

York Regional Police begins naming names in impaired driving offences

Publishing names aims to make impaired driving socially unacceptable

By Brock Weir

It is a move the York Regional Police has been considering since the tragic death of five members of the Neville-Lake family at the hands of a drunk driver three years ago, now the YRP is taking action by naming the names of those charged with being impaired behind the wheel.

The final straw came after this weekend when 16 drivers were charged with 27 impaired-related criminal driving charges.

York Regional Police Chief Eric Jolliffe said it is the "next step" in trying to curb the "distressing trend."

It is clear that something has to change," said Chief Jolliffe. "Effective immediately, York Regional Police will name all of the drivers charged with impaired-related criminal driving offences, to further make impaired driving socially unacceptable and so that members of our community can assist with notifying police if these offenders choose to drive while under suspension. Innocent lives are put at risk every day by this irresponsible and criminal behaviour. We are not giving up."

The Police announced Monday that every Monday hereafter they will post the names of those charged with impaired-related driving offences online at www.yrp.ca. Among the first of the 16 drivers named under the new police policy is one resident of Aurora, Jonathan Natividad Duguay, 23, who faces a charge of Impaired Driving - Drug.

The charges have not been proven in court.

Another driver highlighted by the YRP is 32-year-old Toronto resident Alexander Kostenberg who faces charges of Impaired Driving and Over 80. He was nabbed by police in Richmond Hill on Friday night around 10 p.m. when Police responded to a report of a suspicious vehicle blocking a driveway for over an hour. Police say the driver began moving the vehicle as officers arrived before being stopped by the Police.

"Officers spoke with the driver who smelled of alcohol and a half-full bottle of vodka was observed in the centre console," say Police. "The driver was placed under arrest and taken to #2 District Headquarters for a breath test where he blew four times the legal limit.

"So far this year, York Regional Police have laid more than 1,400 charges for impaired driving offences and the number of drivers choosing to drive while impaired is showing no signs of decreasing. Sadly, five people have lost their lives this year in collisions where drug or alcohol were contributing factors. The legal consequences of an impaired driving charge can include roadside vehicle impoundment and automatic driver's license suspension as well as further consequences imposed by the courts, including longer license suspensions, large fines or, in some cases, jail time."