







Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program

VS Quarterly Newsletter

October 2021: Vol 3/ Quarter 3, 2021-2022

Who We Are

The Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program is comprised of the Program Manager; Dana Overton, and two Victim Services Program Support Coordinators, Tara Skeoch and Amy Elhomsi. Amy's temporary position has been extended until the end of December 2021. The Federal Public Service has posted the Victim Services Support Coordinator position and we hope to welcome the successful incumbent to our team soon. In addition, our Program still has the pleasure of receiving assistance from Connie Genert who primarily works with the Victims of Crime Assistance Program.

Dana Overton, office: 780-412-5426

work cellular: 587-357-9297 dana.overton@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Tara Skeoch, office: 780-412-5383 temporary work cellular: 587-888-6015

tara.skeoch@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Amy Elhomsi

amy.elhomsi@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Please note that Dana has discontinued using her personal cellular number for business and can only be reached at the above noted telephone numbers. We ask that you update your contact information accordingly.

Our Role

Our role is to provide support to RCMP-based Victim Services Units in the Province, working closely with our partner, Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victim Services Program. Together we provide services to Albertans in accordance with the Canadian Victim Bill of Rights and the Alberta Victims of Crime and Public Safety Act. The RCMP Victim Services Program is part of the Community/Indigenous Policing & Recruiting Section, under the command of, and reporting

directly to the Acting Officer in Charge (OIC) of Community/Indigenous Policing & Recruiting, Insp. Kim MUELLER.

If you have any inquiries, please contact the Alberta Victim Services Program Manager, to address any questions, concerns, or comments you may have.



(Photo credit: RCMP "K" Division)





VS Quarterly Newsletter

Mueller Message from Inspector Kim

Acting Officer in Charge of Community/Indigenous Policing & Recruiting

Moving together in Reconciliation:

With the recent discoveries of more innocents at the sites of Residential schools across the country, we acknowledge the grief throughout the First Nations. Metis and Inuit communities across Canada.

Residential schools were an extensive school system set up by the Canadian government and administered by churches with the objective of assimilating Indigenous children into Euro-Canadian and Christian ways of mainstream Canadian society. The residential school system began operating in the 1880s and the last school closed in Saskatchewan in 1996. Thousands of children were forcibly separated from their families for extended periods of time (many from age 5 to 18) and forbidden from practicing or acknowledging their Indigenous heritage, culture or even speak their own languages. Children were severely punished if any of these strict rules were broken. Residential school survivors have shared stories of horrendous physical, sexual, emotional, and psychological abuse at the hands of residential school staff.

These schools severed ties between children, their families and their communities contributing to a generations of loss of language, culture and belonging. Many students grew up without experiencing a nurturing loving family life, in turn many survivors did not have the knowledge and skills to raise their own families/children. The devastating effects of the residential schools are far-reaching and continue to have a significant impact on Indigenous communities in Canada today.

Understanding this history and trauma is an important step for healing and moving forward in Reconciliation. We believe that Reconciliation will be our pathway to mutual respect, cooperation and partnership. Building on this foundation we commit to moving forward to better serve Indigenous

communities. We acknowledge our shared past and the role we, the RCMP, played in these schools. Earning the trust and confidence of Indigenous Communities in Alberta remains a top priority for the RCMP in "K" Division. The first step is always to hear the voices of the communities we serve. Through open communication we can ensure community needs and community expectations are being met. Serving as the communities desire us to serve will ensure relationships are strengthened, where they exist, and new relationships built where they do not. It is through this community led approach that we will strive to earn the trust and confidence of the First Nations, Metis and Inuit people.

Together serving Indigenous communities it is imperative that we listen to Survivors, victims, their families, communities and others affected by the residential school system. Taking this type of trauma-informed approach to helping and working with Indigenous victims will support them to realize a path for healing and understanding.

Working with Treaty Six, Seven and Eight, The Metis Nation of Alberta. The Metis Settlement General Council and the Inuit Cultural Society to explore new ways of working together and share ideas around moving forward together in reconciliation, have developed a strategy as our pathway to Reconciliation. The strategy is built on four pillars which include:

- #1 Work with community partners to ensure culturally sensitive supports are in place for victims, witnesses, offenders and police officers.
- #2 Enhance awareness and education opportunities to support Reconciliation.
- #3 Increase the representation of Indigenous people in RCMP "K" Division.
- #4 Increase efforts focused on Indigenous Community Engagement





October 2021: Vol 3/ Quarter 3, 2021-2022 VS Quarterly Newsletter

This is a journey that we humbly ask our community partners such as Victim Services Units and Indigenous communities to take with us. This strategy/approach to Reconciliation will be reviewed quarterly as we go forward in continued consultation with Indigenous and community partners. This approach will be adjusted as needed to ensure constant improvement, or to address emerging concerns as we move forward together in trust and good faith.

Should you have any further questions or would like to learn more, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Alberta RCMP Indigenous Policing Section at 780-412-5631 or by email: RCMP.KAboriginalPolicing-

KPolicedesAutochtones.GRC@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

You may be aware that the Government of Canada (GoC) recently passed legislation to make September 30th a federal statutory holiday called the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The GoC is committed to reconciliation and ensuring that the tragic history and ongoing legacy of residential schools is never forgotten.

Please take the time on this new National holiday to reflect on all things past and in the hopes of a promising future for all Canadians. As Victim Services personnel usually working on the front line, you may come across a client experiencing pain or distress as a result of their Residential school experience so it is important that you understand the circumstances and the impact these tragic events have had on our Indigenous people and the nation as a whole. We would also like to remind you to take care of yourselves as well, and if you, a client, or someone you know is experiencing pain or distress as a result of a Residential School experience, the Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line is available 24-hours a day at 1-866-925-4419.



(Photo credit: Canadahistory.ca)



(Photo credit: OrangeShirtDay.org)

Background of Orange Shirt Day

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation occurs on what is known as Orange Shirt Day, the day of remembrance marked in Canada. Orange Shirt Day has always occurred on September 30th as this falls during the time of year when Indigenous children were taken away to residential schools. Orange Shirt Day was started in Williams Lake, British Columbia in 2013 by a woman named Phyllis Webstad and has since spread throughout Canada. Phyllis is known as a Northern Secwepemc author from the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation, and the creator of Orange Shirt Day.

Why an Orange Shirt? Phyllis' grandmother allowed Phyllis to choose a brand new shirt for her first day of school. She chose an orange shirt for this special occasion, but in turn she was stripped of her clothing when she got to school, forced to wear a homogenous uniform, and her brand new orange shirt was never returned. To her, the color orange represented her experiences at the residential school, and how she felt that her





VS Quarterly Newsletter

feelings didn't matter. The message that Phyllis wants to pass along is that Every Child Matters, and she wants to educate people about residential schools, as well as to fight racism and bullying.

According to Lloydminster Public School Board, Every Child Matters loosely "translates to Kihci-ita-kis-iw in Cree, which means All Living Things Matter. As part of First Nations culture, childhood is the foundation of our journey through life. Building a strong foundation is vital to the development of the person they will become. The translation of All Living Things Matter honours the Cree holistic value that everything in life is sacred."

Every Child Matters: Reconciliation through Education is a valuable resource that can be found online at canadianhistory.ca through the following link:

https://www.canadashistory.ca/getmedia/577a962b-efe4-407d-8592-6240945d6658/EveryChildMattersENDigital.pdf.aspx

Quarterly Reporting

Our first Quarterly Report was due July 20, 2021 and we thank you all for getting those completed and returned to our Program as required. The second Quarterly Report will be due **October 20, 2021.** A reminder was sent from our Program at the end of August regarding the Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program Quarterly Report form, which contains two minor additions.

Volunteer Hours - This information will help us showcase the volunteer hours dedicated to Victim Services within the Province to inform senior management. This information can be used for a variety of reasons particularly to highlight the importance of volunteers, and the services that are being provided to victims. Volunteer hours also include on-call hours, as these are hours that a volunteer is able to assist on a moment's notice, as required.

Referrals from Crown – This will assist in identifying gaps in referrals so we can serve victims earlier and in a more meaningful way.

We do not anticipate any further changes and suggest this form be saved to your desktops for completion at the end of each Quarter. The new version of our RCMP Alberta VS Quarterly Report Form is available on our InfoWeb page. Do not hesitate to reach out to our Program if you require any assistance or have any questions.

PROS Compliance

Our PROS Victim Services statistic reports that come out each month were generated from "K" Divisions Strategic Analysis and Research Unit (SARU) and have now shifted ownership to our program. Staff within our program have been provided with the training necessary to ensure these monthly reports contain outstanding occurrence numbers that require PROS victim scoring. Moving forward, all monthly PROS reports will include all occurrences per Detachment that do not have a victim score attached, providing Detachments the opportunity to amend the occurrences which require attention.

The Victim Services PROS stats reports will continue to be completed on a monthly basis and disseminated to Detachment Commanders while Quarterly Reports will be disseminated to District Officers. Detachments often look forward to these reports to ensure compliance rates rise and referrals are being documented on PROS as required. This is another tool developed to assist in increasing compliance rates.

Form KD5151 – Encryption

We are pleased with the feedback we are receiving from your units about the level of security compliance as it pertains to the KD5151 and encryption requirements. All electronically submitted KD5151's are to be encrypted, and all hard copy KD5151's are to be submitted in a sealed envelope labeled Protected 'B' to be opened only by VSU. Thank you for your





VS Quarterly Newsletter

continued diligence in ensuring these policies are followed and client information is protected.

Staffing Changes/Extended Leave - Reminder

We kindly request that you advise our office of any permanent or temporary changes in Staff within your Program pertaining to the Program Manager, Victim Services Liaison-member or the Detachment Commander. Changeover occurs often and in order to avoid delays in operations and information sharing, we need the most up to date information as soon as possible.

*Receiving the information from the Detachment level first hand allows us to update our records, without waiting for InfoWeb Updates to occur.

Reminder

All Victim Services paid personnel MUST use an RCMP Outlook account in order to receive electonic referrals and communication from our Program. (*LMOU Section 5.3 k.*)

Cellular Phones

Cellular phones are in short supply and high demand since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Outlook capable cellular phones are prioritized for Regular Members who are on front line operations. As per the Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU), IT provided cellular phones are for advocate safety only. Any additional phones such as those for administrative use, may be requested from your Victim Services Governing Body (Board).

Site Visits

Starting this fall, staff from the Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program were hoping to conduct site visits in-person. These site visits are an opportunity for us to learn more about your particular VSU, and for you to engage with our Program. *Due to the September 15th announcement declaring a State of Public Health Emergency for the Province of Alberta, these visits will be delayed.* Once a schedule is in place you will be advised by email of the potential site visit date.

Reminder: In-Kind Support

A reminder that the Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program offers in-kind support for your Victim Services fundraisers, providing one item per Victim Services Unit per fiscal year upon request. These must be used in a fundraising capacity. To request in-kind support please inform our office of your event.

File Retention - Best Practice

Many of you have had inquiries regarding File Retention. We want to clarify, this is not our direction to provide as file retention is determined by the Governing Body, otherwise known as your Local Victim Services Governance board.

Our Program would recommend best practice is to stay consistent with National Policy, which states the following:

Type and Retention Period:

Routine and client inquiries - 2 years

Program and office administration and coordination - 10 years

Services offered and quality assessments - 5 years

Records lists, finding aids, indices and registers of files - 10 years after files are destroyed

Training

JOIN

JOIN training is scheduled quarterly and the next JOIN Training will occur December 8, 2021. If you have paid personnel that require this training, please reach out to Tara Skeoch to advise. *Reminder, if you have Victim Services





October 2021: Vol 3/ Quarter 3, 2021-2022 VS Quarterly Newsletter

personnel that previously had access and are no longer with the Program, please advise our office so they can be removed from JOIN. If you have employees who will be away for an extended period of time, please let us know so we can put their access on hold. Users who allow their access to expire a 3rd time will be permanently restricted from JOIN access.

LMOU

The Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program is continuing to offer Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) training virtually. This training is beneficial and recommended for: all Victim Services paid personnel or volunteers, Governing Body (Board) members, Detachment Commanders, regular members and Victim Services Liaison-members. A general session of the LMOU Training has been scheduled for October 20th at 6:30pm and is open to anyone who would like to attend. If you or specific individuals from your VSU are interested in attending this group session, or if you would like to schedule a private training for your VSU, please contact Tara Skeoch.

Referral and PROS Training Video

In the Spring, our unit informed you that we were creating a training video for the Victim Services Referral Form, KD5151. We are thrilled to update you that filming is completed and in the editing phase! There are so many people who were instrumental in making this happen, and we want to take a moment to thank all of them:

Melody Littell, Program Manager from NE Corridor Victim Services, for her assistance in detailing the importance of each section of the KD5151. The volunteer actors Cst. Trung Tran and Cpl. Morgan Kyle, who were phenomenal to work with. Our fantastic videographer, Joe Rusnak, who saw our vision and is bringing it to life through the filming and editing.

Insp. Comaniuk for allowing us to use the St Albert Detachment, as our filming location, and the members and employees of the St Albert Detachment who were so accommodating in sharing their workspaces, specifically the St Albert Victim Services Unit who let us film in their space. Cst. Nunes and Prodanovic who assisted in the editing process.

Behind the scenes:



(Photo Credit: Tara Skeoch, Alberta RCMP VS Program)



(Photo Credit: Tara Skeoch, Alberta RCMP VS Program)

Brain Story Certification - Free Online Certificate Program

In Brain Story Certification you will hear from leading experts about the biological processes at play during brain development, and about how experiences and relationships shape these processes for better or for worse. You will learn how adverse early experiences can disrupt brain architecture, leading to increased risk for addiction, depression, and anxiety, and you will learn how interventions for both children and





October 2021: Vol 3/ Quarter 3, 2021-2022 VS Quarterly Newsletter

adults are being informed by this science to improve outcomes and break the intergenerational cycle of early adversity.

The Brain Story Certification course is split into modules that focus on different brain story concepts and their real world applications. This Certificate Program is provided free of charge online and includes 20 modules, in which each takes approximately one hour to complete. If interested, register at: https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/training

Achievement and Accolades

20 Years for Assumption Region Community Policing Society

Assumption Region Community Policing Society is the Victim Services Unit which serves the community of Chateh and Rainbow Lake in Northern Alberta. This year they have reached their 20-year milestone of providing Victim Services to the communities they serve. We congratulate Assumption Region Community Policing Society on this achievement. To celebrate, they hope to hold a community event this fall dependent on COVID-19 restrictions to commemorate their years of service. Congratulations on this significant milestone.

35 Years Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District

Congratulations to the Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District as they have reached the momentous milestone of 35 Years of providing service to victims in their community. The Victim Services Society of Stony Plain, Spruce Grove and District was the first RCMP-based Victim Services Unit in Alberta, incorporated on *November 28, 1986.* To celebrate this achievement, they held a community event in Spruce Grove on September 11, 2021. During this event, they had a short program, provided hot dogs, hamburgers, refreshments and had activities for children. The event had an excellent turn-out and Victim Services Society of Stony Plain Spruce Grove and District were pleased they were able to celebrate with the community members in which they serve. S/Sgt. Colette Zazulak had the pleasure of

attending and applauded the Victim Services Unit on their years of service to the community.



(Photo credit: Victim Services Society of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and District; pictured above S/Sgt. Colette Zazulak, Board President, Craig Beattie, Program Manager Jenelle Jean)



(Photo credit: Victim Services Society of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and District)



(Photo credit: Victim Services Society of Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and District; pictured above is their VSU Board)





VS Quarterly Newsletter

"K" Division Youth Program – Back to School

The "K" Division Youth Program encourages parents, police and educators to teach children how to keep themselves safe. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection is a subject matter expert in this area and they have some fantastic age appropriate educational material and resources for children, teens, parents, educators and police on various topic of child exploitation and child safety that are useful (many of them are free). Their "Kids In the Know" (KIK) Program can be found at: https://protectchildren.ca/en/programs-and-initiatives/kids-in-the-know/).

The RCMP Centre for Youth Crime Prevention (CYCP) (https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/youth-safety/centre-for-youth-crime-prevention) also has tools to help police officers, parents, teachers and other educators inform youth on various crime and victimization topics, for ages 13 – 21.

Upcoming Events

Victims Week

The Policy Center for Victim Issues has announced that Victims and Survivors of Crime Week (Victims Week) 2021 will take place from **November 14-20, 2021**. In light of COVID-19, Justice Canada will be hosting virtual events throughout the week, in lieu of an in-person federal symposium. The goal of Victims and Survivors of Crime Week is to raise awareness about the issues facing victims of crime and the services, assistance and laws in place to help victims and their families. Additional information regarding Victims Week can be found online at https://www.victimsweek.gc.ca/home-accueil.html

Diverse Voices - Family Violence Conference November 17 to 19, 2021

Diverse Voices is proud to present their 21st Annual Family Violence Conference this year from Wednesday November 17th to Friday November 19th. This will be their first remote

conference being held virtually, and their ticket prices have reflected last years discounted price of \$175.

Registration is now open. You can register and find more information on keynote speakers and concurrent speakers/sessions on their website, www.diverse-voices.com

Feedback

Newsletter Feedback

This newsletter is intended to bring you information on the program from our standpoint and share what is going on within the RCMP-based Victim Services Units in Alberta. We are proud to say that the feedback has been excellent and we are happy that this resource has proven to be a useful tool for those working within RCMP-based VSUs.

Quarterly Report Feedback

We thank you all for the feedback that has been provided within the Quarterly Reporting. This is a great opportunity for our Program to address any concerns you may have, and hear how you feel about the Program in regards to your VSU.

Some of the specific feedback and comments received are:

The additional staff in the unit has shown much progress and given validity to the program. Thank you for all your hard work.

Thank you for always returning emails so promptly. I always appreciate your assistance and guidance. I really enjoy the quarterly newsletter.

Thank you for all of the support and guidance you have given me since starting the Program Manager position.

Good News Stories

Do you have any good news stories to share with Victim Service Units across Alberta in our next Quarterly Newsletter? Do you have any information you'd like to share about your



Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program

October 2021: Vol 3/ Quarter 3, 2021-2022 VS Quarterly Newsletter

Victim Services Unit? Any volunteers you'd like to give recognition to? If so, our Program would like to know about it! Please contact K VICTIM SERVICES via Outlook and let us know your story to be featured in our upcoming Quarterly Newsletter.

Contact Us

Questions, comments or concerns. Please contact us via Outlook:

K Victim Services;

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