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### **Community Safety Award Winners Preventing Crime, One Youth at a Time**

(Ottawa)—When a community steps up to help raise a child, good things happen. That is the story behind two of Ottawa's Community Safety Award winners, honoured this week at Ottawa City Hall: Ottawa Police Cst. Mahamud Elmi and the Ottawa Community Youth Diversion Program.

Enforcement Professional Award winner Cst. Elmi works closely with at-risk students at four Ottawa schools to help them overcome obstacles and lead positive lives. He knows that as a police officer, he has the power to grab people's attention. He uses that power to dispel myths about the police and teach young people about the value of paying it forward.

He believes in being a responsible member of his community, both locally and globally. He organizes friendly police-student basketball games and charity events to raise money to build a school in Somalia. Those who know him well say Cst. Elmi is a mentor and role model. As for what rewards him, Constable Elmi says it's all about watching the students succeed. After all, he's been there and he knows the difference that one person can make.

The Ottawa Community Youth Diversion Program, winner of the Community Safety Program Award, is designed to keep young people, aged 12 to 17, out of the judicial system by treating them in the community. This Boys and Girls Club of Ottawa program receives referrals from the police and Crown of youth in conflict with the law. Designed for young people who are at a moderate to high risk of reoffending, the program holds young people accountable for their actions and gives them the support they need to overcome the barriers to their success.

The result? It helps decrease crime in our communities. For successful participants, it means a second chance. No charges are laid, or if they have been previously charged, the charges are withdrawn. For the small team of four that works with these youth, they say community partnerships are crucial to helping them change lives, one young person at a time.

Like all Community Safety Award winners being profiled during Crime Prevention Week 2011, Cst. Mahamud Elmi and the Ottawa Community Youth Diversion Program work hard to make Ottawa a better, safer place to live.

For more information about Crime Prevention Ottawa, please visit [www.CrimePreventionOttawa.ca](http://www.CrimePreventionOttawa.ca).

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