

Calgary designated as a Safe Community

Calgary was designated a Safe Community by the World Health Organization (WHO) in April, making it the largest community in the world to be recognized.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Calgary is one of the safest communities in the world to live in. In 2002, The City took the initiative to apply for designation as a Safe Community, following a 1999 motion made by Ald. **Bob Hawkesworth**, whose intention was to make Calgary as safe as possible.

“The criteria we had to meet included a collaborative infrastructure reflecting a cross-section promoting safety as well as long-term sustainable programs,” said Ald. **Diane Colley-Urquhart**, co-chair of Safer Calgary, the umbrella organization which spearheaded this designation. “For example, we have programs that target high-risk groups such as (victims of) domestic violence as well as programs to target the frequency and causes of injuries.

The designation covers all facets of life at home and work from intentional injuries to unintentional injuries, such as car accidents and falls.

Injuries are the leading cause of death worldwide in people aged one to 49. Fifty-two per cent of all injuries are preventable,

“We are hoping this will raise awareness for all people, for instance, keeping poisons locked up, becoming a part of block watch and making sure your child wears a bike helmet,” Diane said.

The Safe Community designation received by Calgary kicked off a City-sponsored international workshop April 2-4 entitled “A Learning Journey: Integrating the Safe Communities Model in Large Urban Centres.” One hundred and thirty representatives from communities around the world met at the Round-Up Centre to brainstorm and exchange successful ideas to promote safer communities.

“The beauty of being part of this network is that there are opportunities to talk to other communities about issues they are facing,” said Diane. “In exchange, we are learning what other communities are doing all around the world. Essentially, we are all helping each other to become safer.”

In conjunction with the workshop, The City sponsored Calgary’s first public Safety Expo, which showcased state-of-the-art safety equipment, interactive displays and live demonstrations on making Calgary a safer city at home, work and play.

“We’re vigilantly pursuing increasing levels of safety in our community,” said **Greg Steinraths**, Issue Strategist with The City and chair of the workshop

planning committee. "It's a great vote of confidence for Calgary to be recognized for its efforts."

At work, employees are encouraged to do the following to keep work environments safe:

- Familiarize yourself with the safe operation of tools and equipment, and the safe handling of chemicals.
- Report concerns related to both the safe operations of equipment and procedures.
- Report potential safety hazards at the worksite that were not previously identified or addressed.