

Happy autumn from all of us at **LIFE** to all of you!



**A**utumn has always been one of my favorite seasons, the time when everything **bursts** with its last beauty! And speaking of bursting – I am bursting to share some of the great **LIFE** happenings !

As you know, an important goal of **LIFE** is to connect and to make **connections** (just like our newsletter says!) *In the spirit of connecting* - we saw that our last few months were full of such opportunities!

- ◆ **LIFE** received a small grant from the Winnipeg Foundation to hold a Family Conference in 2017. What an exciting adventure. This project will provide an opportunity to **connect** with many of the **ICOF** families as well as other families living in Manitoba – stay tuned for updates!
- ◆ In May, The Department of Families held a connecting symposium. We were able to share information about **ICOF** and **LIFE** and connect with many service providers and government personnel.
- ◆ In June, **LIFE** staff connected with a Korean Delegation Team from Seoul Center for Independent Living. This team was very interested in learning more about **ICOF** and **LIFE** – the presentations were well received!
- ◆ We presented via **SKYPE** with Michael Kendrick at a workshop with members of Canadian Association for Community Living.



- ◆ **LIFE** staff and 2 **ICOF** employers provided great information to students from Red River College – sharing some great stories of hope and accomplishments.

- ◆ An **AMAZING AGM!** We had a wonderful time at our **LIFE** Annual General Meeting “Recipes for **LIFE**” on June 4th in Brandon. Over 80 people attended! Some great networking and connecting. Pictures are posted on our website. [www.icof-life.ca](http://www.icof-life.ca). We are gathering recipes for our Recipe for **LIFE** cookbook that you began at the AGM – if you would like to have your favorite recipe included – please connect with your Resource Coordinator, it is not too late to submit.
- ◆ Of course, I cannot forget the awesome September Fall Fling – the feedback has been amazing!



The **LIFE** team is energized and ready to move forward planning for the fall/winter. With one of our staff on leave, we welcome **Barb Collerman-Elias** to our **LIFE** family as our newest RC!

Did you know **ICOF** is growing? We are now supporting **66** men and women and their support networks who live their lives *In the Company of Friends*.

Finally, in the spirit of connecting, please call, or drop by the office or say hello at the next **LIFE** event—I look forward to chatting with you.

*Patti*

PS. Last newsletter mentioned I love posting some inspirational words on my bulletin board from time to time so in closing I thought I would share my Autumn annotation.....

A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream  
you dream together is reality.”  
— **John Lennon**

## News from ICOF Employers

Submitted by:  
Betina (Resource Coordinator)



As fall arrives, I am always inspired by ways to keep ourselves active and creative throughout the shorter colder days. I was fortunate to learn about this young woman, Chantal, an ICOF employer from Winnipeg and her newfound artwork.

Chantal came across this unique technique for producing decorated coffee mugs while she was online and she felt this was something she could try. It was a success! It's a process of selecting various colours of nail polish, submerging the mugs in boiling water and moving the mugs carefully around to create beautiful patterns. Afterward, Chantal seals the paint to ensure that the polish stays.

But Chantal's creative process doesn't end there, she also enjoys creating patterns with paint and sparkles on wine bottles and then inscribing them for special occasions such as birthdays, weddings or anniversary's to be used as vases or centerpieces. It makes Chantal feel so good to see her friends and family using and enjoying her pieces. Chantal is hoping to expand and offer her pieces to others who may want them for themselves or to give them as gifts. Who knows there could be a great business opportunity here for her!



To connect with Chantal to see more of her work or to order a piece, you can contact her at [c\\_lussier88@hotmail.com](mailto:c_lussier88@hotmail.com).

## Options for Services Update

Hello, my name is **Liz Allen** and while Michelle Pinette is on leave enjoying her new bundle of joy, I will be the Interim Coordinator for the **Options for Services** program. I am excited to oversee this program in Michelle's absence and I look forward to getting to know many new people in this position.

We welcome 2 new Contractors to our database from the Interlake and Winnipeg regions and are proud to say that OFS now has 20 skilled Contractors to assist with agreements around the province.

You can contract with OFS to complete tasks that are either too time consuming, require a specific skill set or that you simply do not want to do.

For further information, you can reach me at [optionsforservices@icof-life.ca](mailto:optionsforservices@icof-life.ca) or 204-772-3557 ext 3.

OFS is planning to offer **Supervisory Skills for Team Leaders** training in Winnipeg this fall.

Stay tuned for the date and details!





Congratulations to Michelle (Resource Coordinator) and her husband on the arrival of their beautiful daughter Hazel. She was born on September 5th, 2016.



## Thoughts from a network member

### “Even knowing what I Know...I would do it again”

My reasons for remaining on a support network are pretty much the same reasons why I initially became a network member back in 2013. Some of the reasons typically given for getting involved in something new include, finding new friends, learning new skills/career development, participating in the community, and acquiring a sense of purpose - none of which applied to me. I was already living a full life when I became involved.

Five years ago my friend lost his long-term caregiver through retirement and his support arrangements changed. He ended up in trouble, in an unsafe situation, and he needed help. I drew on my skill set, knowledge, and experience to act on his behalf, and we started down the path that would lead him to become an ICOF employer in 2013 --- and drop me into a new world that would put the rest of my life on hold and consume my time and energy throughout that period.

And yet – even knowing what I know now – I would do it again. My reasons are pragmatic:

- 1) I have a family-like history with my friend
- 2) He needed support to make informed decisions on options for next steps when support systems fail.

Difficult as it was for me to identify and then navigate through the possibilities, I cannot imagine how individuals like my friend – and the people who support them – can do so without having people in their lives who care about what happens to them.



As other families and friends of ICOF employers are likely to be aware, challenges are experienced in the most unexpected quarters (many of them frustratingly unnecessary), while kindnesses become truly life-sustaining. My family and friends provided critical support to enable me, in turn, to provide the necessary support for my friend. Whenever I lost sight of the path that would best benefit my friend, several people from Innovative Life Options and Association for Community Living (Winnipeg) were instrumental in helping me find my way back to that path.

Today I am grateful for the support systems in place for my friend. We are fortunate to have a wonderful group of people in his life who enable him to experience much of what life has to offer for most of us. And – very importantly, given the dynamic nature of any network – ICOF makes continuity and succession planning an integral part of the model. This gives me hope that my friend will continue to have the support he needs – with or without me - to live a rich, fulfilling life.

## Making Memories Fall Fling



Did we make memories on September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2016.... We sure did. Thanks to a committee of ICOF Employers who worked together to create a theme, sort out décor, decide on food, sell tickets and bake, decorate and clean up, it was a successful event.

It started with an idea that the Westman Region RC's had. It would be nice to do something fun, it would be nice to work with Employers and their staff, and it would be nice to reach out to other people. A committee of three employers, Serge LeGal, Corey Demontigny and Tammy Golding came together and it was an opportunity for them to get to know one another and really band together for a purpose. "It was great to work with people" Tammy said when talking to her RC. It was also an opportunity for the RC's to witness staff interaction and support styles and be able to offer suggestions and guidance to the staff and networks; but that was all behind the scenes...

The day offered games, food, photos and the chance to make memories! Friends, family, networks, employers and staff took advantage of the Instant Photo Booth-with crazy hats and glasses and prints on the spot, a get-to-know you BINGO got everyone up and moving, but the highlight of the day was Serge's idea; the Pie-In-The-Face booth! Line up's of people signing up to throw and be thrown at, all in good fun. And the day finished off with a round of Happy Birthday to Corey who managed to set the date for the fling on his birthday—being on a committee has some perks!



Shannon and Betina the Westman RC's want to **thank** employers for their dedication and hard work, for the volunteers who came the day before to set up, the people who ended up in the kitchen washing up and for everyone who stayed afterward to clean. Serge sent a thank you out to everyone who came to support the event on Facebook; this truly made memories for many.



Our Annual General Meeting will be on Saturday, June 3rd, 2017 in Winnipeg

## BOARD NEWS .....

A heartfelt welcome to our newest members - Clarice Leader and Leslie Udell . We are very pleased to have you aboard. We would also like to thank outgoing members – **Harry Haid and Yenny Trenh** for their outstanding contribution and dedication over the years to our organization. All the best to you both.



Our busy time continued throughout the summer and as you know with a new government in place we took the opportunity to meet with the new Minister of Families. Board members, an ICOF employer and the Executive Director shared and connected with Minister Scott Fielding. We look forward to continuing to connect with him and share information about ICOF, the value of support networks, self-determination, inclusion, innovation and so on.

In closing, from our board notes, the Board is looking forward to its Fall Board-Staff Retreat where we will have the opportunity to connect, re-group, energize and plan.