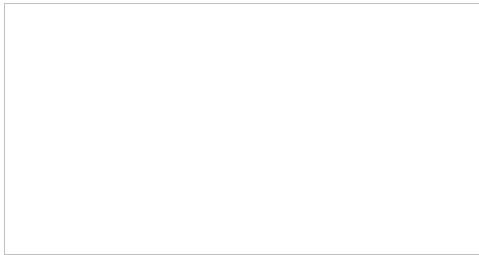


From: [Cecilia D](#)
To: provost@mcmaster.ca; provost1@mcmaster.ca; [City Information](#); [Office of the Mayor](#); info@hamiltonpolice.on.ca; [Stevenson, Kirsten](#); [Wilson, Maureen](#)
Subject: Re: PREPARE FOR MCMASTER FALL READING WEEK AHEAD
Date: Saturday, October 16, 2021 5:09:27 PM

FYI: <https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/kingston-police-officer-injured-during-volatile-homecoming-gathering/ar-AAPBQov?ocid=mailsignout&li=AAgNb9>



Kingston police officer injured during 'volatile' homecoming gathering

KINGSTON, Ont. — Kingston Police say an officer has been taken to hospital after projectiles were thrown at police during Queen's University's unofficial homecoming weekend. Community programs ...

www.msn.com

Hello again to everyone here.

While I am very thankful that this university reading week came and went without incident here in our particular neighbourhood, this news article out of Kingston certainly serves as a very sobering reminder that this is not an issue that will go away if we choose to ignore it.

Thank you to Ms. Wilson, our city councillor, Ms. Stevenson with the Hamilton PD, and the City of Hamilton mayor's office for all taking the time to reply to my original emails concerning what happened in our neighbourhood just two weeks ago. I trust that you are all working diligently to come together in order to find some solid solutions to these types of issues affecting our communities.

I really hope all of our local universities will take a proactive approach (not necessarily an aggressive one) and will seriously consider hosting these events in future for their students (whose parents financially support their institutions), and that these universities do not allow these dangerously unsanctioned events to continue in their neighbouring communities, by merely hoping it won't be as bad "next time".

Do not feel obliged to respond to this particular email. I just thought it appropriate to update everyone here on what is happening right now in Kingston, as it is very much related to what happened here two weeks ago. In my opinion, mayors and chiefs of police also need to ensure that they do not send our officers into harm's way, especially when we know that with careful planning and intelligent assessments these escalations can certainly be avoided in future.

This is going to require a real 'team effort': University + Municipality + Local (and neighbouring) Police forces. I really do hope that this officer in Kingston is going to be okay.

I also hope that this message finds you all well. Thank you again, for your time.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Di Benedetto

"A word fitly spoken has the potential to bring down an entire empire. Likewise, thoughtful and concise language can form the foundation to a new and more compassionate society."

"Une parole bien exprimée a le potentiel de faire tomber un empire complètement. De même, un langage réfléchi et concis peut constituer le fondation d'une société nouvelle et plus compatissante."

From: Cecilia D

Sent: October 3, 2021 7:08 PM

To: provost@mcmaster.ca <provost@mcmaster.ca>; provost1@mcmaster.ca <provost1@mcmaster.ca>; askCITY@hamilton.ca <askCITY@hamilton.ca>; mayor@hamilton.ca <mayor@hamilton.ca>; info@hamiltonpolice.on.ca <info@hamiltonpolice.on.ca>; Kirsten.stevenson@hamilton.ca <Kirsten.stevenson@hamilton.ca>

Subject: PREPARE FOR MCMASTER FALL READING WEEK AHEAD

Sunday, October 03, 2021

ATTENTION: McMaster University, City of Hamilton, Hamilton Police Services

RE: Disturbing Trend of Destructive University Gatherings

To all whom this concerns,

I hope this letter finds you all well.

First of all, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to the *Hamilton Police Services* for their diligent work from yesterday morning into this morning here in our neighbourhood. I was

deeply disturbed to hear that at least one officer was injured in yesterday's chaos and police horses were being abused by these crowds. I hope that officer is going to be okay. I'm sure that I don't need to drill the point home that this is absolutely unacceptable and it needs to be stopped right now.

I am a resident of Gary Avenue in Hamilton, Ontario (adjacent to yesterday's 'ground zero'). I also happen to be finishing a mature degree here at McMaster University. I am a full time single mother to a child with quite moderate special needs and yesterday and throughout the night we felt terrorized in our own home. As you know, I am not the only one who went through the madness that descended upon our neighbourhood. Although I am born and raised in Hamilton, we are fairly new residents to this particular neighbourhood. It hasn't been a year yet and I had no idea that this was coming yesterday, but apparently you all did.

It is my understanding that this happens every single year here at least once a year (if not more), for approximately the last five years (with the exception of 2020 due to the lockdowns). This is only going to get worse each time. People are clearly coming from out of town for this, just to do damage and destruction to property.

Now, rather than respond with a heavy hand and try to ban this (which I think is impossible) I think it is time that the University and the City perhaps hammer out a plan to provide the venue for these "celebrations" and that you inform the student body that these impromptu neighbourhood "events" will no longer be tolerated and will be shut down immediately as soon as they begin. Then you can perhaps offer them a hosted event. And yes, it will likely have to be held on campus when the buildings are all shut. Perhaps the back portion of campus near Cootes Drive, but it can't be held too far from the university. I think otherwise, if you just try to shut the celebrations down all together, we the residents here and any responding officers to these calls will end up bearing the brunt of the hostility that such a tactic is sure to create.

I fear that as early as this coming Friday (October 8th) and into the following week, we may see another wave of this madness here. As the University knows, it will be the Thanksgiving long weekend that leads into the University's Fall Reading Week and I already heard from a neighbour that she has heard another such event is coming here soon. So that is why I am thinking it's set for sometime within that Reading Week time-frame.

Please prepare for this.

This week, I would like to see an email blast from the University to all students condemning what took place. That is perhaps when I would suggest mentioning that you are going to work with the City in providing a proper venue with port-a-potties, etc. and with your own campus security to supplement the police presence.

We can't have the police force overwhelmed like that ever again. I was alarmed at what was happening, as I am sure the officers on scene were. I cannot tell you how terrifying it was every time patrol cars had to leave our street to go deal with another section and then we had to brace ourselves for the thousands of people to be descending onto our street again (and through our backyards). At this point, I knew the police were overwhelmed. Some of the stories I heard from some of the senior residents in the area make me so angry - that anyone could think of terrorizing anyone in their homes, but least of which senior citizens. Disgusting.

That is why I don't believe we are dealing with just authentic McMaster students or even Hamiltonians, necessarily.

Now, seeing as I am literally in the "thick of it" logistically here at our house, I can certainly make the call if I start to see gatherings taking place around here and give the Hamilton PD a heads-up that something might be brewing, but I wouldn't rely solely on that notice. I can't guarantee that I will be home at those exact dates and times that something might start up here.

So, again, please prepare. Please make plans. Please put out communications far and wide. Please do not ever let this escalate to these levels here ever again. Not just for our own safety here, but the safety of any responding officers. They do not deserve to be put in harm's way like that and it should never happen again.

Please do not think this is going away anytime soon. Apparently, this is a trend happening among this age group. They are organizing these things on social media and going city to city doing this. Please do everything in your means to get on top of this so that there is no next time.

As I write this, a fire truck just drove through Dalewood Avenue with its sirens on. I hope to God everyone is okay.

Again, thank you to the Hamilton Police Department for tackling this impossible situation yesterday and into today. You are true heroes. From the bottom of my heart and on behalf of my son who was deeply disturbed by what was going on, thank you for getting organized and finding a way where there wasn't a way.

One last thought to the City and to the University – perhaps it is time to take a good hard look at all these Covid measures and perhaps start rethinking the Province's and Ottawa's ideas of how to handle this. We are creating a situation of mass hysteria and of deep depression and despair (especially with these latest "Passport" measures that has completely polarized society and made many more people unemployed – even during this past week).

What happened here yesterday is not an isolated incident. I believe it is a manifestation of what happens when you try to control a situation en masse with measures that are far too extreme. People are going to get to the point where they feel they have nothing left to lose so they'll become destructive and suicidal, and they will no longer care about anyone or anything – and that is a situation no one wants. It will not end well for any of us – no matter where you sit on the big debate about these measures.

Please take the points I proposed in this letter into serious consideration and contemplation. We need to work together and we need to start putting out messages of hope and not despair. We need to start being proactive rather than reactive. Then you will see a different manifestation - a much better and productive one. At least try it. The way we are going about this now is disastrous, to say the least. And the disaster is literally arriving at our front doorsteps now.

Let's work together. This is not impossible with careful planning, coordination and cooperation and more positive messaging – from governments, health organizations, media,

law enforcement and educational institutions.

I just recently found out about a Christian group that has been operating within the community known as Lift Church. Some of their members live in this community. It might not be a bad idea to get them involved in these conversations too. These young people need community events for their own sanity and morale. We cannot ignore that. But, we can try to make those events positive and way more reasonably controlled than these impromptu neighbourhood disasters.

I look forward to seeing happier and more peaceful Hamilton and McMaster communities in the days and weeks to follow.

Thank you very much for your time and attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Cecilia Di Benedetto
Hamilton, Ontario