

Denver's Channel 7 Does a Story on Commerce City Police and  
a Program to Support those with a Sexual  
Offense Living in their City

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My colleague Sandi at RSOL (Reform Sex Offender Laws) saw this story before I did, and immediately sent out word to RSOL Affiliates regarding the approach Commerce City, Colorado is taking as the police work with registered citizens in their community. My first move was to read the story; I then decided to e-mail Russell Haythorn at Channel 7 News, thanking him for his piece on something potentially positive happening in the sexual offense arena! While it is now a day later, and I have not yet heard back from him, I am hoping that I get a response, and that sometime soon, we will see the story on 7 News about Circles of Support and Accountability that I suggested as a follow-up to the Commerce City story.

After e-mailing Mr. Haythorn and numerous colleagues and friends, I contacted the Commerce City Police Department to touch base with Officer Rasmussen whom the article named as the person on the force working directly with the registrant population. It took a few attempts to get through, but I finally did and was able to leave him a voice mail message. He called me back about an hour later, and we talked about his role with those who were convicted as persons with a sexual offense in his community.

The officer indicated that while he was supposed to be the "dedicated" officer working with this population, he was currently given other slots to fill as well, as they were short-handed. He hoped to be back on his exclusive job with registrants soon. I asked him how he attempted to assist these guys in being successful, and he indicated that he visited with them at their homes, and tried to lend a hand with their job hunt. He explained that while he really did not at this time give them job leads, he did allow them to use his name as a reference of sorts while they were looking for employment.

This approach is similar to the one utilized in Douglas County according to the Channel 7 story, and holds some hope and promise for the future if it can be sustained and built upon. I will be meeting with Officer Rasmussen at Starbucks on I-70 and Quebec on October 13 to chat about his experience so far, and to discuss ways that we might work together with Commerce City and other towns across Colorado (to start with), to bolster the three things that make a difference for these guys coming out of prison with a sexual offense background: research shows that **support, a place to live, and a job** make all the difference in the world as to whether registered citizens can be successful. Their success reduces victimization, enhances public safety and helps to open doors to communication and work on mutual goals held by advocates for these men and police officers!