

# Always more to do, but if 2000 any indication, we can make a difference

*Exciting programs, innovative partnerships and a busy toddler have made an eventful year for MPI Road Safety Manager*

I was glancing at my calendar the other day, trying to figure out if my mother-in-law's impending visit coincided in any way with a scheduled conference in Ottawa I absolutely had to attend—ahem—when I discovered congratulations were in order.

The Allen family has been living in Winnipeg for just over one year.

Wow. I guess time really flies when you're shoveling snow...into April, no less!! What is up with that??

But seriously, folks, it did give me a chance to look back on everything I've witnessed, all the highlights (both personal and professional) from Year One of the new millennium.

There's the basic stuff, like finally figuring out who delivers the best pizza and watching my son progress from crawling to walking to running with blinding and remarkably unsteady speed.

But, I imagine you're reading this because you're more interested in road safety than in my parenting woes, so I'll



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oblige you with a review of MPI's Year 2000 annual report on road safety.

## **Report on road safety**

I'm proud to say that MPI sponsored both the annual Operation Red Nose campaign (where volunteers ensure other community members get home safely during the winter holiday season) and Snoman's Sled Smart Snowmobile Safety School program. In 2000, the Sled Smart team visited 92 schools, delivering 134 presentations to 6,356 students across Manitoba. This program is so effective, in fact, that organizations in Ontario and Alberta are now following our lead.

And, we weren't just out and about in parka weather. Our summer

students were busy at events across the province all spring and summer long, educating urban and rural audiences alike about the importance of adopting safe road safety and vehicle theft prevention practices.

Speaking of education, we also introduced a new component to MPI's High School Driver Education Program called *Driver's Edge—Cops as Co-pilots*. This extremely popular program allows selected Driver Education graduates to learn defensive driving and collision avoidance techniques through an intensive one-day workshop delivered by police officers in police cruisers!

From teens to toddlers...last year was exceptionally productive for our child safety seat program, which recorded 826 child car seat inspections across Manitoba. Additionally, we held more than 80 car seat clinics, training nearly 900 Manitoba firefighters (who, in turn, provide those free car seat checks I've talked about before.)

You could also find us in the workplace, either holding onsite winter driving or defensive driving workshops, or delivering the "Emotions in Motion" presentation which focuses on how stress and fatigue affect driving and road safety.

We tackled drinking drivers with the third annual *RoadWatch* enhanced enforcement campaign, and helped volunteer groups monitor speeding drivers in their own neighbourhoods with *Speed Watch*.

## **Auto theft field study**

And let's not forget about auto theft. We conducted a field study from mid-August to mid-September, educating drivers about the importance of using anti-theft devices. In this initiative, volunteers logged 722 hours and checked 16,461 vehicles. I can't say this often enough: thank you, volunteers. You are absolutely key in making real change on Manitoba's roadways.

We also we ran three high-profile

public awareness campaigns. Two supported our police partners in raising the perceived risk of apprehension for speeding or impaired driving (you may remember the "dancing glasses" commercial, or the one where a speeding "video game" driver turns into a real driver about to hit a real pedestrian). The third addressed the issue of fender benders.

It's a tremendous amount of work, and I'm very proud of all the internal, external and volunteer participants that made it all possible. Of course, there is always more to be done, more change to implement. But, if 2000 was any indication, we can make a difference, one step at a time.

That's it for this week. Until next week, be **RoadWise**.

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