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New YouthLink Interpretive Centre aims to help educate kids about crime

With the unlocking of a ceremonial handcuff ribbon, the newest city police weapon in its arsenal was unleashed Monday.

It's hoped the \$5 million YouthLink Interpretive Centre and its informative, hands-on exhibits will help steer kids away from crime.

The 26,000 sq.-ft. centre that opens to the public Friday at 5111 47 St. N.E. takes a cue from research proving the value of education, said Deputy Police Chief Trevor Daroux.

"A lot of the concerns aren't on the enforcement side, it's education," said Daroux.

"We know it makes a difference to the community."

From beneath a life-size replica of a HAWC helicopter, dignitaries lauded the years of effort invested in realizing the centre's vision.

Lieut.-Gov. Lois Mitchell noted her own connection to city police, nodding in the direction of a photo portrait of her grandfather



YouthLink Interpretive Centre

IMAGE 12 OF 18



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A replica of HAWCS helicopter is one of the many displays at the the official unveiling of the new Youth Link Police Interpretive Centre in NE Calgary, Alta. on Monday September 28, 2015. Stuart Dryden/Calgary Sun/Postmedia Network

Stuart Dryden/Calgary Sun

Thomas MacKie, who served as the force's fourth chief a century ago after emigrating from Scotland.

"Back then, I'm sure Chief MacKie dealt with a different set of challenges than the men and women do today," she said.

"I've always believed in the transformative value and power of education."

The centre's video-equipped and interactive galleries tackle a range of issues, from gangs to drugs, to cyber crime and bullying.

The evolution of the force's firearms, from tear gas launchers to automatic rifles is also chronicled by the weapons themselves.

"It's an environment where they're learning a lot but also having fun," said Deputy Chief Daroux, adding there's a definite serious side.

"It's an opportunity to speak to kids and talk to them about realities, and some of them are harsh realities."

Ideally, he said, "maybe one day some of those of those kids will actually join the Calgary Police Service."

The centre will cater mainly to school groups but is open to the public Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Those aged 17 and under are admitted free.

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