

HANSARD

NOVA SCOTIA HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS SUBCOMMITTEE

ON

AGENDA AND PROCEDURES

Wednesday, May 11, 2011

LEGISLATIVE CHAMBER

**Department of Justice:
Re: Lighthouse Program**

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Public Accounts Subcommittee

Ms. Diana Whalen, Chairman
Mr. Howard Epstein, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Chuck Porter
Mr. Allan MacMaster

[Mr. Gary Ramey replaced Ms. Michele Raymond]
[Mr. Gary Burrill replaced Mr. Brian Skabar]

In Attendance:

Mrs. Darlene Henry
Legislative Committee Clerk

Mr. Jacques Lapointe
Auditor General

Mr. Gordon Hebb
Chief Legislative Counsel

WITNESSES

Department of Justice

Ms. Marian Tyson, Deputy Minister
Ms. Patricia Gorham, Director of Crime Prevention



House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

HALIFAX, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 6, 2011

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

9:00 A.M.

CHAIRMAN

Ms. Diana Whalen

VICE-CHAIRMAN

Mr. Leonard Preyra

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'd like to call this meeting to order this morning. We have witnesses with us from the Department of Justice, and we will be discussing specifically the Lighthouses Program. Before we begin and hear from the deputy minister, I'd like to have the members of the committee introduce themselves.

[The committee members introduced themselves.]

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I'll ask Marian to begin with a statement, our deputy minister who is with us today, and you can introduce the staff who are with you today as well.

MS. MARIAN TYSON: Thank you. My name is Marian Tyson, Deputy Minister of Justice. With me is Pat Gorham, who is the Director of Crime Prevention for the Department of Justice.

Thank you very much for inviting us here to talk about the Lighthouses Program this morning. This program is new for the Department of Justice and it is a commitment that government made in 2009. In total, an amount of \$240,000 was committed in 2009 to support 20 partnerships in all. Currently 15 organizations receive \$12,000 in funding, and earlier this week the final five organizations were announced, bringing the program to its capacity of 20 partnerships.

The Lighthouses Program is modelled after a similar program which is being delivered in Manitoba. Organizations that provide recreational, educational, cultural, life skills for after-school programming are eligible to apply for funding. They are required to offer a diverse range of programs to youth to encourage youth to lead a crime-free life. The evidence to support this approach is very clear - the more effectively youth can be connected to pro-social activities and engaged in their communities, the better able they are to withstand the many negative pressures that they face on a daily basis.

This program is an important part of the department's approach to crime prevention. Traditionally, as you probably know, the Department of Justice focused on enforcement, and it is only recently that we have engaged our partners across government and in the various communities to take steps toward prevention of crime. Early preventative initiatives are now part of our response to crime prevention and community safety. We have established a rigorous application and screening process to ensure that credible community organizations are selected for this program; we have also ensured representation across the province. You have a list in the material that was provided earlier of the various partners and, as you will see from that list, the programs are found both in rural settings and urban settings, as well as a First Nation community, and they're distributed province-wide.

Our 15 Lighthouses partners submitted the first annual report this past January, capturing a comprehensive picture of the work that they do at the community level and what they have accomplished. We in the department are very pleased with the outcomes that they've reported. Just to give you an indication of their work, we think it's very significant that tracking of youth participation in the programs indicates that over 1,300 visits of youth per month were supported by the 15 partners - that means more than 10,000 per year engagements with our partners.

It's also important to note that our Lighthouses partners reported well over 80 formal partnerships that they have formed to support their programs. So these formal linkages range from linkages with the local police, helping organizations, to mental health programs and business leaders.

This program is, in fact, a wonderful example of how a relatively small investment in a few organizations can make a significant difference in the communities that they serve. By supplementing the funding for these organizations we're helping them offer programs which really benefit youth and, in fact, our programs have garnered praise and acknowledgement.

Take the Youth Peer and Parents PEACE Program for example - that's one in Sydney - this after-school literacy and numeracy support program targeting higher risk youth was the 2010 recipient of the Donner Prize, a national prize sponsored by the Donner Foundation, which recognizes excellence in design and delivery of community-based programs for youth. There were a significant number of applicants for that award and we're

very proud that one of our partners was the recipient. There are others, which we can get into later.

Moving forward with this program our focus will be on bringing our five new partners on board and strengthening the capacity of all of our partners. In addition we are working on more formal programs for audit and evaluation, and we will be strengthening our focus and our approach to service delivery. We'll be looking to better identify the strengths and weaknesses of this program so that adjustments can be made in the future. I have no doubt that this program will continue to be successful in making a difference in the lives of many youths in the province. Thank you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. Tyson, and, as is our practice, we'll begin the first 20 minutes of questioning with the Liberal caucus, and I'll call on Mr. Colwell.

HON. KEITH COLWELL: Thank you. It's great to see you here today, and this appears to be a very good program - any time we can prevent youth from getting involved in crime or other activities, it's very positive.

I have just a few questions. Does the funding come entirely from the Department of Justice for this program?

MS. TYSON: Yes.

MR. COLWELL: Do you have, or could you provide to our committee the costs associated with running the program, including the funding for staff, office space, and all that information?

MS. TYSON: From the Department of Justice perspective we run this program from the crime division, crime reduction Crime Prevention Unit and the director is on my left, Pat Gorham, and she is supported by a secretarial staff admin support person and she is in the process of acquiring another senior person to assist.

MR. COLWELL: It's just basically three staff?

MS. TYSON: That's correct. The Crime Prevention Unit is responsible for other things as well as this program.

MR. COLWELL: Yes, they have other programs - could you just briefly tell me what those are as well?

MS. TYSON: Okay, I think I will turn to Pat to ask her to describe some of the things her division does.

MS. PATRICIA GORHAM: Good morning. Our Crime Prevention Unit has a variety of responsibilities. The program delivery responsibilities are the Lighthouses Program, and we also supervise the distribution of the one-time Community Crime Prevention and Reduction Investment grants program, which is a smaller program that offers grants between \$1,000 and \$5,000 to community organizations that demonstrate how they would use those funds to support smaller crime prevention-related activities. For example, getting a basketball net in a particular neighbourhood or working on a community charity event, a bike rodeo, or a seniors' safety event. We hand out a range of those on an annual basis.

Those are the grant program activities, and in addition to that the Crime Prevention Unit is responsible for working on a variety of partnerships to strengthen our ability to prevent crime - we track crime rates and are working on a number of initiatives under the Crime Prevention Strategy; we monitor the success of our mental health court; we are working on some new initiatives related to responding to seniors' safety; we collaborate with the Department of Seniors to support their Seniors' Safety Program; and we are currently looking at how to work more effectively on the issue of elder abuse.

There are a range of initiatives that are more developmental, but the two program initiatives are the Lighthouses Program and the annual one-time grants program.

MR. COLWELL: You mentioned the seniors abuse program, I think that's very positive, because a lot of times I believe seniors get abused and there's never any record of it. What are the kinds of activities to promote in that area?

MS. GORHAM: The actual program delivery is led by our Department of Seniors and we collaborate by providing resources of \$50,000 annually as our contribution to their Seniors' Safety Program. Together with them, I serve on their advisory committee and we select up to 20 seniors' safety investments across the province. The Seniors' Safety Program has seniors' safety coordinators working in close affiliation with RCMP and municipal police, and they work at a very grassroots level responding to the needs of competent vulnerable elderly persons in their area.

This new initiative that we're working on relates to challenges that those competent vulnerable elderly may face when those who are giving them care may or may not be taking advantage of them. Many of those cases don't reach the threshold for criminal response, particularly if the vulnerable elderly person does not want to proceed with charges. We're looking at other methods of supporting that family.

Two weeks ago we had an excellent training session with an elder- abuse team from the Waterloo region who presented their program to us. We have struck a steering committee to see how we might be able to move forward to replicate that kind of program, very much at a community level. Our job is to support the community in the Annapolis Valley that's interested in moving forward with this, and we'll learn from that pilot as to

whether that Waterloo model is helpful and beneficial in responding to the needs of those seniors.

MR. COLWELL: Yes, I know, I've had some issues in my own area where seniors are afraid to come forward, and after it is found out there is an issue they're very reluctant to pursue it any further, which is very unfortunate.

MS. GORHAM: It's a very complex issue, I'm learning. I think that the approach we're hoping to develop will be a very nice complement to what the seniors' safety coordinators are already providing in collaboration with police. We think it will be a good complement.

MR. COLWELL: Well, that is good. I even had one - it didn't happen in my riding, but the people were from my riding, and in a nursing home a senior was abused, tied up, and all kinds of really horrible things happened, the staff did that - do you do any work with the nursing homes about seniors' abuse?

MS. GORHAM: The Seniors' Safety Program is directed towards seniors who are on their own in the community and not those who are under the care of Adult Protection. So the Seniors' Safety Coordinators program is more a community level program, working on behalf of those seniors who are still living on their own in the community.

MR. COLWELL: Back to the Lighthouses Program - how does an organization apply for this? What would be the process?

MS. TYSON: There is a fairly extensive application process and a screening process and evaluation process, but I'm going to ask Ms. Gorham to take you through that.

MS. GORHAM: Yes, we put out a call for proposals and offer about a six-to eight-week window for community organizations to apply. The application form is fairly involved. The most important component is that we are looking to partner with credible not-for-profit charities that can demonstrate that they have other resources in hand for the work that they're doing, because a \$12,000 grant would not cover all of the costs of delivering a program. So our contribution is supplementary in nature and allows for a more focused approach.

So the organization needs to demonstrate that it has other resources to bring to the work at hand and then must lay out for the committee how the planned approach would meet our expectations of the goals of the Lighthouses Program, which are: strong leadership of youth in the design of the approach; good focus on prevention; looking toward how to make their programs inclusive and available to any youth who might want to participate; and that they show a commitment to tracking and evaluation.

So those submissions are gathered together and reviewed by our advisory committee and they are scored. We sort them by region and they are scored by region and a short list is developed which is then reviewed with senior management for the final selection. I think the process has resulted in us having strong viable organizations delivering a creative array of programs across the province.

MR. COLWELL: What are the specific criteria used to judge the organizations for funding when their application comes in?

MS. GORHAM: The specific criteria are based on the objectives of the Lighthouses Program and they're captured on Page 4 of your background document: Reduction of youth involvement in the criminal justice system; Promote pro-social behaviours and attitudes; A high degree of interagency collaboration; and the proponent needs to demonstrate that they have knowledge of the risks and assets in their community and we invite them to use our Community Counts for Crime Prevention on-line tool in doing an analysis of the crime rates and the risks and protective factors in their community.

So they have to present a little bit of a community analysis in their proposal. Those are the weights that are placed, in the review of the submission, on those four areas.

MR. COLWELL: Can you supply the committee with a list of organizations that applied and ones that received money and ones that didn't?

MS. GORHAM: I don't have that with me today, but it would be very easy for us to prepare a master list of all of those organizations that did apply. This year we had 75 submissions competing for the five partnerships that we were able to provide. I could follow up and provide that to the committee.

MR. COLWELL: That would be greatly appreciated. Under the program is there a possibility for someone to get funding two years in a row, or if you've had one three years ago, you can't apply again for so many years, or how does that work - how do you set those criteria?

MS. TYSON: It is intended to be ongoing funding provided the organization is achieving its objectives, and the purpose in that is to provide stability to the organization. The funding doesn't completely fund the organization, it really is supplemental funding, but knowing that they have a certain fixed source of income on an ongoing basis provides them with that stability that they need.

MR. COLWELL: What exactly do you do to follow up on the success of these organizations?

MS. TYSON: Currently - as I said, the program is new - so we've just had our first report back from the organization's annual report and they do a self-report at this time -

they indicate what they've done; how many youth they've seen, broken down into male and female; how many contacts; and what they've accomplished. We've reviewed that and we're very pleased with what we've seen so far. We're moving, though, this coming year into site visits and also a type of audit of them, so we will have a three-fold accountability fixed in place when we do the review at the end of this next year for all 20 organizations.

MR. COLWELL: What is the maximum amount one organization can get in a year?

MS. TYSON: The grants are \$12,000.

MR. COLWELL: The reason I ask accountability is prior to me being elected in the riding I'm in, there was, through the Department of Justice - I can't remember the name of what the process was, it wasn't this one - but there was a grant given to a community organization for crime prevention work similar to this, but not just for young children. It ended up with the whole group going on a field trip - I'll be very polite - on a field trip. It had nothing to do with crime prevention; there was no accountability in the program. This was quite awhile ago. Has that been corrected so that can't happen again?

MS. TYSON: I'll just comment and then I'll ask Ms. Gorham to comment. Many of these grants do focus on recreational activities to have the youth associate with one another, get involved in some kind of activity - and that is one of the objectives of the program, to have them get involved in something that will interest them and hopefully prevent them from committing crimes.

Pat would know more about that.

MS. GORHAM: I'm not familiar with the situation that you describe. The Lighthouses Programs, six of the current 20, or seven of the current 20 if we add in the new ones, are very traditional youth-centre-type operations, for example: the Whitney Pier Youth Club, the Springhill Teen Centre, the New Germany Youth Centre, and they focus on creating a gathering space for kids to come to. Other programs that we have sponsored are more specific activity oriented that might involve some field trips.

For example, the Nova Scotia Sea School takes young kids from inner-city Halifax and exposes them to boat-building techniques and actually takes them out on a short sea voyage. That's a very transformative experience for those boys and girls so it would be a field trip, but part of their whole approach is that they teach those young boys and girls how to work as a collaborative team and how to take care of themselves as they work to assist in the sailing of the boat in a very safe manner.

All of the activities have to be grounded in how that activity will support building, essentially, character and citizenship. The tools that we've tried to create to date have them identify how their activities will connect. They are required to submit a mid-term report

where they identify what outcomes they hope to achieve through their activities that will support the goals of Lighthouses; then, at year-end, they report back on how did we do on the outcomes we planned for our year and what successes have we met.

I think the reporting structure really invites the local Lighthouses partner to think about what activities they are going to undertake and how they will benefit the young person, and they know they are accountable to us at year-end as to how it went. I think it's very difficult for things to proceed in an ad hoc manner.

MR. COLWELL: Yes, I'm pleased to hear that because that's really - I think you've got a great program and it's nice to see there is accountability. So many times money is given to organizations and there's no accountability, and when you really start checking into it the money hasn't been spent wisely, hasn't achieved what it was supposed to achieve. The money is gone and some executive director has made some money off it and the thing is over. I'm glad to see that you have accountability - I think that's very positive.

When all these organizations apply - I believe you said 70-some applied this year and you could only approve five with the funding you had - do you get back to the ones that don't succeed, and what is the process there?

MS. GORHAM: Yes, we're just in the process of doing that now; the awards were announced this week. The deputy minister will be sending formal correspondence to all of those organizations that weren't successful and inviting all of them, if they wish to speak with me or to meet with me to better understand what may have resulted in their program not being selected. The competition is close, these are all credible organizations and so we need to give them an opportunity to understand what may have resulted in their organization not being selected. In doing that, it would be my intention to explore with them other possible avenues for funding that they may want to research, so I'll be available to support them.

MR. COLWELL: How long does this whole evaluation process take? I know there are a lot of applications, 70-some applications, so there has to be a lot to read through.

MS. GORHAM: Well we make it a prime focus for our efforts. As soon as the call closes, that's the sum total of my activities, ensuring that a thorough review of each application is done. So within the public safety and security unit, myself and a policing services consultant carry out the initial screening to devise a short list of about 30 of the 75, that then go to the Crime Prevention Advisory Committee for committee review and scoring. We feel it's a strong process that results in selecting what we believe to be the strongest proponent that can join the Lighthouses partnership.

MR. COLWELL: Is there any influence, outside the committee, suggesting that you should select some different people, or is it strictly left up to the committee?

MS. GORHAM: Well we use a scoring template and so the selection is based on the highest cumulative score that the shortlisted submissions can earn. So I think it's a credible process that stays within the committee, and then we prepare a summary recommendation which we provide to the deputy.

We do it on a regional basis. It would be unhelpful if we simply had a high score system that might result, for example, in a lot of clustering of our Lighthouses here in Halifax. We want to make sure that the opportunity for this is spread more widely, so we score them against each other in their region as it were - so all of those that are in the Valley region, we look at them as a cluster, and all of those that are in the Halifax region, we look at them as a cluster.

So you wouldn't be competing against all 75 co-applicants, you would be competing against those co-applicants in your region, and we felt that regional distinction was very important because we want to have this be a province-wide approach and not one that tends to concentrate where the largest volume of submissions are received which, of course, would be the Halifax region.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Mr. Colwell, your time has elapsed. Now I would like to call on Mr. MacMaster for the Progressive Conservative caucus.

MR. ALLAN MACMASTER: Madam Chairman, I've thought about this program and how people would be approached about it, so my first question is how do you best approach a community about offering the Lighthouses Program, because I could foresee that it could be a bit awkward if you're approaching a certain area, or a certain group of people, where maybe the incidence of crime may be a bit higher - is there a way that you can do that in a sensitive way?

MS. TYSON: Well, essentially we make it known that we are accepting applications to the program on the department's Web site, and our department staff have a lot of connections with the community and they make it known within the communities that we are open for accepting applications.

MR. MACMASTER: So you try to work with people locally and at a local level to put the program across to somebody who might take advantage of it for the people that they might be in tune with who might have a need for it.

MS. TYSON: Well, as I'm sure you know, there are many, many local organizations that are taking steps already to support communities, support youth, and they are able to apply to this program. There's an application form that they fill in, so we don't form local organizations but we invite local organizations to put forward their proposals and they're evaluated in the manner that Ms. Gorham just described.

MR. MACMASTER: Can you give us some background on the types of youth who are helped by the program?

MS. TYSON: Yes, I'm going to ask Ms. Gorham to address that question.

MS. GORHAM: I had an opportunity in March to bring all of the Lighthouses partners together for a workshop. We were able to successfully get some federal funding to underwrite a learning workshop for them and it was very instructive for me to see. We had our Lighthouses partners from as far away as Yarmouth and Bay St. Lawrence gather together for a workshop on working with high-risk youth. The workshop was led, actually, by high-risk youth who had either experienced or were perpetrators of violence who are working with our Lighthouses partner LOVE.

It was interesting to see that even though these were high-risk urban youth, their issues resonated with all of the Lighthouses partners, even the most rural indicated that those young people who are engaging with their programs faced similar issues of feeling disconnected from the community, being unsure of what their role was - and I think that's the strongest contribution our partners are making as they're helping young people who feel disconnected to figure out how to be connected to community by the activities they engage in and the welcoming environment they've created.

So although the programs are not targeted, it's not a referral-based program where you only get to go there if you're in trouble with the law, it appears that because of their sort of non-traditional approach, many of the young people who are participating seem to have those kinds of risk issues of feeling disconnected and struggling a bit in life, and that seems to be the - amongst as well, healthy, productive young kids who might be going out to these programs, that by and large we seem to be hitting the mark in being of assistance to kids who are struggling.

MR. MACMASTER: Are you seeing any patterns or commonalities amongst the youth who are committing crime that you're trying to help?

MS. GORHAM: Amongst the youth who are participating in the Lighthouses Program we don't track whether they have criminal histories, it's a welcoming grassroots type of an environment. Anecdotally the organizers have indicated that many of their young people have a conflict with the law as part of their personal situation. Amongst the young people who they are assisting, the one thing that came through very strongly in all of the annual reports was a feeling of being disconnected, of self-esteem, of not really liking who they were or what they had on the go, and a lot of focus on feeling bored and at loose ends, so having things to do and places to go where they were welcomed seemed to be a really key service that the Lighthouses partners are providing.

That certainly resonates with what we know about patterns of youth criminal activity, that amongst all those young people getting in conflict with the law there is a small

cluster of young people who are deeply troubled. The larger group are young people who are experimenting a bit with certain adolescent rites of passage, taking risks - and a lot of that seemed to be tied to feeling bored and getting caught up in events that are negative and destructive. But that the kids themselves will probably not continue down that path, which is why we focus on early intervention like our Restorative Justice Program, so that we can redirect those young people at that first risk-taking behaviour and get them back on the right track.

Then we have our more comprehensive programs for those young people who are more troubled and whose ability to bounce back isn't as clear. So we have the whole spectrum and Lighthouses is working at the very early end of the spectrum of services that we offer.

MR. MACMASTER: Are they bored because they have just not maybe been taught from a young age some of the things that are available to them in life?

MS. GORHAM: It would be speculative of me to answer that, but I would think that one of the features around feeling bored is the challenge of maturing enough to be independent but not have any way to act as an adult. So what do you do if you don't have a job and you have time after school, you have a lot of energy, how do you use it productively? Unfortunately some of our young people are less directed than others. Some young people are so impressive, the engagement they have in after-school activities; others, either because they are not comfortable to engage in it or maybe their family situation has made it difficult for them to have that on the go, seem to be at a loose ends. The more we can get them reconnected with activities, the better.

MR. MACMASTER: I guess the reason I'm asking these questions is if we don't understand the root causes of youth crime, it's hard for us to go out and help people to change the causes that are creating the problems.

Do the programs that you have been offering - and you've given us sort of a summary of the groups you've been helping - do they include trying to show young people some other things in life that they could bring into their lives, things they could do that maybe would cause them to feel better about themselves and more positive about the world around them?

MS. TYSON: Well there are various kinds of programs. Some are focused on educational activities, such as reading or numeracy skills. Most of them have a mentorship aspect, so they can see community leaders or older youth who have accomplished more in their lives than some of the other youth who are at risk. The mentorship, for example there's a program in the Valley that has just been approved, Kids "N" Kops, and this program will engage up to 50 students from Grades 7 to 9, and youth leaders as well for those programs, from Grades 10 to 12. They will work with the police, the RCMP, through

the school year to develop projects that can support crime prevention, so that would give them a sense of accomplishment.

Other youth focus on artistic activities - in the Spring Garden Road courthouse we have a mural that was painted by youth, and there's a project ongoing now at the Law Courts on Lower Water Street to do another mural in the entrance, focused on truth. These youth have produced a video, for example, so it would give them those kinds of skills. So it goes from boat building to videos to learning, reading. It's a very broad range of supports and programs.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. How do the organizations that get funding from the program, how do they determine who gets to participate? My first question today was I could see the potential could be awkward for a young person to be asked to join because they might feel that they are getting singled out because maybe they've done something wrong in the past and they might be offended by that - how do groups decide who gets to participate in the program?

MS. TYSON: I think they're generally open to all youth, but I'll turn it over to Ms. Gorham.

MS. GORHAM: The deputy is correct, the approach of all of the Lighthouses Programs are to welcome any young people who might want to participate. As youth program experts, our Lighthouses partners use a variety of approaches to welcome youth into their programs - dropping into the school to tell young people about the program, and word of mouth is very powerful with adolescents. I know the folks at the New Germany Youth Centre essentially relied on word of mouth around the rural community, that there's a place we can go and by offering the things that young people are interested in to get them there. I learned at the gathering that pizza is a very important outreach component and seems to be a real draw, particularly for young boys who, I guess, are perpetually hungry.

Some of their techniques are pretty basic. Their feeling is they may come to get free food, which they find great - I'll go for the food - but once they're there the engagement begins to happen and the openness to the programming begins to happen and the relationship gets built, and then they come back even when there isn't pizza available. So that's one of the techniques that they use.

MR. MACMASTER: They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, so I think you're probably on to something. Do you aim to teach the youth values and principles throughout these programs?

MS. GORHAM: I think the focus across all of the Lighthouses is to help young people recognize that they are part of our community, and that's a good thing, and that they can embrace that and enjoy that. I think it is a very positive message around values of citizenship. The Split Rock Learning Centre for example, in Yarmouth, decided they

needed to help the kids to understand what that meant, so they organized a jobs crew and made it known around the Town of Yarmouth that the Split Rock kids would be available to clear brush or shovel snow - and by making themselves available as sort of energetic community helpers it kind of changed a bit of the negative attitudes that some of those young people were earning for themselves in that community.

The young people actually found themselves very much enjoying being part of the jobs crew and being the Split Rock kids who were doing good things rather than the kids who were being asked to move along by the RCMP. That was an example in one of our annual reports - that by organizing that experience for the young people, the folks at Split Rock equipped those young people with the leadership experience that they wouldn't have had before. There are countless examples of that type of helping kids get focused on what it means to be part of the community.

MR. MACMASTER: One of the challenges, I think, for young people is if they're not brought up with some values some of the activities they can get into can lead to a lot of unhappiness. I don't know what your thoughts are on that, but if they're taught values they might start to find that life is more rewarding because they're living in a more loving way with the people around them - has there been any focus on that?

MS. GORHAM: The programs are not required to teach values in the way that we fund them. We invite the programs to show us how they're planning to meet the goals of the Lighthouses initiative, but I think values education is a big part of the relationship that they're having around the values of co-operation. In the measurements that they provide in the annual report we ask them to comment on skill areas such as: are the young people improving their ability to resolve conflict in an appropriate way, are they developing better pro-social skills, are they developing better relationship-building skills?

One of the interesting things I saw in the report - a lot of the programs indicated that they saw a growth in the ability of the kids participating to sort out problems in a more appropriate way, moving away maybe from being reactive and violent to talking things out and being more supportive of each other, which I think is a really important social value. I think that the impact is there, but none of the programs that we're sponsoring now sort of announce themselves as teaching values education specifically.

MR. MACMASTER: Interesting. I think of the Aboriginal community, I know there was a gentleman I used to keep in contact with and he talked about the use of the sweat lodge and the spiritual experience that a lot of young people would feel when they would go in there, and that kind of broke down the barriers and I think they got a chance to see that there's more to life than physical - the pizza you might say - that's around them, and there are other things that build a person's character and contribute to their self-worth. I would encourage you going forward to be open to that.

Perhaps the program is open to it now - if a group had an experience like that, that they wanted to offer, would they be eligible to receive funding?

MS. GORHAM: I'm sorry, I didn't quite understand your question.

MR. MACMASTER: If a group wanted to offer an experience like that, that was sort of like the one I just described, would they be eligible for funding like that?

MS. GORHAM: Certainly and right now we do have a First Nation organization, the Potlotek Youth Program from Chapel Island First Nation and that's exactly the focus that they are using. Their program is actually about cultural reconnection. That community has gone through some very, very difficult times in recent years and in their application they indicated that they were seeing the impact of those difficulties reflected in how young people were coping.

They felt there was a lot of anger amongst the young people and that their goal with the Potlotek Youth Program was to create opportunities for them to connect with elders and to connect with their culture and to have their activities centred around the cultural values of the Mik'maq. Their report indicated that they had a very, very successful year with the young people that engaged with the program.

I think that if there were other applications of that type they would certainly be entertained.

MR. MACMASTER: Have you been able to track decreases in youth crime in the communities that have received funding in the past?

MS. GORHAM: I think it's early yet to do a match between the presence of Lighthouses Programs and the shift in youth crime. We are seeing a downward shift in general youth crime in the province; I don't know whether we're able yet to attribute that to this investment. It may be a combination of a number of factors.

We have a vibrant Restorative Justice Program that is also working very closely with youth who are struggling so we are seeing a downward trend in our youth crime, which is a very important thing to recognize. Within that we recognize that we still have a fairly high violent youth crime rate, so we do have pockets of challenging youth that we're still working on. We're not able yet to make that comment that this investment has resulted in this level of youth crime because we're still at a very early stage. We believe we'll be able to make that type of inference at any rate as we go forward.

MR. MACMASTER: You mentioned there's a pocket of youth committing more serious crime - could you give us some background on that pocket of the population and could you give us your opinion on whether or not maybe this program is suitable for it, or are you looking at other measures to try to focus on that section of the population?

MS. GORHAM: I think that within every community there are young people who are more severely challenged and whose personal situation results in them becoming people who victimize others. We need to support those young people, but we also need to manage the community safety and that's where our correctional services plays an important role in the work they are doing with higher risk youth, both in the supervision support provided by probation officers and the programs that are available if those young people do end up being incarcerated.

I think that these community-based programs are also able to contribute to supporting those young people because often they are still in the community. A good example of that is our Lighthouses partner, LOVE, Leave Out Violence Everywhere, in Nova Scotia that really works very closely with higher risk young people. Their invitation is to engage young people who have either perpetrated or have been victims of violence, and they use an approach of unconditional support and a fairly confrontational self-examination of how you become someone other than this person who hurt others and how you become someone other than a person who is a victim.

They work in a very directed way with higher risk youth and produce impressive outcomes and they are one of our Lighthouses partners so they're working quite closely with the higher risks groups. I think that demonstrates that this program has the flexibility to embrace the whole spectrum of community innovation of support, both for a low-end type of young person all the way to young people who have actually been perpetrators of violence against others.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you. Madam Chairman, I believe my time is about . . .

MADAM CHAIRMAN: I think your time has really elapsed, there's only a couple of seconds to go, so I'd like to call on the NDP caucus. Mr. Whynott.

MR. MAT WHYNOTT: Thank you very much and thank you for coming today to talk about this important program. Not that I've been on this earth that long, but my wife and I have worked with young people over the last six or seven years and we understand. I've certainly seen how many youth are in need in this province and also understand the importance of good role models for those youth and I think even in the last number of years you've seen it shift. I think that there is so much more access for young people to - we've seen this with bullying. It's even more important now to have these sorts of programs so I'm glad to see that we've been able to expand this program or be able to extend it to at least five more partners across the province. I think it's an important thing.

Most recently I've been appointed the Ministerial Assistant for Youth so this program is certainly - I've spoken to many youth organizations and they've said that it has been a positive experience for them. I guess I want to target - kind of as an holistic question - how important do these organizations see this money?

MS. TYSON: They see it as stable money that they don't have to think about fundraising for, because a lot of these organizations do a lot of fundraising. That takes time and energy and they're not sure from one year to the next how much money they're going to have. This is a block of stable funding that would be accessible to them, providing that they are satisfying the objectives of the program. I think it's very important to them.

MR. WHYNOTT: Yes, I agree wholeheartedly. What would be the sort of things that - I know you touched on it a little bit but I want to narrow in a little bit. I had a brief chance to glance through the report, but if you could talk a little bit about what exactly the money is used for. I know it talks a little bit about literacy. Can you discuss broad themes about that?

MS. TYSON: I'll give you a couple of examples and then perhaps my colleague can supplement that. In Whitney Pier they have a youth club, which is supported by the community and the business centre, and they have strong community partnerships. They are involved in both educational and recreational after-school activities.

MR. WHYNOTT: I know that the Speaker played an important role in the Whitney Pier Youth Club.

MS. TYSON: In Cape Breton, at Bay St. Lawrence, their program involved youth with seniors so that the youth were helping seniors in the activities that the seniors might need. It's called Time Banking, so they're sharing their time with seniors. That would be important both for the seniors and also for the youth to get an appreciation that the seniors are people and that they get to know them and work with them. There is a large variety of both learning and recreation, which is team building and skills building throughout the province, but I think maybe my colleague would have additional specific examples that might be helpful to you.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Ms. Gorham.

MS. GORHAM: The Lighthouses investment was described by the director of the EPIC charitable organization, the Youth Peer and Parents PEACE Program, as a game-changer because it's a small supplementary fund but in that example it allows them to bring artists into the program. So when the young people complete their literacy activities they can get a guitar lesson. For some of these young people, having the opportunity to learn those skills isn't present in their family environment.

I know Chester Borden, the director of the Whitney Pier Youth Club, was able to use the funding to create some games nights, focused on younger kids, by being able to purchase some of the equipment they were most interested in because they were a bit too little to get involved in the basketball program that was so popular with the older kids. Chester found that it allowed him to bring more balance to the activities in the club and

create a more welcoming environment for the younger kids. He found it was very helpful in strengthening his club, which is famous in Cape Breton.

MR. WHYNOTT: As I said earlier, I did have a chance to take a brief look at some of the things. One of the things that jumped out at me, as a key outcome for a number of these organizations, was around literacy. We have talked a lot about how literacy is so important for our young people in building a foundation for their future. I would say that more than half of these saw outcomes of literacy skills increased. Can you make a comment about that?

[9:57 a.m. Mr. Howard Epstein took the Chair.]

MS. GORHAM: Although only a couple of the programs have after-school tutoring support as sort of a feature of their program, a lot of their focus is on creating opportunities for young people to engage in more reading and writing behaviour. Knowing that anything you read, anything you write that you feel confident about, strengthens your literacy, so a lot of their activities focus on that. For example, the Sea School boat-building club, the kids learn how to read patterns and learn how to follow directions and learn safety activities around tools management. All of those types of activities expose them to the responsibilities of reading and writing.

I think strengthening confidence in literacy is a key way to help young people actually improve their literacy. We see that as kind of a feature percolating across all of the activities that the Lighthouses partners are undertaking.

MR. WHYNOTT: I have a question around, how was the money or was the money ever looked at to be able to identify specific minority groups or to create diversity opportunities? In particular, in the constituency I represent we have a large demographic of African Nova Scotians. You did mention a group you identified was the Aboriginal community, so was there any other focus on other types of diversity groups?

MS. GORHAM: We are very anxious to see a wide range of submissions for the Lighthouses Program. One of the things we do in addition to the open call and sort of public announcement and Web site is the Crime Prevention Unit maintains what we call a stakeholder list, that any time we have any engagement with any community group we add them to our e-mail list. We did a broadcast announcement to our stakeholder list, inviting anyone to think about applying for Lighthouses, and if they had any questions to please contact me and I'd be delighted to help them with their submission.

I did get contact from many grassroots organizations wondering would we quality. This is the type of thing we're doing and we did that specifically to encourage a diverse range of submissions and we were successful in that endeavour. We have two programs that are specifically focused on reconnecting young boys and girls of African Nova Scotian heritage to their heritage - the Voices of Change program in East Preston led by the

Community Justice Society, which is a very strong leader in the African Nova Scotian community here.

There's also our Restorative Justice agency doing some excellent outreach work in the communities of East and North Preston based out of the East Preston Recreation Centre. They've actually seen that community go from no after-school activities whatsoever to their Voices of Change program actually being so popular they had to reorganize it and offer it one night for the juniors and one night for the seniors. They get up to 40 boys and girls coming out in the evening across that rural community.

A new one that was just taken on is the Mulgrave Park Baptist Church which will be leading a really interesting intergenerational project where they will take young kids from the Mulgrave Park community of African Nova Scotian heritage and they'll be working with African Nova Scotian senior citizens to develop video stories of our African Nova Scotian heroes. So they'll be doing community history research and creating a video in collaboration with a local film production company. So those are two examples where we're seeing cultural reconnection led by African Nova Scotian leaders who were excited that they're our Lighthouses partners because that's really important work for those young boys and girls.

MR. WHYNOTT: Absolutely, that's great to hear, very good to hear. You mentioned in your opening remarks, I believe - or maybe later - where you brought all of the partners together for training on youth at risk. Can you identify some of the struggles that the partners are facing within their communities? I mean they're the people who know it the best and I'm sure you talked about it, so can you maybe share a little bit about what their struggles are?

MS. GORHAM: It was a great opportunity to bring everyone together and the workshop was led by LOVE and by the young men and women who are clients of LOVE. They had an opportunity to be leaders and to organize the training event. The dialogue was similar all the way from rural Bay St. Lawrence to Halifax, folks from East Preston were present, folks from Yarmouth were there, Bridgewater and the Valley. Young people need an opportunity to feel connected. That seemed to be the overriding theme.

The struggles that they were concerned about, there were no surprises to me, in hearing them worrying about adult criminal networks moving drugs through their community and how vulnerable young people are to being lured into those high-risk choices and the need for them as community leaders to always be available to support young people. So that was what I heard essentially: worrying about the behaviour of adults and how young people can manage that, and also helping kids feel more connected to their community.

An interesting one that was identified that we're going to be working on was feeling a little bit isolated as a helping organization worrying about this sort of on their

own. So they were delighted to meet each other and recognize that they have a lot of common issues. So we'll be looking for other ways to keep the Lighthouses partners in networking with each other. As part of the grant that we were able to assist LOVE to get from the federal government to support this, is the development of a plan for a bit of an informal network for the Lighthouses partners. We'll be looking at how we can support them to be in touch regularly with each other and look for other opportunities to bring them together as community leaders, working on behalf of all of our young people.

MR. WHYNOTT: You talked about how the money was - people applied for the money because these organizations already exist. Why was the decision made to use the groups that already existed?

MS. TYSON: There could have been a brand new group formed but I think virtually all of them had existed previously. Applications were able to be accepted, if a new group decided to form for this purpose they would not be excluded.

MR. WHYNOTT: So I guess to actually go into the Public Accounts of this, my question is, what is the overall budget for the crime prevention unit?

MS. GORHAM: The overall budget is made up of a small operations budget - I'm just trying to think how much it is exactly, I wasn't prepared with that. I think it's around \$300,000, so all of the activities come in under that and then, in addition, would be my salary.

MR. WHYNOTT: Does that include the Lighthouses grant?

MS. GORHAM: No, and then the two grant funds are - should I go ahead, deputy?

MS. TYSON: I think I can perhaps answer your question. The unit itself consists of three people, so salaries and benefits would be included in the department's budget, the \$240,000 commitment of this government for the Lighthouses Program, and in addition there is an annual \$40,000 fund available for the small, one-time grants which can be anywhere from \$500, but not exceeding \$5,000, for crime prevention initiatives.

In addition, the unit is also connected with other parts of the department and other departments in activities such as domestic violence, that plan, and the Restorative Justice programs, so there is a broader connection with other parts of the department where we participate. They are not specifically funded, but staff is involved in those activities. The grants such as the \$50,000 grant to the seniors to support their programs is another example.

MR. WHYNOTT: Thank you. I believe my friend, the member for Lunenburg West, wants to ask one quick question before my time is up, so thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ramey.

MR. GARY RAMEY: Thank you very much, and thank you, Ms. Tyson and Ms. Gorham, for coming in. I was very pleased to see that the Name the Shame project, that I guess is in partnership with South Shore Regional School Board, has been approved because I was hoping for some time that we'd be able to get a project like that going.

We have a pretty good history down there of working together. Some of you may be familiar with the Baby Think it Over Program, where you give high school students in Grade 9 a baby with electronic innards in it which cries at various times during the night and you get to see what it is like to get up and deal with that. We've got a long history of that kind of activity and that's actually a partnership of the South Shore School Board and the United Way.

I've heard nothing but good things about the New Germany program, which happens to be in the neighbouring riding of Pam Birdsall, and now we have this one. I've noticed, too, when Mr. Whynott was talking, and somebody else mentioned it as well, some of these rural communities seem to be experiencing - I remember reading about the Dene and the Inuit in Newfoundland and Labrador and different northern communities, and some of the youth there and some of the youth in our rural communities seem to have very similar problems, even though those are Aboriginal children in the north and these are just regular Nova Scotia children down here. I have seen that develop over the years and that's why programs like this are so good. I think you said the budget is \$240,000?

MS. TYSON: That's correct.

MR. RAMEY: That's not very much money if you get a really good result.

MS. TYSON: It's not a huge amount of money. It's supplemental funding, but it's amazing, from the results that we've received, how much good that money has been able to do for these organizations . . .

MR. RAMEY: My point exactly.

MS. TYSON: . . . and how widespread the connections have become. Eighty partner connections have been made by the 15, and the number of visits from the youth is phenomenal, 1,300 a month from the youth.

MR. RAMEY: Well, absolutely, 1,300 a month and 10,000 engagements or something a year - and then what does that save society? I'll get to my question because I'm giving way too long a preamble and not asking a question - we accuse the Opposition of that sometimes, so I'd better stop it.

What I was wondering is do you have any statistics - and I don't expect you to have them on you this minute - do you have any statistics that show the percentage of youth involved? I know about the 1,300 and the 10,000 engagements overall, but do you have any breakdown of that specifically in relation to a given unit, like in New Germany, how many kids would be seen at New Germany in a year or how many children are using that there, or in this new program that I know you don't have any statistics on yet because it just got granted, do you have some way of tracking individual pockets of youth going to a particular place as opposed to the overall?

MS. TYSON: Yes, that's one of the things that the organizations report on. They break it down between male and female youth.

MR. RAMEY: Oh really? So you do have that information available?

MS. TYSON: I think some of that information would be included in the book, in the appendix of that.

MR. RAMEY: I subbed in late so I didn't get to read it all.

MS. TYSON; It's not in the bulk, it's in the appendix where they report on the number of youth who have been involved.

MR. RAMEY: Thank you very much, that's what I wanted to know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: That perfectly fits the time available. We move now back to the Liberal caucus for a 14-minute round and it will be followed by the other two caucuses again for 14 minute rounds. Ms. Whalen.

MS. DIANA WHALEN: I certainly wanted to say that the Lighthouses Program seems to be striking a need in the community, filling that need and helping in many ways, so it has been an interesting discussion to hear that this morning. As I said to you in the beginning, we know it's a very new program and I hope it will be expanded because clearly, with 75 applications in and you were only able to accept five this year, I'm sure there were a lot of good programs that had to be left for another time. I hope that will expand.

I appreciate the comments and questions we've had already on the program, but I wanted to ask some questions around another program at the moment. When you were here before, Ms. Tyson, we had talked - it was probably a couple of years ago - around victim services and at that time you actually did follow up, I want to acknowledge that. After our discussion at Public Accounts you had met, again, with me and members of your department and actually some advocates for victim services and we did increase the amount of money as a result. I shouldn't say, we, you did, through your department,

increased the amount of money allocated for counselling awards; it went from \$60 to \$80 an hour that is allocated for those awards.

MS. TYSON: It's \$85.

MS. WHALEN: Okay, I should know that exactly. I wanted to acknowledge that that had happened, but I still think we have some questions and interest in whether or not we're hitting the mark on people who have been victims of crime and need help. One thing that had spurred me to get back and interested in this again was that last Fall the federal government did a lot of advertising on television showing victims and saying we welcome you to call and go to this Web site.

When I went to the Web site, which is a Government of Canada Web site, basically all that it did was direct you back to services in your own community, so if you came to Nova Scotia, it broke it down right into the smallest of communities, you could get a phone number and know where to call. My concern is that would have created more demand, I would expect, for services and I did want to ask you if you received any increase in calls after those advertisements had run?

MS. TYSON: I can't say that the calls increased as a result of those advertisements, but I can tell you that the number of people who accessed the counselling program did increase. In 2009-10 the amount provided went from approximately \$123,000 to approximately \$156,000 the following year.

MS. WHALEN: So an increase in the amount of money that went out to counselling awards.

MS. TYSON: And the number of people who accessed that program increased.

MS. WHALEN: That's great. One of the things I wanted to ask you for, I don't expect you to have it today, but I was wondering if you could provide to the committee exactly that, the number of clients who were served, who were able to access counselling. I was looking really for a three-year window, say 2007-08, up to 2009-10. I don't think you'll have the most recent year yet, if you did I'd love it.

MS. TYSON: I don't think we have the most recent.

MS. WHALEN: No, we haven't closed it, but if you went from 2007-08 to 2009-10 and gave us the number of people who were served and if you could give the total amount of dollars that were expended, so the money that was expended each year on counselling and maybe compare that to the estimate because the year you mentioned at \$123,000, the estimate that year was \$250,000, so you had put aside, or expected, anticipated \$250,000. Scarcely half was utilized, in fact, not half that year. I'd like to have a look at that.

One thing, as well, that I've been trying to get a better handle on is the victim surcharge fund, which all provinces have in place and it's an amount of money that is an extra fee when you're paying a fine and it's directed to that. I've been having difficulty through my inquiries to get an accounting of that fund, how much is collected each year and if we could stick to the same three years, that would be great - just to know how much was actually collected by the Province of Nova Scotia, which is directed to Victim Services from that surcharge. If you could provide a budget of that, I'd like to know really a statement of what happened to those funds. I don't know if they go straight into the budget of the Department of Justice or if you do actually allocate the counselling money from that fund.

MS. TYSON: I'll try to get that information but essentially there are two sources of funding. The Criminal Injuries Counselling Program is funded through two separate programs and it is funded from the public consolidated fund, the counselling. There is a budget of approximately \$400,000 available in that fund so we have up to that amount. Depending on how many people apply, that amount is available. As you pointed out, the amounts that we have paid per hour have increased and also we've expanded the ability of people to access that fund. We now have family counselling available and the time has been lengthened so that people are now able to access the fund for a longer period of time. For example, if there is a trial, people may not access the fund. They may become in need of the fund at that time of the trial.

The other fund is the victim assistance fund and this is funded from the surcharges, which are 15 per cent. Fifteen per cent is added to a fine levied by the Provincial Court. That amount, of course, varies from year to year so we never really know how much money will be in that fund but that fund is for the purpose of providing for the program itself. We provide for staff and travel and the costs of providing the direct services to the people. Examples of the direct services would be assisting an individual to prepare a victim impact statement or the Child Victim Witness Program. The staff and the program are funded from the surcharge. The counselling is funded from a different fund, a budget of approximately \$400,000 from the public funding.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, deputy. These questions are somewhat off topic from what is on the agenda today. I appreciate the deputy minister's answers and undertaking to respond with details. I'm just wondering if I could encourage the member to speak to today's topic.

MS. WHALEN: Well, I think today's topic has been pretty much exhausted unless we want to talk about individual - among the 20 - programs that are out there. I think I said it's a good program and I think that it's working well. I think we've had a pretty thorough discussion about how it's working and where it is headed. If I could have the indulgence of the Chair.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Well, you have another seven minutes so you can ask whatever questions you like, even if they are slightly off the topic. You're taking your chances, of course, as to whether the deputy minister actually has the answers to hand but let us try it.

MS. WHALEN: I think the deputy minister is well informed but, at the same time, I think that we can ask for some information back, which will be of interest to all members of the committee, I'm sure. I do think this is something that has been raised here in the past and certainly I think, as I say, has a bearing on every community. Again, thank you very much for your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that.

What I'd like to know about again, would be on the last three years and this is something I realize you have not brought your finance people with you or specific information on victim surcharges but you do know of my interest in it. I'm wondering if you could give us the detailed budget of the Victim Services Division or program because that's an area again, when we look at even past Public Accounts, we don't get the detailed breakdown of costs. I would like to know where the offices are and how many staff provide those services. I would like to know the costs that are associated with delivering that program across the province.

It's really to try and put into perspective the amount of money that people are paying on their fines - that 15 per cent surcharge for Victim Services - which I believe is over \$1 million. Yet we are putting about \$250,000 at best towards counselling, you said last year it was up to about \$150,000 actually utilized. People in Nova Scotia are paying a lot more money into that fund but the benefit is really going to the government, it's providing the funds to run the office to put staff in place in Victim Services.

MS. TYSON: I think I can provide some information. I will get specific information for you, but it's my recollection that from the victim surcharge we are not able to provide direct funding to individuals. That is why there is a separate fund under the consolidated fund for the counselling program. I will confirm or clarify that information.

I can also tell you that it was approximately \$1.6 million, in the 2009-10 year, which was collected through the victim surcharge. It goes to provide for civil servants and casual people, any overtime as a result of the need for staff to work with victims. It goes to certain professional services - very minimal - that we provide for the staff to keep up to date with the kinds of assistance that victims require and for miscellaneous rentals, that kind of thing, just the normal office operating equipment.

I can't tell you right off hand, through memory, the various locations of the offices or how many staff, but I can get you that information.

MS. WHALEN: I would appreciate that and I know members of the committee would appreciate that too. Frankly I don't think I'm alone in feeling that when people pay a surcharge for Victim Services, that it should go to help victims of crime and that we're

missing the boat in this province in really providing some good services to people who are victims of crime.

I know we've extended some of the timelines. We still are in a position where the counselling awards at \$85 an hour don't pay for a lot of counselling. You have to supplement it. I know we've had this discussion, but we've called to different counsellors, their rates are not \$85 an hour when you're hiring an independent, private counsellor. I just feel that people are leaving money on the table; victims of crime are not accessing the counselling because they can't afford to supplement it.

MS. TYSON: I think on the counselling, I think as we did talk on a previous occasion, we pay the amount, we track with Community Services and that amount is \$85. We do have a list of counsellors, and there are quite a few counsellors, and that list is broken down in terms of their specialties. Not every counsellor charges \$85, but there are quite a few, and we believe a sufficient number who are prepared to do this work for the \$85 an hour. We haven't experienced complaints or a lot of concerns on the part of individuals that they aren't able to get a counsellor.

MS. WHALEN: I appreciate that.

MS. TYSON: I just want to comment on the direct services because I think maybe there might be some confusion. The victim surcharge and the staff, they do provide direct services. Our staff does that, they go to court with victims and they support them and they help them prepare the victim impact statement.

MS. WHALEN: Ms. Tyson, I wonder if I could just interrupt. You've heard me speak in the House on this issue and you know they're often very late in providing information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Member, there's a point from Mr. Whynott.

MR. WHYNOTT: Mr. Chairman, we're here to talk about the Lighthouses Program. Maybe we can put the member back on speaking about Lighthouses.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think it's already been pointed out to the member that we're slightly off topic and that she's taking her chances in asking questions of the deputy as to whether the deputy was actually prepared with the full information on a topic that is not directly what she was asked here to comment on. She's already been made aware of that. Perhaps we can just finish up on this, there's another half a minute remaining.

MS. WHALEN: I wonder if I could request some more information, I've asked for the budget of the department. I'd like to also get the list of counsellors, not just for HRM but for around the province. I have seen the HRM one. I would like to ask if, in fact, there are any plans to extend the program in the future.

MS. TYSON: There is no current plan to extend the program. I guess I'm not sure what you mean by extending it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. At this point actually the time in that round for the Liberal members has elapsed. We'll move now to the PC caucus with 14 minutes. Mr. MacMaster.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. When we look at investing money in trying to improve the safety of citizens or of trying to help young people and, of course, the subject today, we're talking about a program that is designed to help young people move away from lifestyles of crime. Could you give some commentary on the value of investing money? There's always the ethical dilemma of truth versus mercy. With truth you can have justice, where you're trying to punish people, versus the side of mercy which may be exemplified in the Lighthouses Program. Could you provide some commentary on that and your thoughts on investing in one versus the other?

[10:25 a.m. Ms. Diana Whalen resumed the Chair.]

MS. TYSON: Well the Department of Justice has always invested in enforcement in the past, so that we have our policing partners, we have our correctional institutions and our probation officers. It's new for the department to become involved in prevention activities. I think it is becoming very well known across the country and other countries that prevention is an extremely important tool, as it were, to use. If you can prevent youth from becoming engaged in crime at an early age, then, of course, if they will lead a crime-free life and a productive life, that's preferable to simply enforcing the laws and incarcerating people when they commit crimes.

We are finding we are getting more information all the time. For example, we spoke earlier of some of the Reading Recovery program, literacy programs, numeracy, we find that not only in our jails, correctional institutions, a very large percentage of the adults have difficulty in reading and numeracy, so it is a problem.

When I was in Community Services, the school in Truro, the facility in Truro where children, youth, are involuntarily placed, that it was surprising, in fact shocking, to realize that almost every youth in that facility had not been in school prior to being admitted. We find that a very important part of crime prevention is to focus on youth and try and steer them in the right direction, as it were, at that age.

MR. MACMASTER: This may be a difficult question to answer but for every dollar that would be invested in something that would be focused on crime prevention, how many dollars would that save on the enforcement side of justice, of the laws of our province?

MS. TYSON: Well, I don't think I can give you a specific answer but my recollection is that it's about \$60,000 per year to incarcerate an adult in our institutions.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you very much. How does the Lighthouses Program fit with the other programs in the Department of Justice?

MS. TYSON: I think it's a good fit with our other programs. We have the Restorative Justice Program which, in fact, does address youth who have committed crimes and tries to steer them away from crime by meeting with our staff and by meeting with the victim, if the victim is willing to meet. The youth will then quite often get to understand the consequences, the impact of the crime on the victim.

Our experience in that program has been very positive, in terms of - and I can't give you a specific number but very high, in terms of youth who have not reoffended, after having gone through the Restorative Justice Programs. In fact, we've got pretty well the best program in North America in that Restorative Justice Program.

That fits very well, that fits with youth who have committed crimes. The Lighthouses Programs are focused on trying to prevent youth and redirect them away from crime and into more pro-social activities. I think it's a good fit and it's new, prevention is new, the Lighthouses Program is new. In fact the whole Crime Prevention Unit, a very small unit, is new.

We're not the only department focused on these kinds of activities. For example, Community Services provides funding for many organizations such as Phoenix House, very good work and very focused on crime prevention as well, and directing youth toward productive lives and not committing crimes.

MR. MACMASTER: The law enforcement of our province has lots of challenges throughout their daily work. Have they been offered a chance to offer some input towards the Lighthouses Program or have they been consulted about how the work that they do might help feed people that they're seeing, coming across in their daily work, to feed them into programs like the Lighthouses Program?

MS. TYSON: Yes, we have the RCMP and local municipal police forces involved in many of the programs themselves and they have their own programs. We have Cops and Kids, which is the new one in the Valley that has just been approved. We have the RCMP involved in literacy reading programs. The Adopt-a-Library program is one. We have, in fact, at our municipal level, Chief Beazley is very interested in preventive programs and he's very involved with some of the high crime areas in HRM, attempting to redirect youth, and his officers are involved in meeting with youth and working with youth in recreational activities such as basketball, that kind of thing.

So we see that the police recognize the need for prevention, and they can catch them, but they need that prevention at the front end. They are very willing to work with the department and with other stakeholders and community leaders. So we see them involved to a very large extent in the various programs.

MR. MACMASTER: I have a sense that there's a lot of crime that happens in the province that never makes it to a courtroom because the evidence isn't there or can't be proven, so it never advances, but giving our law enforcement officers another tool that they can work with, they may be even more effective at helping young people in our province if they're able to. If they can't move a case towards the court system, maybe they can move it towards another direction, which may be like the Lighthouses Program or that type of work. So I think it's good that you're offering that to them.

MS. TYSON: They're very good role models as well and I know that a few years ago it was difficult for them to go into Uniacke Square because it was a very dangerous place but now they are engaging with the youth in activities right in the community, for example, and they're in the schools all over the province.

MR. MACMASTER: And maybe people are starting to see them as not just enforcers of the law but also people who might be able to help them with something other than the hard hand of the law, you know.

MS. TYSON: They're great partners.

MR. MACMASTER: Yes, that's great. Have you considered rewarding applicants to the program that have a component in their projects to take those, the youth who are involved, who may have been committing crimes in the past or at risk to commit crimes, and try to engage them in helping other youth they see who might be living under the same conditions as they are, or that may be in situations that might lead to a life of crime?

MS. TYSON: Yes, and I'm going to ask Ms. Gorham to address that question.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Ms. Gorham.

MS. GORHAM: Many of the Lighthouses partners use that kind of youth leadership model where they create leadership roles for participating youth and a good example is the Split Rock Learning Centre, in Yarmouth, that works with sort of a core group of youth who have graduated from being simply participants to leading particular initiatives, such as the jobs crew I mentioned earlier.

LOVE is another good example where, for example, last month, their actual young people led the training experience for our Lighthouses partners and co-facilitated the delivery of a day and a half of training. These were young teenagers and it was very impressive to watch them play that role, helping adults learn more about working with high

risk youth and at the end of the session they talked about what a powerful experience that was for them to be the teachers. So we see that kind of recognition of creating leadership models throughout the Lighthouses Programs and I think they're doing a very good job with that. I'm not sure if that answered your question or not.

MR. MACMASTER: That does help. I just have one last question. There are people in this province who take advantage of young people, especially if they're maybe poor or marginalized. Has there ever been any consideration under this program or other programs of the department to try to work with the young people that you're working with to try to identify who those people are and maybe find ways to limit their destructive impact on the young people of our province?

MS. GORHAM: I don't know whether that has come forward as a feature of the activities of the Lighthouses programs because they're working to essentially build the resilience of young people but I know that they talk about, how do you resist peer pressure or high-risk situations. It's an interesting question and my understanding would be that hasn't been brought forward as a specific program activity of self-protection.

The one that is just starting up in the South Shore, the Name the Shame project is an interesting one. The youth in the SchoolsPlus program there at - I think it's called - Forest Heights Secondary School, identified that they want to have an impact on sexual harassment and disrespectful behaviour, particularly towards girls and how we work on this together. That's an interesting example of where the kids have come up with the program - with the support of the adults - that they'll be implementing there as a new Lighthouses partner around how do you build better respectful understanding among young people, about how to have respectful relationships.

That might be a good example of how we might also create opportunities for building that kind of resilience among young people, like how do you resist the temptations that are put your way by manipulative adults who want you to buy their drugs or move their drugs. It would be interesting to see whether that type of an approach might inform the other Lighthouses programs. To my knowledge now, there isn't that kind of specific approach being taken at this time by any of the Lighthouses partners.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you very much and I'll leave the question with you as an idea and something that you may consider.

MS. GORHAM: Yes, it's interesting.

MR. MACMASTER: Thank you, Madam Chairman.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We will turn to the NDP for the next 14 minutes. Mr. MacKinnon, please.

MR. CLARRIE MACKINNON: Madam Chairman, I'd like to begin by saying that I share a constituency boundary with the Minister of Justice and how enthusiastic and what a champion he has been for the program. I hear quite a bit about it from interactions with him. An area that has not been touched at all this morning is in relationship to mental health and crime. I know police departments are well aware of the program. What about mental health organizations? The connection here is quite significant.

MS. TYSON: I can certainly agree with you. There is a connection between mental health and crime. We see it in our adult institutions with a large number of people who appear to have mental health issues. We see it also in our youth institutions, with our youth. I don't know - and I'm going to turn the microphone over to my colleague - of any Lighthouses Program specifically directed at mental health or connected with mental health.

MS. GORHAM: The Lighthouses programs that we are sponsoring now are not specifically connected with any mental health organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association, but they indicated in their reports that they partner well with those programs. Because they are offering fairly low level recreation-oriented gathering opportunities- they're not case workers per se- but they have the ability, because they're in relationships with these young people, to offer support and maybe referrals to focused assistance.

One good example is the Parents PEACE Program run by the EPIC charity in Sydney that's an after school non-traditional literacy and numeracy support program. They work very closely with the social worker at the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board so that if they identified that some of the young people who are referred for tutoring assistance need a much deeper level of support, they are able to make that referral and the social worker works very closely with them.

I think similarly, looking at the program, Leave Out Violence Everywhere, many of the young people involved in that program are facing significant personal challenges, including mental health challenges, and they work closely with the local mental health service providers to ensure that their young charges are connected to the health that they need, but it's more around partnership and referral than a specific mental health approach.

The program in Truro, the Northern AIDS Connection program, is an interesting one where they're teaching more safety around personal sexual health. In their report, they indicated that many of the young people that got involved in their project exhibited a lot of concerns around their mental health so they formed a partnership with the local Canadian Mental Health Association that's resulting in them perhaps thinking about organizing a new support program and looking for funding from Justice Canada.

That new idea emerged from the partnership between the Lighthouses and their partner to maybe come up with some new approaches. I think the innovation is happening

at a community level but we don't have one Lighthouses partner that's working on mental health issues at the moment.

MR. MACKINNON: Often the member for Inverness and I are on the same wavelength in some areas. One, of course, is in relation to First Nations. We have 13 First Nations in the province and I am delighted to see there was a program on the Chapel Island First Nation. I hope that other First Nations will get involved.

Certainly, the largest First Nation, Eskasoni, some time back had some severe youth problems in relation to suicide and the First Nation communities are very connected. I was feeling that within my First Nation of Pictou Landing, which I interact with very closely, I hope there will be more programs and more encouragement of First Nations to get involved. Are there other First Nations showing interest?

MS. GORHAM: This year we didn't receive any additional submissions from First Nations organizations for the Lighthouses but we did receive some submissions for our one time grants program from First Nations initiatives. Those are being finalized in the next couple of days. We have a wonderful Aboriginal organization here, the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, which is working on a project venture, a support program funded through the National Crime Prevention Centre for three years. We worked closely with the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network to assist them to secure that funding.

Their project venture is a program out of the Navajo First Nation that has been shown to have a really significant impact on moving First Nations young people away from alcohol abuse and that's its particular focus. There are leading project venture initiatives in Pictou Landing, Indian Brook, Eskasoni and Wagmatcook. I think those are the First Nations where there are leading project venture initiatives so we're excited to see the outcomes of their work. That's not through the Lighthouses but the Crime Prevention Unit supported their application for that funding and we're excited to see what they accomplish with that.

MR. MACKINNON: I know with the amount of funding you can't be all things to all people. Certainly for the program, I would think it might be helpful in the future to look at the mental health aspect. Crime prevention is really important but the mental health end of things, anti-bullying and suicide prevention and what have you are so important in the areas of youth.

I'm going to turn the rest of the time over to the member for Halifax Chebucto. Thank you very much for your input.

MR. HOWARD EPSTEIN: Thank you. I had a number of short questions I wanted to pursue. Didn't I hear you at the beginning, deputy minister, say something about a three-year commitment, did I mishear? What was that about three years? Does the department make a three-year commitment to each of the agencies or did I just mishear that entirely?

MS. TYSON: The expectation is that the funding will continue year over year, provided the agency is achieving its objectives. We monitor or measure the objectives through their self-reporting. At the end of this next year we will be adding or monitoring through site visits and also through an audit process, so the 15 have met their objectives, in our view, and their funding will be renewed, so unless there is a decision down the road to reduce or eliminate that funding, that funding is expected to continue.

MR. EPSTEIN: I didn't notice, was there money for the continuation of the project in the budget yesterday?

MS. TYSON: Yes, your government's commitment was \$240,000 for Lighthouses programs, based on the Manitoba model. The five that have been announced this week will complete that \$240,000 commitment.

MR. EPSTEIN: Is any of this money flow-through money from the federal government, or is this purely a provincial initiative?

MS. TYSON: This initiative is a provincial initiative.

MR. EPSTEIN: Prior to 2009, was there anything comparable to this in place in Nova Scotia?

MS. TYSON: Yes, there was a pilot of five programs, it ended with four programs. There was a pilot, it was similar to the Lighthouses Program but it was a pilot. The funding was one year with uncertainty as to whether that funding would continue. It was not as formalized as the current Lighthouses projects.

That particular program was reconfigured to fit the Lighthouse Program, so the four programs that originally started are now Lighthouse programs, so they have been continued.

MR. EPSTEIN: Did that pilot project have a name or not?

MS. TYSON: It did have a name.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Ms. Gorham.

MS. GORHAM: It was called the Prevention Together Program and it was modelled on the Manitoba Lighthouses Program.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, I guess that's the next thing I wondered about. Is Lighthouse a term that is used in Manitoba?

MS. TYSON: Yes.

MR. EPSTEIN: Not too many lighthouses in Manitoba, why . . .

MS. TYSON: No, it's an unusual term for Manitoba.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay, that will just be a puzzle, I guess.

MS. TYSON: The program in Manitoba was very successful, it is very successful and it has been in operation longer and it caught the attention of members of this government. It was a commitment to form a program of 20 \$12,000 grants, which has, as I indicated earlier, with the five that have just been announced, that commitment has been met.

MR. EPSTEIN: I actually had some questions about the Manitoba program. Do you happen to know many years the Manitoba program has been in existence?

MS. TYSON: I don't but my colleague may.

MS. GORHAM: It's my understanding that it has been on the go for approximately eight years but I would have to double-check that for you and get back to you with that.

MR. EPSTEIN: Okay. I'm wondering, given what we're dealing with, that's still a relatively short period of time. I'm wondering if there are any longitudinal studies that support the assertion that it has been successful in Manitoba? Why do you feel that it is successful? Can you just explain why that is?

MS. GORHAM: There are 52 of these partnerships in Manitoba and given the population demographics in Manitoba, many of them are in First Nations communities. They are seeing that as a very important investment in redirecting those vulnerable young people, so it has a slightly different focus in Manitoba in that it is targeted in a particular way.

The outcomes they are seeing are very similar to ours, reports of stronger community engagement, more involvement between elders and youth, outcomes of experiences of leadership for young people who wouldn't have those kinds of experiences, very similar to our preliminary year-end outcomes. I don't know whether they've done a longitudinal study to see if they are able to identify this as having been a feature that they can tie directly to changes in youth crime patterns, but I can investigate that and get back to the committee with that information.

MR. EPSTEIN: That would be very useful. I don't discount what you say. It seems to me that it's an important measure of success to have reports back from those who oversee the programs, identifying what look like changes in people's lives. At the same time, it's useful to supplement that with some objective criteria, whether that means crime statistics or whether it means longitudinal studies of individual lives.

MS. GORHAM: I'll do some follow-up with my colleagues in Manitoba and if there is anything that they have created, I'll ask for it and forward it on to the committee.

MR. EPSTEIN: It seems that it's likely, of course, way too early to have statistical information in Nova Scotia but this will, I take it, at some point be reflected in crime statistics, that part of your analysis will be to look at crime stats at some point in the future and see if any link can be made to this program. Is that right?

MS. TYSON: We would very much like to be able to do that and we are looking at how we might do that now. Of course, the challenge is that it is difficult to follow a person and there are privacy issues, which we need to figure out how to - with consent of the individual, of course, we can do that, but without consent we would have to determine how we might track that information.

MR. EPSTEIN: Has the Lighthouses Program been taken up in any other provinces?

MS. TYSON: Not to my knowledge, no.

MR. EPSTEIN: So it's Manitoba and Nova Scotia that are doing this. Can I just ask you about the regional allocation of grants that you mentioned before? I understand, of course, the idea of regional allocation and it makes a lot of sense, but I'm wondering if there is a link at all to population numbers or is there a link to something else? For example, typically, Cape Breton as a whole is about 15 per cent or more of our provincial population, would you try and have 15 per cent of the dollars go there? Is that the kind of regional allocation that you mean?

MS. GORHAM: I don't think we were, perhaps, as scientific as that. As the program grew incrementally, we worked with the submissions that were received and so identified, for example, this year where we only have five, we made sure they went to five regions. Last year, where 10 were dispersed, the goal was to attempt to disperse two to each region and so it was a very simple arithmetic process. I think that the outcome has reflected the demographics where we're seeing the larger number clustered in the northern and central region where our population is larger.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Your time has elapsed now. Thank you very much, Mr. Epstein. With that, our rounds of questioning have completed and there is a little bit of time allocated for any closing statement or issue that you'd like to raise. Ms. Tyson.

MS. TYSON: I would just like to thank the committee again for the opportunity to come here today and talk about this program, which Minister Landry and myself and department staff think is a very positive program, one of our most positive programs that we've seen. It is extraordinary results so far. Since it is new we'll be monitoring it and there

may be areas where we can improve or alter the program as we find out more information about it, but thank you again.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much and I think we're all very impressed with the first year of operation on this and, again, there may be a strong rationale to expand it to more programs in the future, but as you say, you want it evidence-based and so I do thank you.

There is no committee business today for our committee so we're just drawing your attention to the fact that there is no meeting next week. We will be meeting April 20th and the subject then is high-speed internet and broadband and it will be the Department of Economic and Rural Development and Tourism. With that, could I have a motion to adjourn.

MR. EPSTEIN: So moved.

MADAM CHAIRMAN: We are adjourned.

[The meeting adjourned at 10:54 a.m.]