



VS Quarterly Newsletter

July 2021: Vol 2/ Quarter 2, 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 Elhoms. Amy's temporary position has been extended and she will remain with our Program until September 30, 2021. We would also like to welcome Connie Genert to our Program on a temporary basis as she primarily works on the Victims of Crime Assistance Program within Community Policing. Connie has been assisting our Program behind the scenes with large-scale projects. We are excited to have Connie on the team as she has been a huge asset and we appreciate all of her help and expertise.

Dana Overton, office: 780-412-5426

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 Elhoms;

amy.elhoms@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Our Role

Our role is to provide support to RCMP-based Victim Service Units in the Province, working closely with our partner agency, 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 OIC of Community/Indigenous Policing & Recruiting, Insp. Joel Whittaker.

As RCMP employees, we receive direction from and adhere to the RCMP reporting structure and lines of communication. We are your front-line connection to the RCMP program, dedicated to supporting victim services throughout the province.

If you have any inquiries, please contact Dana Overton, to address any questions, concerns, or comments you may have.

A Message from Insp. Joel Whittaker

"I have seen the absolute benefit of Victim Service Units throughout my entire policing career. Whether it's consoling a loved one in their time of grief, assisting people through the complicated process following thefts or break-and-enters or providing essential referrals to help navigate our complex systems, Victim Service Units are always there for us and for victims. I am confident that the partnership between the RCMP and Victim Service Units will continue to flourish. You truly rose to the occasion over this past year, overcoming the difficulties of the pandemic, and we are so grateful for your service to victims in Alberta. Thank you to all our dedicated staff and volunteers! "



(Photo credit: RCMP "K" Division)



RCMP Quarterly Reporting

The Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program Quarterly Report was distributed to each of the RCMP-based Victim Service Units at the beginning of April 2021. Our Program sent the Quarterly Report Form at this time to allow your Victim Services Unit to familiarize yourself with the information we will be requesting. The first Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program Quarterly Report is due for Quarter 1 (A-M-J) 2021-2022 with an expected completion date of July 20, 2021.

If you have any questions regarding the RCMP Quarterly Report, please refer to the Information and Instructions on the first two pages of the Quarterly Report Form. If you have further inquiries, please contact our office and we would be more than happy to assist.

Victim Referrals and Security Compliance

Just as a reminder the accepted referral form for the Alberta RCMP is form KD5151. The KD5151 is a Protected B document once complete, and therefore is subject to Security Policy [SM 4.2](#), which dictates the document must be encrypted when transmitted electronically, or placed in a sealed envelope marked Protected B, when submitted in hard copy.

In April, our unit began the process of assisting paid Victim Services personnel in obtaining their Smart Cards. The Smart Card with PKI (Entrust) is required by all paid personnel in order to open (decrypt) electronically submitted referral forms that are encrypted. If you or your staff do not have a Smartcard with PKI, this must be requested as soon as possible at the Detachment level.

Instructions were sent from our office at the end of June detailing the process to decrypt electronically submitted KD5151s. If you require further assistance with this process, we request you first reach out to your Liaison-member for assistance prior to contacting our office.

Reminder

Smartcards and passwords need to be protected and cannot be shared with anyone. Further information on securing your Smart Card and PKI can be found in Policy SM 4.2

Referral Cards for Members - Updated

We updated our Referral Cards for Members in June of this year and have had these cards re-printed and distributed to each RCMP Detachment in Alberta. These referral cards will assist RCMP Members when offering Services to victims. The notebook sized laminated cards contain the PROS referral codes, as well as a script that Members may choose to use as a guideline when offering Victim Services. A pdf format of this referral card will be available on our InfoWeb page. If your Detachment requires additional Referral Cards for your Members, please advise our office.

Training

JOIN

The next JOIN Training will occur Thursday September 23, 2021. There will be one JOIN training session offered per quarter. If you have paid personnel that require this training, please reach out to Tara Skeoch to advise. ***Reminder**, if you have Victim Services personnel that previously had access and are no longer with the Program, advise our office so they can be removed from JOIN.

LMOU

The Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program is continuing to offer Local Memorandum of Understanding (LMOU) training virtually. This training is beneficial to all Victim Services paid personnel or volunteers, Governing Body (Board) members, Detachment Commanders and Victim Services Liaison-



members. Since January 2021, 16 Victim Services Units have completed training; that is 167 VSU staff, volunteers, Board members and RCMP members who have participated in the training. LMOU training is on hold over the summer and will recommence in September. If your group is interested in receiving this training as a Unit or individually, please contact Tara Skeoch to schedule a training session for the fall.

KD5151 & PROS Scoring Training Video

Last quarter we shared that we are creating a training video, meant to assist in accurate completion of the KD5151 and PROS Victim Scoring for regular members. We have moved into the filming stage and our goal is to have this video available on the InfoWeb for the fall of 2021!

Agora Training for Victim Services Paid Personnel

Now that you have your Smartcards with PKI activation, you have the ability access to Agora training on the Info Web. Some courses that may be of interest to you are:

- Victim Services in Alberta
- Victim Bill of Rights in Canada
- Using a Trauma Informed Approach
- Introduction to Sexual Assault and Trauma Investigations
- Cultural Awareness and Humility
- Managing Safely
- Eagle Feather – H Division
- Honour Based Violence and Forced Marriage
- Domestic Violence Investigations – K Division
- RCMP Web Conferencing Standards

Instructions have been sent from our Program on how to attain Agora, and how to navigate Agora once you have access. If you require these instructions again, have any questions or require assistance, please contact Amy Elhomsy via Outlook at K VICTIM SERVICES.

A special thank you to Kerri Wilkinson of Foothills Regional Victim Services Association, for suggesting that Program

Managers and those working with the RCMP-based Victim Service Units in Alberta would like to have access to Agora and the same training opportunities available therein. As of current, we are able to now provide Agora access to all Victim Services paid personnel in Alberta and hope to expand this offering in the future.

We hope that you take advantage of the training opportunities available in Agora and again, thank you Kerri for suggesting Agora as a method to deliver training to VSUs across the province.

Victim Services in Alberta on Agora

This course was created by Alberta Justice and Solicitor General (JSG) Victims Services with the intent to familiarize K Division employees with the services provided by Victim Services Units in Alberta.

The half hour long course describes the mandate and services provided by Victim Services Units in Alberta and outlines how to make appropriate referrals while providing an understanding of services that can be offered by Victim Services Units.

“Victim Services in Alberta” was updated at the end of May. The updates pertain to the interim Victims of Crime Assistance Program including the Court Attendance Expense Reimbursement Program, Emergency Crime Victims Assistance Program and the Victims of Crime Counselling Program.

When the permanent Victims of Crime Assistance Program is finalized, the Victim Services in Alberta course will be updated once again and you will be able to re-register to take the updated course with the new information at that time.

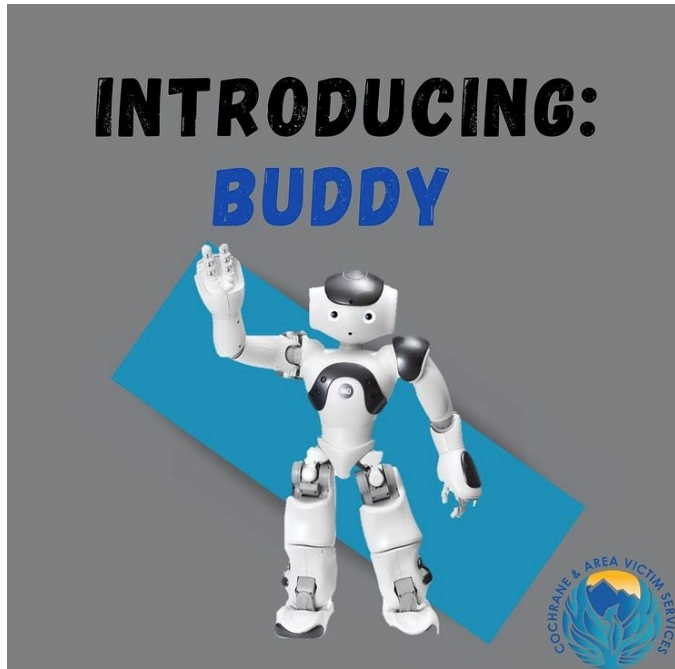
VSU in the Spotlight !

Cochrane & Area Victim Services: Introducing Buddy

In November 2020 Cochrane & Area Victim Services welcomed a new member to their Victim Services team to help



children and youth through legal and court processes. A trauma support robot (TSR) named Buddy!



(Photo credit: Cochrane & Area Victim Services)

Facts about Buddy the TSR:

- Buddy stands at 2 feet tall – the perfect height to engage with children.
- Buddy is equipped with LED lights which change colour to grab the attention of the child and add visual stimulation
- Buddy can engage in conversation and is programmable through a tablet allowing interactions with children to be customized according to their needs
- Buddy is programmed using block-chain programming which allows people with little technical experience to understand and code the robot. This allows the robot to be brought into schools and eventually children could program the robot on their own.

Not only does Buddy assist children and youth through legal and court processes, Buddy visits places within the community

to keep everyone healthy and connected. He visits local non-profits to bring attention to their cause, such as the humane society, and food bank. In the future, Buddy will also be used within Cochrane & Area Victim Services to assist with public education.

Check out their Instagram page @cochrancevictimservices for videos, photos and more information on Buddy, the trauma support robot.

Achievement and Accolades

25 Year Recognition

25 years is quite the milestone and many Victim Services Units are celebrating this achievement. The Alberta RCMP Victim Services Program recognized the 25-year milestone for the following Victim Services Units.

2021 – High Prairie & District Victims Assistance Society

2020 – Battle River Victim Assistance Society, Jasper Victim Services Society, Lethbridge Detachment Victims Assistance Society, Rocky & District Victim Services Unit Society, St. Paul & Area Victim Services Society, Taber Community Action and Prevention Society (TCAPS)

2019 – Edson & District Victim Services Society, Highway 43 RCMP Victims' Services Unit Association, Peace Regional Victim Services Society

2018 – Airdrie & District Victims Assistance Society, Barrhead Community Victim Services Unit Association, Beaver County Victim Services Unit Society, Bow Valley Victim Services Association, Brooks & County Victims Services Unit Association, Fairview Victims Assistance Association, Foothills Regional Victim Services Association, Hinton Victim Support Services Society, Lac La Biche Society Victim Services Unit



2017 - Redwater - Smoky Lake Victim Services Society, Slave Lake Victim Services Society, St. Albert Victim Services Association, Sturgeon Victim Services Association, Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association.



(Photo Credit: High Prairie & District Victims Assistance Society – pictured above S/Sgt. Warren Wright, Program Manager Sandra Bembridge (middle) and Assistant Coordinator, Verna Isaac).



(Photo Credit: St. Paul & Area Victim Services Society – pictured above Detachment Commander S/Sgt. Greg Stannard with Program Manager Patricia Laramée and Assistant Program Manager, Tina.)

Congrats to 30 Years

Congratulations to Strathcona County Victim Services and Leduc and District Victim Services on celebrating 30 years of providing services to their community. As a part of the 30 Year milestone Strathcona County has updated their logo to celebrate this accomplishment. Congrats and to many more years to come!



(Photo credit: Edson RCMP Detachment – pictured above Colleen Talpash from Edson & District Victim Services with Detachment Commander S/Sgt. Christian Delisle, and Victim Services Liaison-member, Cst. Aldrin Merlin)



(Photo Credit: Vermilion RCMP Detachment – pictured Cst. Joseph Wieser, Vermilion RCMP VSU liaison and Heather Koroluk the Acting Program Manager for the Battle River Victim Assistance Society).

Vermilion RCMP Celebrates 25 Years of Partnership with Battle River Victims Assistance Society

Detachment Commander of Vermilion Detachment, Sgt. Mike Dunsmore, proudly informed various local news and media platforms of Battle River Victim Assistance Society reaching the momentous achievement of 25 years as a Victim Services Unit (VSU). They have been in operation since 1995 and reached this milestone in 2020. Sgt. Dunsmore noted that “this VSU currently serves the citizens of the following communities and surrounding areas of: Provost, Wainwright, Kitscoty and Vermilion. The Battle River Victim Assistance Society employs two fulltime advocates, six volunteers and a seven-member board of directors. The staff serve the needs of the residents of these areas by providing support, information and appropriate referrals to victims of crime, crisis and tragedy. Last year the Battle River VSU handled over 300 requests for assistance.” Sgt. Dunsmore took the opportunity to express gratitude to Battle River Victim Assistance Society for 25 years

of partnership with the RCMP to provide exceptional assistance to victims of crime.

Westlock VSU Feature

Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association was featured in an article on Town and Country Today.com, a local news website, in recognition of their 29 years of service to the community.

In the article S/Sgt. Baird refers to the Program Manager, Leah and her team as the unsung heroes of the community. The full article can be found [here](#).

Everyone within Victim Services contributes to this success and we congratulate Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association on nearly 30 years of service.



(Photo Credit: Townandcountrytoday.com – pictured above Detachment Commander S/Sgt. BAIRD and Westlock Community Victim Services Unit Association Program Manager Leah Breckenbridge)



Volunteer Highlight



(Photo credit: Strathcona County Victim Services)

Bill Hunka

While celebrating National Volunteer week in April, Strathcona County Victim Services had a special mention for one of their long-serving volunteers, Bill Hunka (pictured above with RCMP Supt. Dave Kalist). Growing up in a farming community, Bill saw how support from friends and neighbors made all the difference. The retired school principal says seeing firsthand the difference a victim advocate can make in someone's life is what has kept him volunteering with Victim Services for over a decade now.

A big thank you to Bill, and every Victim Services volunteer that continue to volunteer their time to their local Victim Services Units.

Thank you

We appreciate and recognize all RCMP-based Victim Services Units for all that their Victim Services teams, past and present, have done for their communities. Regardless of the years of service; simply being present for the community when needed is something to be celebrated. On behalf of the RCMP, we are thankful for what you bring to your Victim Services team, and wish many more years for each of your Victim Services Units.

Good News Stories

Do you have any good news stories to share with Victim Services Units across Alberta in our next Quarterly Newsletter? If so, please contact K VICTIM SERVICES via Outlook and let us know your story!

Contact Us

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

K Victim Services;

RCMP.KVictimServices-KServicesauxvictimes.GRC@RCMP-grc.gc.ca