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DAILY HERALD

# Social Service reps getting at 'COR' issues

Plucked from the front-line and placed in Prince Albert's Community Mobilization group, the new mandate of two Ministry of Social Services employees is getting at the "COR" of local issues.

Kim Werrett and Corrine Anderson contribute to Community Mobilization's Hub meetings and serve as full-time members at the Centre of Responsibility (COR).

The Hub is a twice per week meeting of various agencies from throughout the city, during which time they tackle individual issues.

"I think it's just the working together, and having everyone together to best meet the needs of the family," Werrett said.

With representatives from the police service, mental health, addictions services, schools and others coming together, issues are dealt with in a holistic manner, immediately.

For example, a family with addictions, housing and mental health issues has their case brought to the Hub.

Within a couple days, a subsequent meeting can be called, with Hub members sitting down with the family, in person.

"Oftentimes, we'll get information when it's almost in a crisis situation, so we'll decide as a group that we'll go out to offer those supports," Anderson said. "So we're helping that family right when it might be the best time. Everybody's right there, so it's right at their fingertips."

"The family has access to that information right there, instead of having to make phone calls," Werrett said.

"They have a face to connect to that service."

This immediate connection has reduced wait time for action from a few weeks to a few days, and connected people to services they might have otherwise remained unaware of.

"We've always kind of had a relationship with police and community organizations, but this has brought them along a lot more together and closeknit," Anderson said.

Taking only last year's caseload during Hub meetings into account, Anderson said the impact of their involvement in Community Mobilization on the community has been huge.

"I think a huge success for us, in general terms, is in 2011 we were able to divert 86 cases from our intake unit ... which do initial investigations when the calls come in," she said.

"They were cases that had the potential to be investigated by Social Services, so we were out talking to agencies before it got to that point."

The two Social Services representatives' role with the COR is a more time-consuming effort that looks at underlying issues in the Prince Albert area.

"The COR takes on the broader issues in Prince Albert, and try to make things better and safer for all of PA," Werrett said.

One recent example has been Community Mobilization's sponsorship of the theatrical production of *Invincible*, a play written and performed by Carlton Comprehensive High School students.

The well-received play centred on domestic violence, and how to deal with it.

"If we're doing something like that, it's usually because it's been identified in the community as something that needs to be addressed," Anderson explained.

"When (the COR) came into effect, the Ministry of Social Services was looking at long-term goals, and when this came along it was a perfect opportunity to address these concerns and hopefully get on these things."

This is the third in the Daily Herald's five-part series on the Community Mobilization model. During the series, various agencies will speak to the benefits and some success stories that have come about as a result of their involvement in the Hub and COR.

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