

COPP Interview with Paul Peters – August 2009

What has your experience been like so far?

- So far, I've had a great experience as a COPP volunteer. I've enjoyed getting to know the other volunteers, and I've now worked on shifts with three different partners. The RCMP has been very approachable and supportive of our program, so it's good to know that we're all on the same page, so to speak. It has also been interesting to see Steinbach from a new perspective. There are many new streets and parks that I didn't even know about!

Where have you patrolled? How often/how long do you patrol?

- I've been available to patrol either one or two evenings per week, and each shift is usually between four to six hours in duration.

How do you patrol (walk, bike, car) and do you take someone else with you?

- We are allowed to choose whether we want to patrol in a car, bicycle or on foot. Personally, I prefer to patrol in a vehicle, because it makes it easier for writing notes and also allows for more area to be covered during the shift. As standard COPP protocol, we are always scheduled to work together with a partner.

Have you reported anything suspicious/dangerous since you started?

- It is important to remember that we are not police officers. We act as additional "eyes and ears" for the community, but we do not want to put ourselves into harm's way so there shouldn't be too many "dangerous" situations. If we encounter any crime in progress, we report the incident to the RCMP so that they can deal with the situation as they see fit. During our shift, we also take notes on any suspicious or unusual behaviour that we encounter. These notes are then submitted to the RCMP so they can look for possible leads that might be of importance to them.

How does being a volunteer in this program make you feel?

- I've definitely felt more connected with our community since I started volunteering with COPP. It has been an eye-opener to see some of the problems that are occurring right here in Steinbach. But on the other hand, it feels great to be working together with people who are trying to make the city a better and safer place to live.

What would you tell someone who was thinking about volunteering as part of COPP?

- Volunteering for COPP is a great way to be proactive in the community. You can volunteer to work on days that will suit your schedule. You work together with enthusiastic people and get the satisfaction of making a difference in the city. Also, for anyone that is interested in a future career in law enforcement, being a COPP volunteer could be a small step in that direction.