

INNOVATIVE LIFE OPTIONS

# Our Stories Our Gratitude

## Gratitude

Gratitude is a state of thankfulness.

Important things like being with family and friends.

Having incredible and supportive staff.

Day to day things like an opportunity to watch a favorite movie or try a new activity, learning a new skill or being proud of your contributions at work.

Small moments in life that give us joy -  
singing, dancing or reading.

*enjoy  
every  
moment.*

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## In 2021

We asked ICOF employers and the LIFE Staff and Board to share what they are grateful for in their lives.

Many thanks to all those who  
contributed.

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## Albert

These photos are of me baking. I enjoy making all sorts of things. The first one I am making chipa dough and the second I am making kilke. Both of these are Mennonite recipes which is important to me because I am a Mennonite man initially from Paraguay. My staff, Martha and Lucy, helped me make the dough. I enjoy making things and bringing them to my family to enjoy together! I am very proud of my baking skills.



## Becky

MADI and ME

The last couple of years have been hard for me because I had to take a leave of absence from my job and all of my other Special Olympic activities because of Covid. Also my mom and dad had to put my 16 year old dog "Bailey" to sleep. But now I have many things to be thankful for and the most important is my new puppy Madi. I got her this Spring when she was 8 weeks old. I spend lots of time playing with her, taking her on my 3 wheeler and walking her. So she and I get lots of exercise. When I get home, she jumps all over me and makes me feel good. I am so grateful to have her in my life and I love her so much.

## Liz



*The best things in life and what I am most grateful for are the people I love, the places I've been and the memories I've made along the way.*



# Jeremy

I am proud and grateful for the chair my dad got me and I enjoy relaxing in my new chair.



# Brenda

I learned to make "sew less" blankets from one of my workers. This fall, she is making one for each member of her family as Christmas presents. I am happy that I learned to make the blankets, they will help keep everyone warm!



Mini golfing is something I enjoy doing when I travel. (this photo is taken in Kingston, ON)



# Amy

I am thankful for a home filled with love and laughter. I am thankful for every moment I can stop in amazement of the little wonders that are my children. These little miracles I created give me purpose each day and bring me hope for our future. I am grateful for board games on Saturday afternoons and time for me in the early hours of the morning. I am so thankful for those who support me through the good and the bad and remind me I am never alone.





## Dylan

Dylan and Mom, Arlene on a "rockhounding" trip to Souris!!  
" Polishing rocks is one of my hobbies!"

## Tammy

I am very proud of volunteering at the Y West Daycare for 15 years.  
I love playing with the kids and also helping out with cleaning.  
I am so happy to be back there.



I am grateful for family, friends, my network and my staff. It is all about teamwork and everyone doing their part!

I am so lucky that I was able to get together with my family recently. My brother Rick and Bonnie (from BC), sister Joan, sister Leanne (from Regina), Dad and Betty. We were able to visit, eat out, play some games and enjoy the super fall weather!



## John

My name is John and I am grateful for the freedom to have fun and enjoy myself in my community with a great cup of coffee from Tim's.





## Devon

Devon would like to say thank you to all his support network members. He enjoys all the calls and visits and cookie orders. He'd also like to say thank you to Shannon for driving across the province to deliver safety supplies. He is super eager to be able to have an in-person support network meeting. Devon says that he is looking forward to being able to go on a vacation to Kenton to visit his friend Phil. Devon would like to invite anyone coming out our way to pop in for a great cup of coffee!

## Clarice

I enjoy family time especially my grandkids and getting together with friends.



I am grateful as a planner, visionary and achiever of community based initiatives that I was part of, the beginnings of ICOF and LIFE and have many amazing moments and memories!

## Stephen



### Running Out of Time

Life is complicated.  
There will always be problems.  
Stress is a distraction  
from what's really important.  
Don't wait for things to get better.  
Count your blessings;  
Learn to be happy right now;  
Otherwise you might run out of time.

By Joanna Fuchs  
Poemsource.com

# Ron

"Anything is possible when you have the right people there to support you." Misty Copeland



Throughout these 28 years as an ICOF Employer there have been happy times and a few challenging times.

Many life long friends

"I am really proud of myself because I have a best friend who accepts me for who I am during the good and bad times. I am so lucky to have Karen as a best friend." (Ron's words).

Many caring staff who have helped me accomplish what I chose to do, especially Abey and Jim who have worked with me a very long time.

Travel to Vancouver, Edmonton, Toronto, Las Vegas.

For me, it is all about choices. I have a lot of gratitude as an employer with ICOF and I am thankful for this -- to choose the life right for me.



# Jonathan

I am so thankful for my nieces and nephews!  
Three live in Yellowknife and three in Stonewall.



I love spending time with my hockey friends.  
Here are some of the hockey guys on the Dauphin Kings team, who I work with!  
I love my job with them!

# Shannon

"At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us." Albert Schweitzer





## Shaun

These pictures are from the bowling alley, trying a new chickpea salad recipe together, and playing boggle (one of our current favorite games).



## Meaghan

During the pandemic at the age of 43 I got my first dog ever. We named her Maude, after a character in one of my favorite movies, Harold and Maude. The character is tiny and full of energy, and she opens up Harold's eyes to the beauty of life. Our Maude is just the same. Every day with her has been a blessing. One of the moments I am most grateful for is our shared excitement to see one another when I arrive home after work. Without fail her tiny head is peaking out at the window awaiting my arrival. I am greeted by such tremendous enthusiasm when I come home, I find the day's trials and tribulations melting away. I am grateful for Maude.

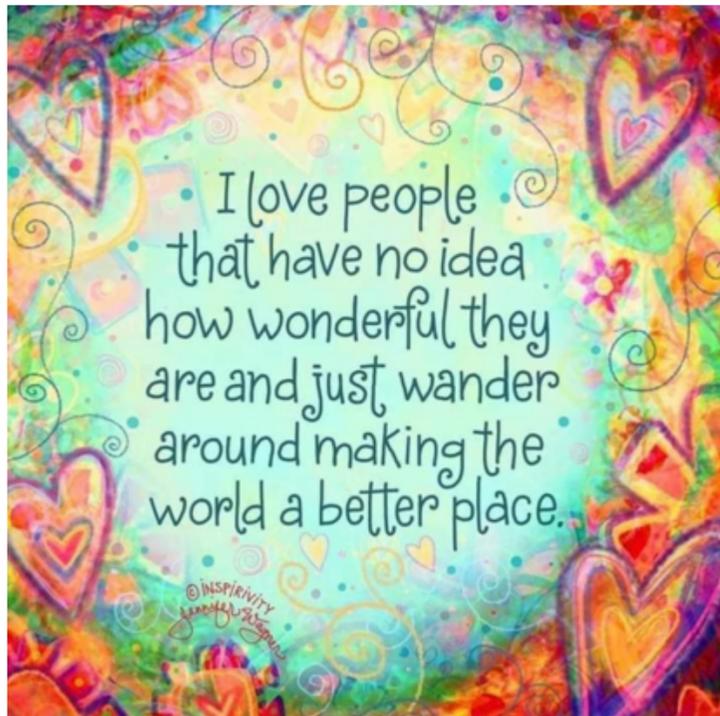


## Kim

Baking is definitely something that I LOVE to do! Excited for a double layered cake – my most favorite!



A GRATEFUL  
heart IS A  
MAGNET  
FOR  
MIRACLES



## Betina



# Matthew

"Never regret anything that made you smile."  
Mark Twain

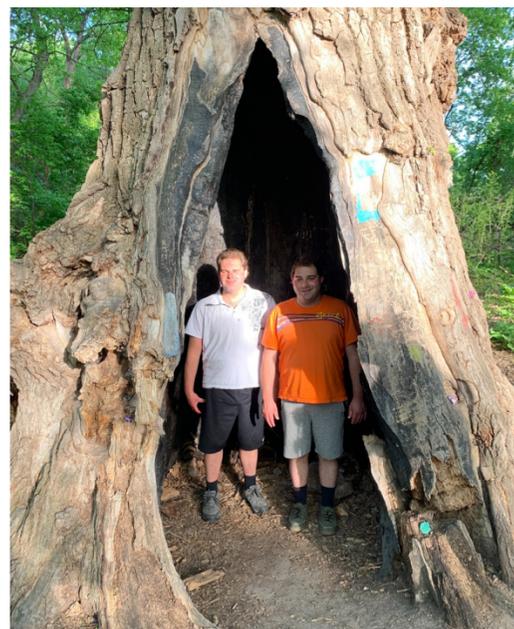
I am really proud of myself because I get outside for a walk, do my chores and I cook myself breakfast every day.

I am so glad I tried softball because I learned it is one of my favorite sports. My favorite position to play is center field; I enjoy hitting the ball and being out with my teammates.

I am thankful for learning more about computer skills and organizing. When I am at CCI I like being able to gain experience along-side my friends and co-workers with the goal of gaining full time employment. I also like being there because my friends are there and I enjoy talking and catching up with them.

## Collin and Cory

We are very thankful for our wonderful staff, family and friends. They take us to the cabin, hiking, camping, celebrate our birthday and so much more. They have all gone above and beyond during the pandemic to make sure we are looked after safely and keep us busy doing fun things. Life is very good 'In The Company of Friends'!



I played in the Swan River floor hockey tournament in 2018.

# Chantal

My name is Chantal and I am deaf and 40 years old. I am happy to be able to live in my own home through

In the Company of Friends.

I am blessed that my six staff have helped keep me safe through this pandemic.

I have started a business named Chantal's Creative Crafts since I was not going able to go out and enjoy life this past year. I am very proud of my business name.

I'm thankful that my sister Marsha and nephew Aiden helped me sell my crafts at the Oak Island Market over summer.

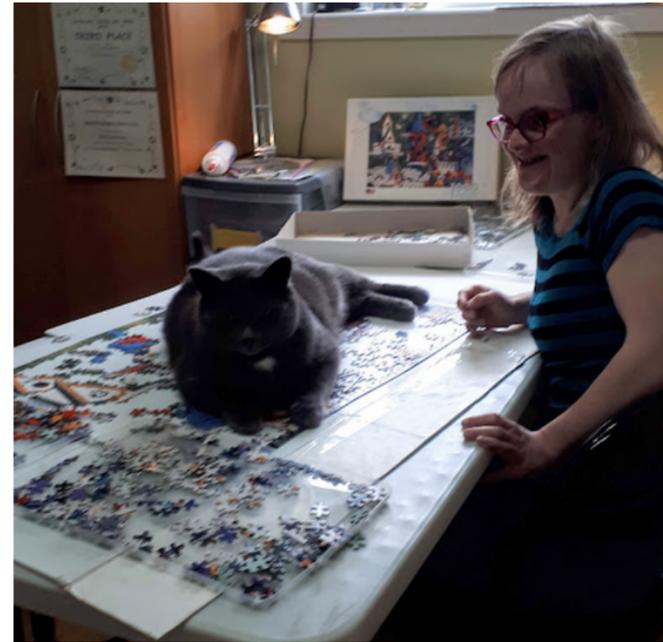
I'm enjoying the zoom times with my friends for art, yoga and music to help me stay active.



# Milli

I am grateful that my days are spent making art for my business, The Paper Fifrildi, that I live where I want, and spend time with others in my community. I also have a cat that keeps me company in my home - bonus!

Here I am working on a puzzle. Earl likes to think he helps by laying on it.



Sitting outside enjoying the summer in my yard under the shade tree.



# Evelyn

I am grateful for God sending me a husband who was able to blend into my already made family. I am so very grateful for three kids who grew in my belly and for all the kids who became part of our family later on.

I feel most happy and peaceful when I see my kids surrounded by friends and living out their own dreams.



# Clarence

My name is Clarence and I enjoy wood working and this past year I had the opportunity to try new wood projects. I am grateful for my ability to be creative and I made wooden holders to hold the hand sanitizer bottles. Not only did I keep some for my home but I gifted some holders to friends and family.



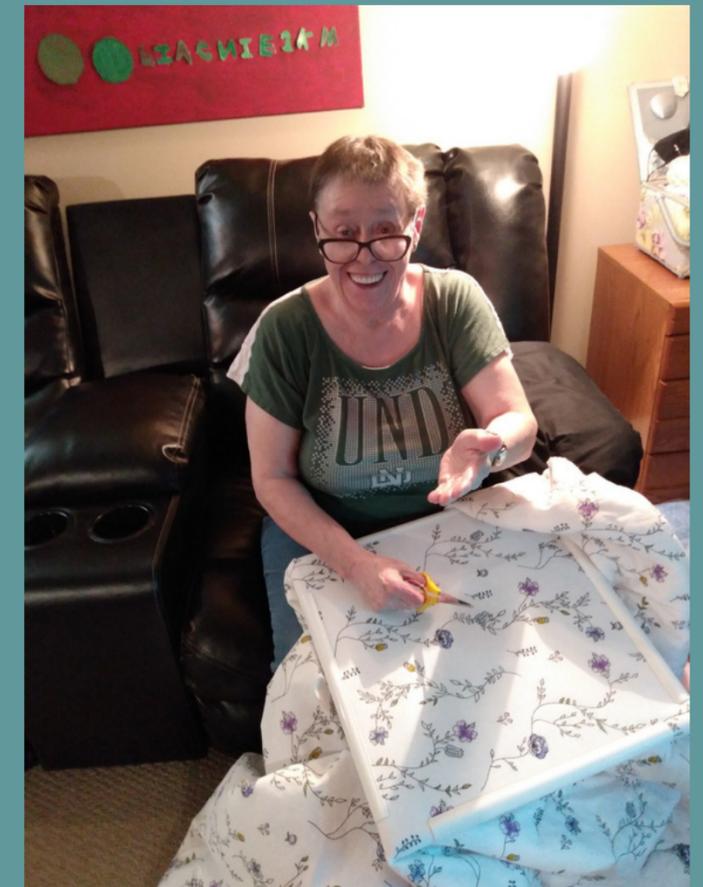
# Family



# Evelyn

My name is Evelyn and I have chosen to share a home with my sister and brother, one that we are proud of and love.

I am grateful for my health and the ability to share my gift of quilting. I love to make quilts all year round and auction them off once a year and donate the proceeds to a local charity.



# Maryann

My name is Maryann. I am grateful for connections in my life. I love to tell stories and stay connected and enjoy waving to my neighbors each day.





# Mark

"Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher!" Oprah Winfrey



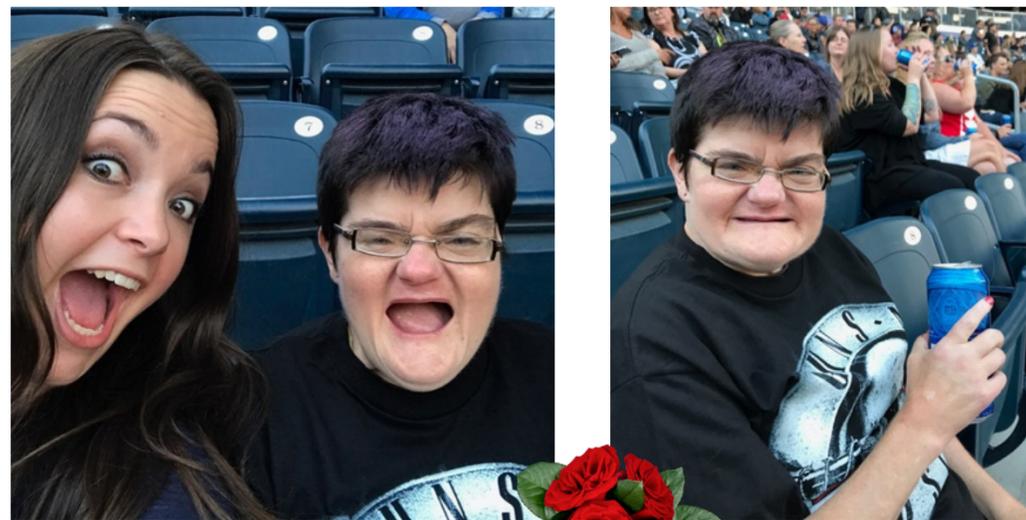
# Laurie

I am very thankful for the opportunity to work with everyone associated with LIFE. I have learned so much from everyone I have had the pleasure to meet. The greatest joy in my life are my 2 children that continue to amaze me as they reach their goals and dreams!



# Marilyn

This was one of the best days of my life! I love rock music and one of my all time favorite bands is Guns and Roses. I went to a concert with my friend Whitney and got a brand new Guns and Roses t-shirt, which was awesome. We even got moved to seats right beside the stage!



# Jessica

I am grateful for my family being there to talk to on the phone and being able to go home to my mom's to visit and spend time. I am thankful for my apartment and being able to live independently. I enjoy the bright, sunny windows to be able to watch people go by and to be able to look out while I work on my puzzles. I enjoy being independent on Sunday's and being able to go for lattes. I like that I am determined and can do whatever I set my mind to do. I am thankful that my staff have shown me how to video chat and are helping me learn to paint.



This is a picture of me painting at the Riverbank Discovery Centre

# Leslie



I am grateful for all the wonderful people I call my friends, as well my close and loving family (I truly like and love all of them). My sources of joy are good people, who love to laugh and look out for others, listening to great music and dancing, all animals but especially my cat and revelling in nature.



# Corey

Corey's gratitude list:

Corey is grateful for:

*Staff who keep me on a good path (and take me for coffee)*

*Family, who make me feel special and include me in the family*

*A good job for pay*

*Friends who are interested in the same things that I am*

*My support network - they are there when I need them*



# Sid

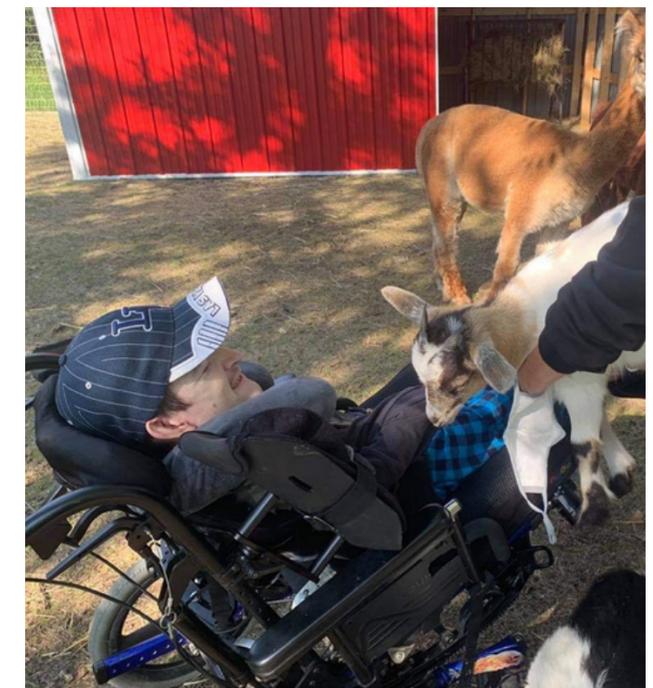
I am thankful for my friends who I go places with and for spending time with Jaxon and Teddy. I like looking after my friend's dogs.

# Ryan

" It is our choices that show us what we truly are far more than our abilities."

Albus Dumbledore from Harry Potter

I chose this picture of myself at the local petting farm, doing something I love which is being with animals and nature.



# Murray W

I did a Powwow demonstration at Princess Park with my friends Sam and Zach.

I love going to Powwow Club because it is great exercise, I get to see and meet new friends, and it's good for my spirit.



# Danny

Danny likes to spend time with family, watch movies, read books and eat good food.



# Laureen

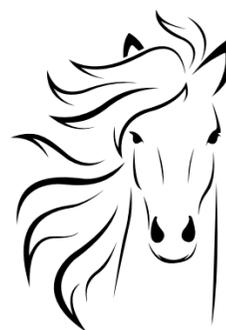
I am so grateful for the opportunity to travel with my family.





## Richard

Hi. My name is Richard. This is me at my happy place. I love riding horses. I ride every Wednesday evening at Alidale Farm. I love team penning!



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## Pat

In my role as a Support Network Member, Parent and Innovative Life Options Board Member these are a few of the things that I am grateful for:

My family, friends, support staff, fellow Support Network Members and Board Members, vaccinations, Patti and staff.

As well, I am grateful that I am living in a country and age where there is support, services and adaptive equipment to enrich my son's life.

**A few things that bring me joy:**

Family, friends, grandchildren, travel, golf, RVing, board game nights, music, Northern Lights, seeing my family healthy and happy and advocating for, and accomplishing, positive changes for those living with a disability.

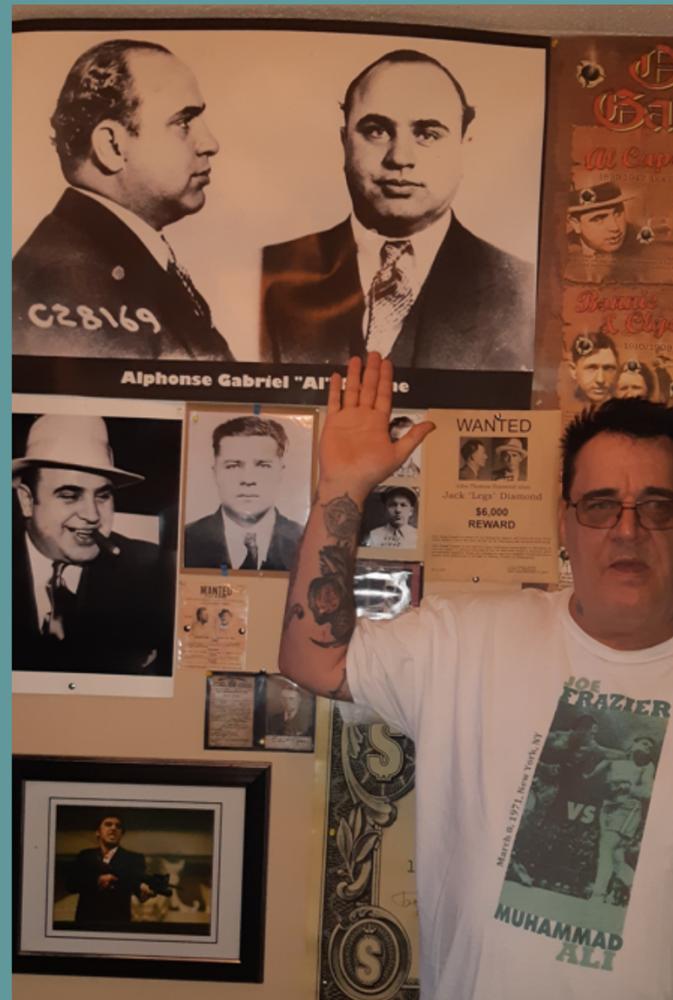


## Rick

*Gratitude is the fairest blossom which springs from the soul. I'd like to say THANK YOU.*

# Patrick

Good day everyone. I would like to introduce myself, my name is Patrick and one of my favorite things to do is collect memorabilia of Al Capone and his gang. Here I am with a few pictures I have collected over the years. I also have some books that I have read as well as movies and have a Tommy gun key chain. I have enjoyed travelling to Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan to see the Al Capone tunnels. I am proud of my collection and love to collect and display them all in my home. Thank you .



thank  
you ❤️

# Farley

I am thankful for my freedom to choose how and where to live, work and play. I enjoy walks around my community and feel safe amongst my friends. They have taught me new skills that help me look after my house and yard, like operating a riding lawnmower. I am grateful for friends who love to laugh, for a place to work, for coffee-time, for Landon who teaches me how to fish. My friends are great at accepting my little obsessions like making lists, cleaning their vehicle lights, checking their turning signals and guarding their keys.

# Barb

Over the last few years, several of my family members have experienced serious medical issues. As I reflect on the challenges that my family overcame, I am very thankful for the healthcare professionals who cared for my family with the utmost skill and dedication. I feel most fortunate that we live in an era where science and technology have advanced to the point where we have developed life-saving procedures that were unimaginable to previous generations and that we live in a country where all citizens, including my family members, have access to these life-saving procedures.

Above all else, I am grateful for and touched by the outpouring of concern and support that I received from family, friends, colleagues, ICOF Employers, and Support Networks. I thank all of you for the phone calls, emails, texts, and offers to run errands for me and my family. I am truly blessed to have all of you in my life.





## Trevor



## Jordan

Jordy is thankful for nature. He loves the calming walks through the trails near his home. He is also thankful for the staff that work with him each day be his guide in this life and to help him enjoy each and every day.



## Rene

I have the pleasure and privilege to be a LIFE board member for a number of years now. Since my retirement I have volunteered my free time to several organizations but, this one is particularly close to my heart.

I also found a passion to work and train horses . I do trail rides and do cattle roundups in the fall. My son Serge has become more comfortable and confident around these large animals where he and his workers will come and help groom them. What makes it all worthwhile is the connection and calmness the horses have with this person sitting in a wheelchair. Like a person said " There's something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.(person)."

I love life in more ways than one.



# Kendra

This is a picture of me enjoying life with my baby brother.



# Jason

Jason loves children and enjoys helping out at a local daycare.

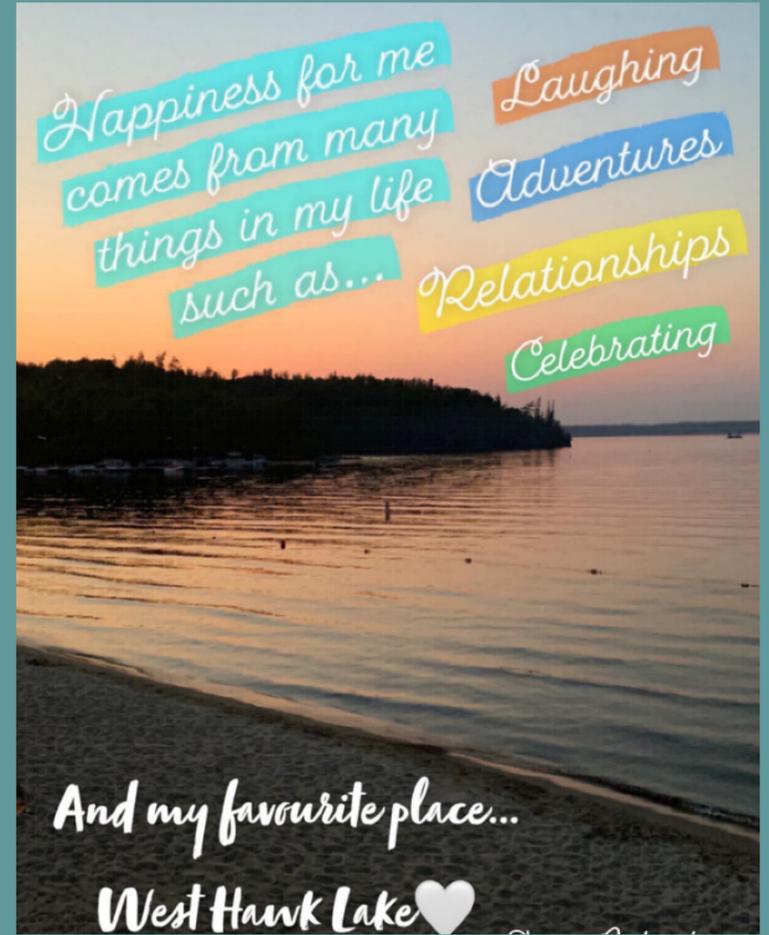


# Will

Fast and furious with dad on the side by side!



# Dana





## Mark

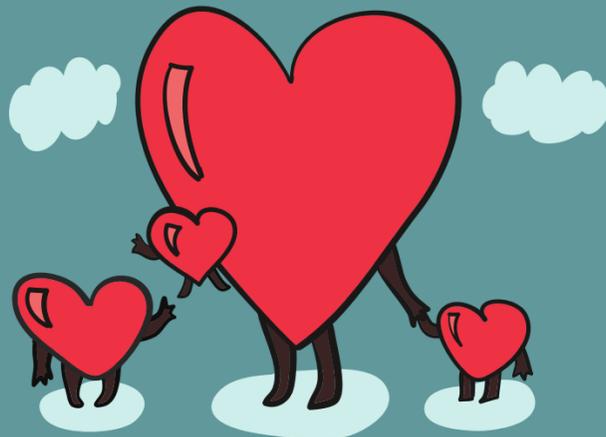
Mark is always so happy to get an iced coffee, although I think today, it was chocolate milk.

Mark and his staff Susana did a "zoom" cooking class with SCE LifeWorks. Mark & Susana were the "chefs" conducting the class.

They made mini pizzas. Thanks goodness for Susana. She is a very creative person.

## Gail

I am grateful for my wonderful family and my two beautiful grandchildren who bring me happiness and joy!



## Bunny



*Family is the support you will never have to pay for because come rain, or shine, they will be there to cheer you on with every of your life goals.*

*TheRightMessages.com*



## Jannie

I am proud of myself for trying to water ski. I learned I really loved water skiing.



# Sylvia

I am a proud mom to my daughter Sarah who makes me smile every day.

She makes me feel good inside and I love her very much.



love



# Rose

I've come to appreciate the lessons learned from the past, to be thankful for my breath, heartbeat, love in my life, and to visualize my future with many possibilities. When faced with challenges if I replace my fears with gratitude instead, they dissolve. My mind cannot hold on to both thoughts at the same time. This is a good thing since it is already congested with so many.

# Brandi

Sitting beside (Left) my favorite villain Nellie and the rest of the cast from Little House on the Prairie.



Dressed as my favorite villain Nellie

# Kurt

Kurt is thankful for the support from his network. Kurt likes having a support network because they go for coffee with him or to stock car races. Some people ask him to help fix cars.

One person helped Kurt make bird houses to sell. Support network members help Kurt but Kurt likes being able to help his support network members too. Feeling needed and being helpful makes Kurt feel positive about himself.

Kurt looks forward to having his staff come and work with him too. He enjoys the coffee outing now that he is able to.

Tic-a-t-boo is his favorite saying!!!!



The picture is of Kurt and his niece



# Wendy

"Gratitude can transform common days into thanksgivings, turn routine jobs into joy, and change ordinary opportunities into blessings."

W. A. Ward

Being the parent of two men lucky enough to be part of ICOF, I am thankful every day for the opportunity to see them living their best life.

That means everything!

As a board member, I'm truly inspired by the dedication of the staff and board members. Bless you all for all you do!

# David

This is me having fun singing, Sugar Sugar, at Karaoke night.



# Sara

I am grateful for my life. I am grateful that my voice is heard and my choices respected. I get to make up my own decisions with the help of my support network and get to speak out more about how I feel.

I am excited that I have the opportunity to explore being an entrepreneur and the people at Innovative Life Options help me to grow stronger.

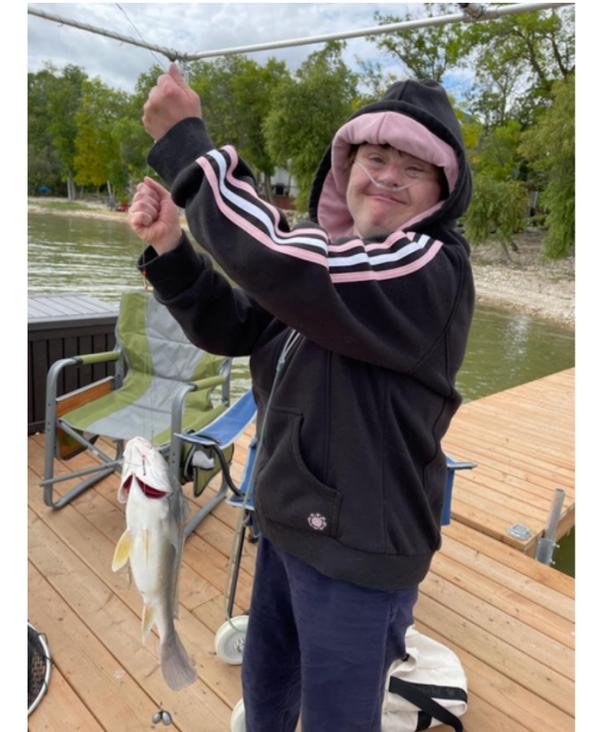
I am grateful for my ability to learn and grow in my relationships.



# JJ

I like my life with the In Company of Friends. I am trying to learn new things every day. Over this past season, I have gone fishing with Todd. I just love it! It is so much fun.

I am very grateful for the way my life is now. I like to be involved with my family and everyone I know. I love my life with all my cousins and my friends in Dauphin too. I like being able to visit and go out to restaurants and on lots of car rides. I like to ride my scooter too.



# Murray

I love a lot of sports, but the one that I am most proud of is when I am a Rodeo Clown, especially when I am getting in the barrel! My friend Jenny introduced me to Denny the Clown who taught me so much about what it meant to be a rodeo clown. Denny has now retired, but I am looking forward to meeting the new rodeo clown and being friends with them.





## Dylan

I am grateful for my safe sunny home, to be able to be in nature, to be able to express myself creatively, and most importantly for my silly and caring friends and family!

Dylan's Niece, Mom, Sister, and Nephew dressed up as the cast from Tintin for Halloween

## Michelle

I am grateful for family, friends, good health, and nature where I find myself at peace.



## Colby

Colby (with Cheesehead) fulfills his dream with his support network by watching the Packers in Green Bay.



# Lorne

This was my story 2 years ago.  
In summer I was playing lawn bowling.

It is my favorite sport to play.  
I have met a lot of people there.  
In the picture bowl hit the jack.

And our team won the game.

I was so proud of myself.

This year I've been playing lawn bowling since July.

I did it again.

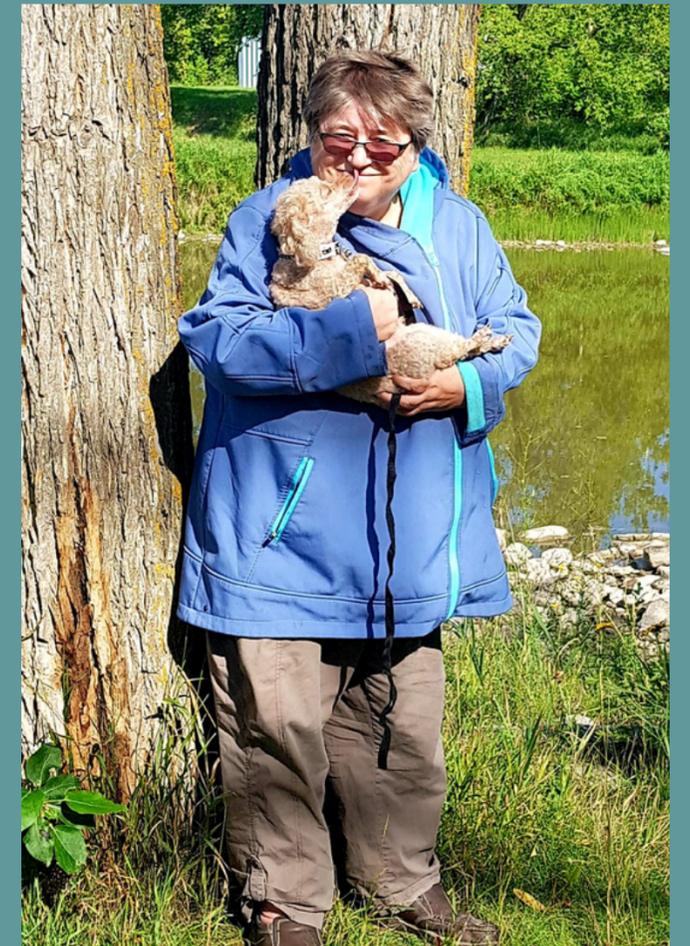
I feel grateful to play lawn bowling.



# Anita

I enjoy volunteering as it teaches me a lot of things. I enjoy going out for coffee or meal with friends. We have good visits while doing so. My favorite tv show is Good Witch and Jag. I really enjoy watching them. I like spending time with Bonzo. He is always happy to see me.

I really enjoy going for walks in the park. I really like when I see wild animals like rabbits and squirrels. I enjoy going on road trips when we can do so.

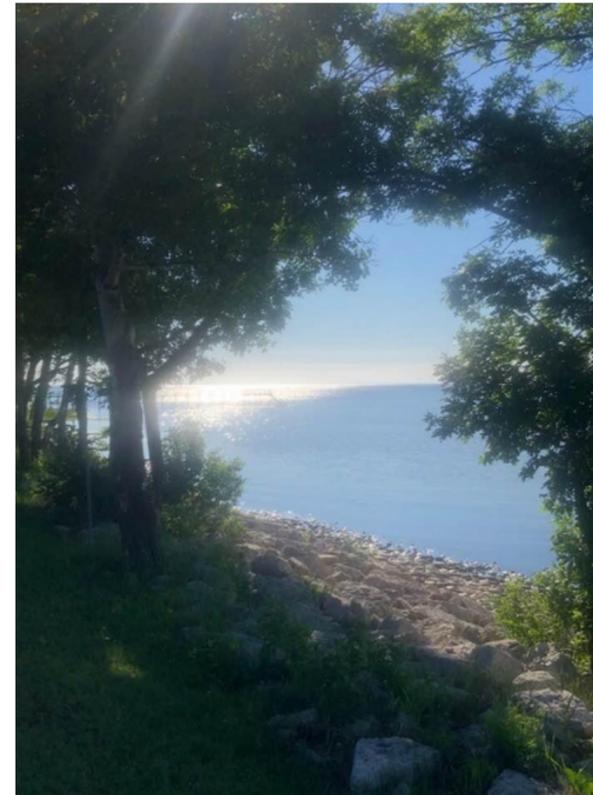


# Patti

There are so many things in life that bring me joy and happiness. I feel each day I should express my sincere gratitude!

I love my summer runs by the lake with my pup, I cherish my family and extended family - the family outings, dance parties, dinners, our family sport tournaments from soccer to curling to frisknock!

I am very thankful for all those connected to LIFE. And I get a warm positive feeling when I see true inclusion and belonging. You know, I think my feeling of gratitude helps life feel pretty great!





Created by Innovative Life Options

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