

South Calgary Youth Charged with Graffiti Vandalism 2010

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How You Can Take Action on Vandalism

Graffiti is the name for images or lettering scratched, scrawled, painted or marked in any manner on property.

Graffiti has existed since ancient times, with examples dating back to Ancient Greece and the Roman Empire. Modern graffiti can take many forms, from simple written words to elaborate wall paintings.

While some graffiti is a valuable art form, the graffiti that has lately been appearing around the West Springs Cougar Ridge area is merely vandalism. Defacing property without the property owner's consent is punishable by law. For that reason, the tags appearing around this area are considered "graffiti vandalism", rather than just "graffiti".

So how do we rid our neighbourhood of this scourge?

Some people have been contacting the several Residents Associations in our area for help, but these organizations cannot do anything about graffiti vandalism.

The only organization that can address this issue is the Calgary Police Service (CPS), with your help.

Another south Calgary neighbourhood has already benefited from residents who reported graffiti vandalism to the CPS. On February 11, 2010, the Calgary Police Service arrested and charged a local youth with more than 25 graffiti-related offences in south Calgary.

Since October 2009, several complaints had been filed with the CPS regarding spray painting, or tagging in the southeast communities of Queensland and Deer Run and the southwest community of Canyon Meadows.

On Feb. 3, 2010, the CPS Graffiti Unit, with assistance from District 8 officers, executed a search warrant at a home in Deer Run. Inside, officers found 23 cans of spray paint, 50 felt and paint pens, numerous sketch books and papers with the suspect's tag, and graffiti on the walls on the suspect's bedroom that matched the vandalism throughout the community.

The name of the suspect, a 16-year-old boy, cannot be released under provisions of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*.

The CPS Graffiti Vandalism Unit is responsible for gathering information on incidents of graffiti and creating a database of incidents and characteristics of the offenders.

Each graffiti vandal usually has a unique signature or symbol marking his or her work. The Graffiti Intelligence Officer takes pictures of graffiti and interviews offenders to develop profiles and reports that help in the investigation of other offences.

You can help police track this problem. If your property is targeted by a graffiti vandal, remember "Record, Report and Remove".

- **Record:** take pictures of the damage.
- **Report:** write the date, time and location on the back of the photo, sign it and drop it off at the nearest district office or email it to cpsgraffiti@calgarypolice.ca, or report it to the police at 403-266-1234. If the graffiti is on public property, such as playground equipment in our community parks or on utility boxes, please call 311. Please note that the fences surrounding the neighbourhoods are not public property – they belong to and are the responsibility of the adjacent homeowners.
- **Remove:** clean up the graffiti on your property as soon as you can. Visit the City of Calgary's graffiti site for removal tips. To help Calgarians keep their private property graffiti free, the City of Calgary is funding a cost-shared program, the Private Graffiti

Abatement Program (PGAP). To get help from PGAP, please contact Laura Shott at 403.268.1880 or email PGAP@calgary.ca.

Submitted by: Susan V., President, Cougar Ridge Residents Association