

Learn signs of child abuse

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(York Region) - Everyone should learn the signs of child abuse, York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge says.

Chief La Barge issued the reminder as part of Child Abuse Prevention Month.

"We all have a duty to protect our children," he said. "Sometimes that means being keen observers and acting on those observations."

The York Regional Police child abuse unit works with the York Region Children's Aid Society to provide a multi-disciplinary approach to reports of children being physically, sexually, emotionally abused or neglected. The unit is also committed to investigating incidents of child pornography and child luring over the Internet.

York Regional Police is reminding residents valuable information about Internet safety is available through our Be Net Aware Program. This comprehensive program is geared toward protecting children from Internet predators.

Components of the program include a compelling educational video/DVD presentation available for downloading from our website, Internet-use contracts parents and children sign together after agreeing to safety rules and posters and mousepads available for residents and educators.

As well, York Region Children's Aid Society has launched its Use Your Voice public education campaign. The campaign educates residents about their obligation to report suspected child abuse.

A recent survey found close to one-third of York Region residents would not report suspected child abuse despite their legal obligation.

York Regional Police will assist the York Region CAS in distributing purple wristbands for purchase to aid in public awareness. Funds raised will help support children in care. They are available at all York Regional Police district headquarters and at Headquarters in Newmarket, as well as participating Rona stores.

For more information, contact Jennifer Grant, York Region Children's Aid Society, at 905-895-2318, ext. 3301, or visit www.useyourvoice.ca or www.yorkcas.org. Contact Detective Sergeant Lynn Rooney of the Child Abuse Unit at 1-866-876-5423, ext. 7070, ext. 7907 or visit our website at www.yrp.ca.