



# Victim Services of Kingston and Frontenac

c/o Kingston Police, 705 Division Street, Kingston, Ontario K7K 4C2

Telephone: 613-548-4834 Fax: 613-547-6674

## Volunteer Minutes

Meeting: January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019 at 7:00pm

### Welcoming 10 New Volunteers!

In October/November, we were fortunate to have 10 new volunteers go through training. We would like to officially welcome Brianna, Cassandra, Dakota, Haley, Harlee, Samantha, Sarah E., Sarah J., Shaelyn, and Tara! Thank you for all the time you invested in the training and we are very excited to have you aboard.

**New Protocol:** As of December 28th, VSKF implemented a new protocol for booking yourself on call and for communication with Emergency Services. VSKF is no longer using Alliance Communications. Instead, a call forwarding system has been put in place using (613)546-2060. This system connects callers directly to the VSKF office during office hours, or Volunteer Relief Supervisors afterhours. **Volunteers are no longer required to call in for their shifts!** Supervisors will be checking in with volunteers before each shift to ensure they're prepared as usual and should a call coming in, supervisors will contact volunteers. If for any reason the supervisor is unable to take a call, the call will bounce to Paula as back up. So far there has been very positive feedback about this new system, especially from emergency services. They are please to connect directly with VSKF Volunteers on the first call and not requiring a call back. This appears to solve a long standing problem of tracking down officers after the initial call into the answering service, and allows us to collect the needed information without relying on a 3rd party. Thanks to this change we will be saving a great deal of money which can be better utilized in other areas of the service.

**The phone list and the referral list** have been formatted slightly differently. We hope that this will make them easier to navigate. We encourage feedback on the new formats. Any suggestions or concerns are welcome.

**Call Volume:** We are still seeing a steady increase in call volume. VQRP calls are up substantially and, to accommodate this, ALL staff is trained and able to access the VQRP system to process applications.

**Spring Volunteer Training:** Training is tentatively scheduled for April 16<sup>th</sup> to May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2019, and the Saturdays will be April 27<sup>th</sup> and May 4<sup>th</sup>. We are looking for 10+ new volunteers and are already accepting applications. If you know anyone who would make a great volunteer please have them contact the office as soon as possible to get on the list.



**Canadian Red Cross**

**Canadian Red Cross** has a new coordinator for our area as of December 2018.

Allan Jenson, who also oversees Cornwall to Gananoque, met with Paula on December 12th to discuss the relationship between Victim Services and the Canadian Red Cross. During this meeting, Allan expressed his sincere appreciation for the work Victim Services does and how our services can truly work well together. The Canadian Red Cross now operates a little differently, having access to hotels without attending on scene first. Victim Services can transport victims to warmth and safety and meet with the Red Cross once the victims are settled. This may be a very positive change, reducing the time victims are displaced and waiting in the cold, and expedite the services provided. To achieve this, the Canadian Red Cross is using a Montreal based travel service to book hotels who, in turn, invoices the Red Cross for the cost of the room. It's hoped that Victims Services can adapt a similar protocol for VQRP eligible services.

### REMINDER

New emails are as follows:

Paula [victimservicesed@kingston.net](mailto:victimservicesed@kingston.net)  
Michael [victimservices@kingston.net](mailto:victimservices@kingston.net)  
Lana [victimservicesht@kingston.net](mailto:victimservicesht@kingston.net)

Our old email [fvcars@kingston.net](mailto:fvcars@kingston.net) is still functional; all incoming mail is forwarded to [victimservices@kingston.net](mailto:victimservices@kingston.net).

In attendance: Paula, Michael, Lana, Brianna, Chris H., Claudette, Dakota, Danielle, Erin S., Josh, Kim, Laura Y., Louise, Samantha, Sarah J., Tara, Terry

## **Initiatives in the Works!**

**Kingston Police/ Victim Services Purchase of Service Agreement:** Currently, Victim Services and Kingston Police are working together to create a Purchase of Service Agreement. Kingston Police will be giving Victim Services staff access to their system to obtain occurrence information from a queue. These calls will be placed there by officers based on their assessment and/or the client's request. This system may be adapted in the future by Kingston Police to auto populate the queue with ALL calls falling under specific codes, and staff will evaluate which occurrences need to be called/responded to based on the synopsis. This could mean a substantial change in call volume. Kingston Police is now in communication with their IT department to adapt the system to accommodate this. It is unknown when these changes will be finished.

**Website/Database:** With the possibility of increased call volume on the horizon, Paula contacted a developer, who assisted neighbouring Victim Services, about building a website and database. This new website/database will help VSKF operate with continued effectiveness while supporting a much larger call volume. The introduction of an online system for Volunteers to submit their reports, an accessible database from remote locations, an online volunteer application process and an online referral system for community agencies would speed up the administration process and allow staff and volunteers to concentrate on what matters most... Victims. The hopes are that this database would give staff and volunteers independent logins to access the appropriate resources and forms from their phones, laptops or tablets. The information that volunteers can access would differ from staff. Staff may access Victim information and view all calls/reports, where as Volunteers may only submit reports and access referral options and the phone list etc. This system is currently being used by other Victim Services and has received a lot of positive feedback. We are hoping to have this new system up and running before September, 2019.



**OTF Seed Grant:** Michael and Paula have been working hard to complete a grant application in hopes of receiving an Ontario Seed Grant. This grant

would fund a project to evaluate Victim Services response to the rural community, create a new response system and increase the community's awareness of services available for the rural community. Included in this project is purchase of technology for staff to work/train/respond remotely and further customization to the website/database. Approval/Denial of this grant could take up to 3 months to receive. Pending approval, the start of this project would be July 1, 2019.

**Human Trafficking Update:** Lana spoke of the Grant secured by the Kingston Police to educate and raise awareness in Kingston, Frontenac, L&A area high schools. Timea Nagy-Payne will be hosting a 2 day 'Train the Trainer' workshop instructing participants on how to effectively present the issue of HT to a high school age audience. Workshop has been offered to VSKF employees, school counsellors (public and catholic) and police. Once training is completed we will begin presenting in local high schools.

Lana has been sitting at the Risk Watch Table regularly and been seeing referrals as a result.

Lately we have noticed some clients resurfacing after having taken a hiatus from our care/services. Our HT clients often require more long term support than our usual immediate crisis work and support referrals we're used to providing.

Lana continues to offer to HT based presentations to interested groups/agencies. We have an upcoming presentation scheduled for the Kingston Rotary Club January 31st and Youth Diversion's SNAP and ACE program youth.

### **NEXT VOLUNTEER MEETING:**

**Tuesday, February 12, 2019**

**7:00pm**

**Kingston Police Community Room**

**Speaker: Allan Jenson, Coordinator**

**Canadian Red Cross**

## **Kingston 4 Paws Service Dogs Advice on Responding to Crisis Calls with Service Animals**

Thank you so much for allowing me to come and speak about our program on Service Dogs and to teach about what to do if you encounter a victim who uses the support of a service dog. As I mentioned, Service Dogs go through extensive training that starts at 8 weeks of age and continues into their second year of life. To many individuals, a service dog is essential to help them to be independent, alert them of approaching medical crisis, and to help keep them calm during episodes of anxiety, depression, or crisis. Service Dogs support their person in so many ways but we do not have to totally understand what the full job of the dog is to support a person who has a service dog.

If you encounter a victim with a service dog please focus on your victim more than the dog. Try to ignore the dog as it works and use eye contact with your client if they are comfortable with that. Feel free to use the dog as a way to help your client feel more comfortable but do not pet or talk to the dog, unless your client requests it. You could comment on how lovely their dog is and what a great team they are. Ask what the dog's name is and perhaps how long they have been together. Keep it very casual and you will put the person at ease quickly. Do NOT ask what is wrong with them for them to need a dog, or what the dog is trained to do. People with service dogs are often judged and felt compelled to defend the reason why they need a dog. Keep it positive and respect the dog and the person's space. If the dog is at home with the person and roaming around DO ask the person if they'd like you to put their dog on a leash and give them the leash so he/she can be closer to them.

During crisis, a dog is still a dog no matter how you look at it. If there is a body or blood or feces etc. they will want to investigate. Unlike regular pets, you do not want to place the dog in a room away from the person. Encourage them to leash the dog and to either hold the leash or tie it to their waist. Word it positively always. "Can I help you to leash your service dog so he can stay closer to you?", "How can I help you and your service dog?". Remember; do NOT pet the dog, even if it's out of jacket unless the client has said it's ok. If the dog is out of jacket and jumping into your space

ask it to sit and then see about leashing him/her so they can stay near their person.

In some cases a person will want you to interact with their dog. They may say "It's ok if you pet him". This is the other person connecting with you and feeling more comfortable. If offered, pet the dog gently but only for a quick moment then put your attention back onto the person. Never ask to pet the dog as this can make a person feel uncomfortable. Be careful that you don't share too much about your own pets or pets you have had in the past. A service dog is a great ice breaker and conversation starter but remember, this is about them, the victim, not us the Victim Service Volunteer.

If you have to take this individual somewhere in your car please make sure the dog and person stay together. The dog can be in the back seat and the person in the front, but many will prefer to be together in the back seat. Offer choices.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me at 613-484-8502. If the dog is from our organization "Kingston 4 Paws Service Dogs" feel free to contact me as we have very close relationships with our clients and are a trusted person in their lives.

Samantha Cooper, ABCDT, CTDI  
Service Dog Trainer/Co-Founder

