



## **Community Safety Awards 2011**

### **Winner profile: Mohamud Hassan**

#### **City of Ottawa Community Safety Leader Award**

Ask Mohamud Hassan what motivates him, and he'll tell you it's the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of young people and families. Through his work with the City of Ottawa, Mohamud strives to give people the support and tools they need to be successful.

Six years ago, Mohamud was tasked with finding solutions to the challenges faced by Somali youth. A Somali immigrant himself, Mohamud understood them. He felt the key to their success was education, adapting to their new home and making the choice to invest in themselves.

He worked with 75 Somali youth and their families, identifying barriers and running workshops to overcome them. The Somali Youth Initiative was so successful that it was expanded to encompass all visible minorities and eventually all youth. Today, the Youth Initiative serves 200 young people in Ottawa in Ottawa each year. Demand is even higher. As his supervisor, Bernadette Bonk says, "His endless determination to reach these youth and coach them into real opportunities in their communities is impressive."

Today, as a Community Liaison Officer, Mohamud connects hundreds of youth and families living in poverty, new to Canada, and facing barriers to employment, education and training, to the services that can help them.

As part of the City's Service Excellence vision to provide excellent customer service, Mohamud helped establish the innovative one stop service "Community Hub" at the City's Social Service Centre South Office. The Hub gives people easy access to immigration, employment, budgeting and taxation services all under one roof. The approach helps ensure that people don't fall through the cracks. The community hub is so successful that another one is underway at the Central office.

Mohamud says he's overwhelmed with the recognition. He never stopped to think that what he was doing was preventing crime. Still, he says, "If you give your heart and passion to helping others, you teach them to do the same."

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