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COR constable praises collaboration between agencies



[Matt Gardner](#)

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© Herald photo by Matt Gardner For Simonson, who represents the Prince Albert Police

Const. Lisa Simonson of the Prince Albert Police Service has been seconded to the COR (Centre of Responsibility) for more than a year.

Service on the COR along with more recent addition Sgt. Troy Dumont, her time with the organization is a case study in the value of teamwork and inter-agency co-operation.

“Working collaboratively with the other agencies, I’ve definitely been able to look at a new side of policing where the collaboration is consistent,” the constable said.

After more than a year seconded to the COR and Hub, Const. Lisa Simonson has played a key role in Community Mobilization Prince Albert's development of a community-wide alcohol strategy.

"Both Sgt. Dumont and I, we share an office with corrections and social services, child protection, addictions, education and mental health -- and to be able to have that consistent collaboration, we're able to jointly identify and discuss gaps in services, how we can help improve those gaps (and) what steps are necessary to implement change."

A police officer for 14 years, Simonson previously served with the Edmonton and Vancouver police forces and has been a member of the Prince Albert Police Service for the past three years.

Her decision to join the COR team put her at the forefront of local efforts to adopt a more comprehensive and collaborative approach to various social ills and issues faced by individuals and families.

"It's a great opportunity," she said. "This position affords all the representatives the time to be able to research on best practices in relation to different issues like, for example, alcohol strategy (and) parenting, and it also affords the time to be able to collaboratively come up with different initiatives."

The development of an alcohol strategy remains an ongoing concern for COR and Hub members.

Early in the process, Simonson facilitated an information session for representatives of community agencies that offered sobering statistics on alcohol use in the city and served as a "call to action" for the creation of an alcohol strategy.

Not only have we been collaborating with government agencies, but we've been able to collaborate and develop relationships with community-based organizations and the NGOs as well. Const. Lisa Simonson

While helping tackle the issue of alcohol abuse, Simonson noted that the strengths of the COR model, such as building relationships and trust between agencies, apply to a wide range of issues.

"Being able to ... consistently collaborate makes such a huge difference as opposed to that one phone call, that, 'OK, well, maybe social services can help me, or who else can I reach out to?'"

"Here ... we have the advantage of having mental health, addictions, and having the expertise of these other organizations here, and also to have the analysts available to us to help us with the research in our systemic issues that have been identified through our executive steering committee ... our top two being substance abuse and parenting."

The development of a community alcohol strategy, she noted, is presently the most visible example of the COR's response to substance abuse.