

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **North Simcoe Victim Services offers training opportunity for new Crisis Response volunteers**

*March 6, 2020 – Orillia, ON*

North Simcoe Victim Services (NSVS) is looking for new Crisis Response volunteers to join its team – a group that helps people during what is possibly the worst time in their lives. Crisis Responders provide a unique service of supporting victims of crime and tragic circumstance.

“Our volunteers are a very special group of people,” said NSVS Executive Director Kim Hewitt. “We recruit and screen them carefully due to the vulnerable population that they will support and interact with.”

Because of the nature of their work, the organization provides an extensive program of training that teaches volunteers about the wide variety of cases they will be responding to. Their role is to provide immediate emotional and practical support, while also freeing up time for police, fire and paramedic responders to do their jobs. “Our volunteers have often told us that the training they receive has been ‘life changing,’ said Hewitt. “The program prepares them for their roles with Victim Services, but also provides the kind of skills and knowledge that supports other career or life goals they may have.”

This year’s training is the inaugural program to be organized under the direction of the organization’s recently appointed Volunteer Coordinator, Mandy Davison. Davison has been a Crisis Responder and Team Lead (Crisis Responders work in teams of three) with the organization since 2016 and in February became the successful candidate for the full-time role of coordinating volunteers.

“I am looking forward to the opportunity to train, guide, and support all of our Crisis Responders and Team Leads,” said Davison. “The work is extremely rewarding and I have always been so proud to be a part of the North Simcoe Victim Services team. To be in this new role is truly an honour.”

Volunteers joining the organization this year will learn, among a wide range of topics, how the community is being impacted by current mental health concerns and the opioid crisis. Training begins on March 24 and runs for eight weeks. Trainees attend sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7:00 to 10:00 pm and on one Saturday. In addition, there is an online component, contributing to a total of 60+ training hours before new recruits are sent into the field, at first along with an experienced volunteer. All volunteers receive ongoing training opportunities, which can include guest speakers at monthly get-togethers and special weekend training retreats.

North Simcoe Victim Services has been operating in the Orillia area for over 20 years and during this time thousands of people have been assisted during a time of crisis. Volunteers respond to calls 365 days-a-year as part of a three-person team that is on-call for assigned 12-hour shifts. Currently there are over 50 volunteers who cover 2,190 on-call shifts each year. The organization hopes to attract a full class of 25 to its upcoming training program.

For more information, or to apply as a Crisis Response volunteer, contact North Simcoe Victim Services at [volunteers@ns-vs.com](mailto:volunteers@ns-vs.com) or 705-325-5578 or visit the NSVS website at [ns-vs.com](http://ns-vs.com). The deadline for volunteer applications is March 15.

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*Mandy Davison, newly appointed Volunteer Coordinator with North Simcoe Victim Services, is looking forward to welcoming new recruits to the organization's training program. Training begins on March 24, with applications due by March 15.*

**Media Contact:** Kim Hewitt [exdir@ns-vs.com](mailto:exdir@ns-vs.com) 705-325-5578