

Message from our Executive Director



Happy 2016 Everyone!!! I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and that the new year brings you much joy and happiness. I must say, I certainly have had many joyous and happy moments in my first year as Executive Director at LIFE.

Thank you again for being so welcoming and helping me figure out what is what and who is who.

I continue to be amazed by our awesome resource team, administrative staff, our Board of Directors, the support networks and the ICOF Employers! All are so dedicated and passionate and really care about creating great lives. I am honored to be part of such a committed community. There is no greater reward than the opportunity to work with passionate people in an outstanding organization. I am looking forward to what 2016 will bring to LIFE, ICOF employers and their networks.

Each month, I like to post a quote on my board. I would like to share this month's quote with you.

Life is a song, sing it!
Life is a challenge, meet it!
Life is a dream, realize it!
Life is a game, play it!
Life is Love, enjoy it!
 (Sai Baba)

Leadership Exchange: An Excellent Learning Opportunity

The International Initiative for Disability Leadership (IIDL) is a unique international leadership forum that shares knowledge, innovation and effective practices to support their vision of a full life in the community. IIDL is a collaboration of four countries: New Zealand, Republic of Ireland, Canada and Australian Capital Territory.

I am pleased to tell you that from September 20th – 22nd, we hosted 5 guests as part of this exchange! Three visitors from Ontario and two visitors from Australia spent several days with our staff, board and several ICOF employers! There was a great deal of sharing and learning about innovative programs, current research, and best practices. Our guests were very impressed with the ICOF model and LIFE. It was an excellent learning experience for us. It was good to hear about their work and provided an opportunity for networking.



Thank you to all the Board members, staff and ICOF employers who were able to assist us **show our stuff!**

If you want more information, please call me and I will be happy to share more details.

Patti

Wage Enhancement Update



A huge thank you to all ICOF employers and networks who shared information with us regarding their staffing details. As we had indicated in our letter, we have shared the information with Family Services and we continue to advocate and stress the importance of this issue. Thank you for your support!

News from ICOF Employers

The Crusades of Captain Rye and his Renegades

A pirates treasure..... messages in a bottle.... anything is possible for Captain Rye! Captain Rye is the creation of one very talented ICOF employer, Ryan Nelson, who along with support from his staff is in the creative process of writing his first novel.

Through the use of role play, word association and technology, Ryan is able to create characters and scenes that are crafted into the engaging story, "The Crusades of Captain Rye and his Renegades." His characters are loosely based (you could say) on friends, family and staff and find themselves in all sorts of precarious situations.

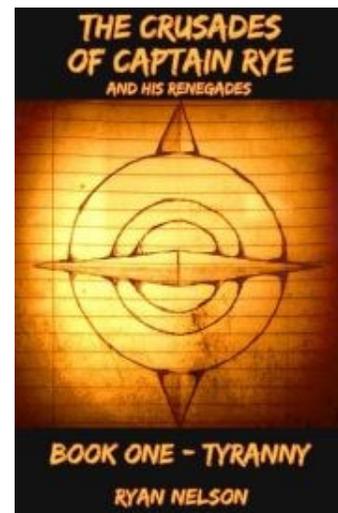
But not only is this about creating a story, Ryan is reaching out into the greater community with messages and pirates treasures in a bottle and engaging people to share their treasure finds and connect via social media. Ryan has fans as far off as Great Britain! He is published on the site wattpad – and weebly and you can follow progress on Facebook.

When asked if I could write about his novel in our newsletter, the smile that lit up his face was priceless... Ryan wants to share his work with everyone, so please check out the novel, follow his posts and leave comments.

Find Ryan at:

wattpad – search ryannelson778 or at
<http://adventuresofcaptainrye.weebly.com/>

Shared by Betina Roberts, RC



Upcoming Events



Manitoba Provincial Election

On April 19, 2016 the Manitoba Provincial Election will be held. As a Manitoba citizen, you have the right to vote in the election.

Please visit our website for further information

<http://www.innovativelifeoptions.ca/upcoming.html>

Innovative LIFE Options 

Annual General Meeting

Innovative Life Options will be hosting our AGM on Saturday, June 4, 2016 at the Riverview Curling Club in Brandon.

We have a block of rooms available at the Victoria Inn.

You can book your room now by calling 1-204-725-1532 or 1-800-852-2710

Reference Group # 318023 or
Innovative Life Options AGM

Support Networks

Over the last 20 years I have had the opportunity to develop, support, and be a member of a network. The following are some observations based on my experience.

I am always apprehensive when I hear networks talked about in terms of automatically solving all the dilemmas and challenges an individual will encounter on their journey to living a 'good life'. Any of us who have been members of a network know this is not the case. We know that dilemmas are part of the network experience. There can be dilemmas with funding, health, housing, personal, staffing, and the network itself.

Networks it turns out, are a place to teach us what we already know- that dilemmas are part of the human experience. The important thing about dilemmas is what we do about it.

Some networks report they seem to have more dilemmas than other networks. I think this is true. It is certainly true in human experience. Some individuals have more dilemmas than other individuals, some families have more dilemmas than other families, and some countries have more dilemmas than other countries. Dilemmas are not distributed equally.

Having had the experience of being a member of a network where it seemed for a time that dilemmas were our constant companion I can testify it was a struggle. Questions start to crop up- ***Why is this not working? Why is this not like the video on networks we saw where everything worked? Why are we unable to move forward? Where is the 'network magic'?*** The truth is that simply forming a network is not a solution. Forming a network is the first step in developing a community committed to creating solutions. Networks have the potential to find or create individual solutions that address the

dilemmas a particular individual is experiencing. This ability is a critical part of the process of supporting someone to have a good life. But are networks just about engaging dilemmas?

It turns out some networks report that it feels like all they do is manage dilemmas. Why is that? Is it a lack of support to the network? Is it the orientation of the network? Is it persistent external issues that cannot seem to be resolved?

All three of these circumstances have the potential to make managing dilemmas the single focus of a network. Networks with a single-focus on dilemmas do not report a lot about celebration and the 'good life'. Focusing on just the negative experiences encountered inhibits networks from experiencing their full potential and purpose. There also needs to be a sense of community and celebration in the network experience to keep up momentum and motivation.

So... what can networks do about dilemmas?

- * *Networks can expect it. There will be dilemmas. It is part of the human experience.*
- * *Networks can learn how to engage dilemmas.*
- * *Networks can celebrate victories.*
- * *Networks can learn to lament losses, lick wounds, and engage again.*

Engaging dilemmas is just one of the functions of a network. While an important function, it is not the only function. In my experience, the 'network magic' is in working as a community of people committed to seeing that a person we care about gets a life that works for them.

Shared by a network member



Claiming Full Citizenship

Self Determination • Personalization • Individualized Funding

2015 International Conference

October 15-17, 2015 | Vancouver, BC, Canada

@2015_CFC

facebook.com/ClaimingFullCitizenshipConference2015

With the passage of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, self-determination, personalization and individualized funding initiatives have a new

foundation upon which to build. In countries all over the world, these initiatives are transforming the lives of people with disabilities. Like the shift from institutions to community services, these initiatives are a momentous step forward in assisting people with disabilities achieve meaningful and rewarding lives as full citizens.

In October, 2015, the UBC Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship hosted: *Claiming Full Citizenship: an international conference on Self Determination, Personalization and Individualized Funding*. LIFE was invited to sit on the committee, present at the conference and join and share in the excitement and fellowship of this important event. What an amazing learning experience!

Videos and presentations from the conference are posted to the [Centre for Inclusion and Citizenship website](http://cic.arts.ubc.ca/). Please visit the site! <http://cic.arts.ubc.ca/>

CONFERENCE OUTCOMES:

- ⇒ We were able to share lessons learned on the implementation of self-determination, personalization, individualized funding and supported decision making.
- ⇒ We were part of promoting cross national, cross cultural and cross sector dialogue and the sharing of best practices.
- ⇒ We helped support the realization of the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities through promoting the effective global implementation of self-determination, personalization and individualized funding.
- ⇒ We helped create a road map for the effective implementation of self-determination, personalization, individualized funding and supported decision making.
- ⇒ We also met so many people who believe in full citizenship for all. We continue to talk and connect with these inspiring people.

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<https://twitter.com/LIFEisGOODICOF>