



# CONNECTIONS

**A Message from our Executive Director -  
Patti Chiappetta**



**Hello Friends-Happy Summer!**

I am pleased to present our LIFE Newsletter the summer edition, to each of you. I hope you enjoy the articles, the summer fun activities, and I want this newsletter to keep you connected and informed about the happenings around Innovative LIFE Options.

My fingers are crossed that we will see a summer that will allow us to once again connect with some family and friends, and participate in activities that are once again safe to enjoy. I greatly appreciate all the hard work and efforts each of you have made throughout the last 16 months – always trying to stay healthy and ensuring the good health and safety of your community. Congratulations!

The pandemic did challenge us! I believe it also made us very aware of how important connecting with others is to our health. Whether we connected over the phone, through social media, virtually or however we did it – We KNOW connecting and relationships are extremely important.

This was one of the reasons we thought we should create and send an extra newsletter this year. We want to stay connected to you!

Keep happy, healthy, safe and positive everyone!  
And know we always love to connect with you - enjoy the newsletter!

Kind regards,



## Post Pandemic Anxiety Coping Strategies

We at Innovative LIFE Options acknowledge that as we move into a post pandemic life, feelings of anxiety and stress may be rising for some of you. During the pandemic we have retrained our brains to be more cautious. This meant staying home as much as possible, keeping our distance from others, not congregating in groups and wearing masks when in public settings. For many, these practices not only felt natural, but also vital to our health and safety. Now that we are starting to move back towards our old social habits, we are here to remind you to be gentle with yourselves. We recognize this post pandemic life may leave you feeling uncertain in many ways. So, we have put together a list of tips that can help you work through your feelings of anxiety and uncertainty.

**Set your own boundaries.** It is okay to not want to rush into meeting up with friends in big group gatherings. Take some time to think about what your comfort levels are and where your anxieties lay. Maybe you feel more comfortable keeping your mask on even if it isn't the law anymore, or just going for a walk outside with one friend instead of a bigger group gathering. Take small steps to build up your confidence in what feels safe for you. Honor where you are at and don't feel rushed to "get back to normal". Communicate to those around you what your boundaries are and don't be afraid to stand your ground, you have the right to make choices based on your life and your experiences.

**Try not to let your anxiety get the best of you.** Take a step back to think logically when anxiety rises as old practices of gathering are reintroduced. If you are in an environment that makes you feel uncomfortable, remind yourself of the facts, such as "I have gotten my vaccine, I have a mask if I need it. I can leave if I feel unsafe."

**Try not to dismiss your COVID trauma.** Many countries are studying and realizing that people are experiencing very real trauma from living through a pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has been an extremely stressful ordeal and some have identified it as being a form of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. You don't have to downplay the impacts COVID-19 has had on you emotionally. If you need help dealing with your feelings about the pandemic talk to someone you trust, ask for help. You can reach out to your Resource Coordinator as well, who can connect you with helpful resources and services.

**Pause and Reflect.** You may be having trouble with pandemic closure and that's okay. Take time to reflect and think about what the pandemic taught you. There are lots of things about the pandemic we will be happy to leave behind, but there may also be some pieces that have helped you grow over the past year and a half. Look for the silver linings in your pandemic experiences, such as the resilience you have shown, what relationships have grown stronger, what new skills you have developed. Now think about what changes to your life have made your life better? What changes do you want to move forward with? What changes do you want to leave behind?

**Take care of you!** Find time to relax as your daily routines pick up again. Rest is an important part of your health, not overdoing your days will help keep you both mentally and physically healthy. You may find it helpful to try yoga or other mindfulness practices. Staying in the present moment can help relieve stressful emotions and anxieties. Try to do a meaningful activity to do each day. Taking part in the things you find fulfilling will help to keep your mood lifted.





## Connections LIVE Events

Join us via ZOOM! Virtual events from the comfort of your home!

**NEXT EVENT:**



**August 18th @ 7:00 pm**

Invitations will be sent by your LIFE Resource Coordinator or Options for Services Coordinator!

**Special thanks to:**

**All ICOF Employers who presented at our ICOF Marketplace in May!  
It was great to see all the products you create and sell.**

More events to be scheduled for the fall!



**CALLING ALL ICOF EMPLOYERS – WE NEED YOU!**  
**Please consider joining the ICOF Advisory Board  
to share your thoughts and ideas.**

We would like to meet 2 or 3X a year.  
Our Fall meeting will be in late September via ZOOM.

**Please call (204-784-4814) or email [patti@icof-life.ca](mailto:patti@icof-life.ca) if you want to join us!  
Or please talk to your Resource Coordinator.**

Again – I would LOVE to have you join the conversations!

Community Navigator is a project of LIFE to assist people in finding their way by discovering new options and opportunities through exploration of resources and tools, planning for the future and developing relationships to build strong support networks.



Email us at [communitynavigator@icof-life.ca](mailto:communitynavigator@icof-life.ca) for more information or inquiries.



## The 2021 Possibility Grant Recipients are:

**Chris Austin**

**Clarence, Evelyn and Maryann Friesen**

**Patrick Michalkow**

**Brenda Roznowski**

The Possibility Grant is made possible each year by donations made to the Endowment Fund through the Winnipeg Foundation to encourage each ICOF Employer to reach for their dreams and see what the possibilities are!



### Thoughts from Dave Pitonyak

[dimagine.com](http://dimagine.com)

"What I believe..." Margaret Wheatley (2002) People are the solution to the problems that confront us. Technology is not the solution, although it can help. We are the solution - we as generous, open-hearted people who want to use our creativity and caring on behalf of other human beings and all life. Relationships are all there is. Everything in the universe only exists because it is in relationship to everything else. Nothing exists in isolation. We have to stop pretending we are individuals who can go it alone. We humans want to be together. We only isolate ourselves when we're hurt by others, but alone is not our natural state. Today, somebody tells the truth. I don't know why this is, but I experience it often. Truly connecting with another human gives us joy. The circumstances that create this connection don't matter. Even those who work side by side in the worst natural disaster or crisis recall that experience as memorable. They are surprised to feel joy in the midst of tragedy, but they always do. We have to slow down. Nothing will change for the better until we do. We need time to think, to learn, to get to know each other. We are losing these great human capacities in the speed-up of modern life, and it's killing us. The cure for despair is not hope. It is discovering what we want to do about something we care about.

## A Challenge

By Judith Snow



Look around yourself for an opportunity to enter into relationships with someone who has been exiled. Act on the faith that this person has dreams and hopes much like your own and that this person has meaning in her or his life that can be conveyed to you and that has the power to enrich your life and the lives of others.

Understand that this person may be the bearer of a deep and creative dream. Bend your will and inner and outer ear to listen to this dream. Walk into the daily activities and environments of life with this person as dream and reality interact in a creative dance that expresses the meaning of life. Try this and may you rejoice in all that you create together.

---

### Looking for administrative support to manage your own services?



Contact Liz for more information  
[optionsforservices@icof-life.ca](mailto:optionsforservices@icof-life.ca)



**We are in the process of updating our website in 2021 and are looking forward to the new website.**

## Changes to the Vulnerable Persons Act (VPA)

"Recent changes have been made to Manitoba's Vulnerable Persons Living with a Mental Disability Act.

Changes to the VPA were recently passed in Manitoba's Bill 29: The Reducing Red Tape and Improving Services Act. Notable Changes are summarized as follows:



*Progress is impossible without change and those who cannot change their minds, cannot change anything.*

George Bernard Shaw

### Procedures for appointing substitute decision makers are streamlined in the following ways:

The commissioner may appoint a substitute decision maker without referring the matter to a hearing panel if all interested parties agree and are given the opportunity to make representations to the commissioner:

The maximum term for renewing the appointment of a substitute decision maker other than the Public Guardian and Trustee is increased from 5 to 10 years;

The maximum term for extending an emergency appointment or variation is increased from 30 to 60 days.

### For additional information:

<https://web2.gov.mb.ca/bills/42-3/b029e.php>



Have you checked out our new look on Facebook? We post interesting stories, updates and information on a regular basis!

**Don't forget to Like us on Facebook!**

## Summer Time Fun



Manitoba is a beautiful province! It doesn't matter where you go, there is something beautiful and amazing to experience and fun to explore, even in your own backyard!

---

**Send your summer time fun pictures  
before August 31st for a chance to win!**

Send pictures of your summer time fun. Tell us where you went and what you did there for a chance to win a fabulous gift basket!

**Email your pictures to: [info@icof-life.ca](mailto:info@icof-life.ca)**

---

### You could explore Manitoba:

**Inglis, Manitoba** -a National Historic Site which features several grain elevators throughout the community. It's the barley capital of Canada!

**Vermillion Park** in Dauphin comes complete with walking trails and great views of wildlife and birds. There is a day use picnic area with benches, playground and wading pool.

**Rainbow Beach**, situated on the shores of Dauphin Lake includes a day use area with many amenities, including an unsupervised swimming area, boat launch, playground, change rooms, concession, picnic shelter, washrooms and access to fresh water taps.

**Lake Audy** is a really neat feature of Riding Mountain National Park and features a wildlife sanctuary housing a herd of Plains Bison. There are viewing areas with exhibits detailing the bison and the history of the prairie grasslands. While in the park, don't forget to head to Wasagaming, which has many accommodation options, restaurants and shops.

**Spruce Woods Provincial Heritage Park** is a wilderness recreation destination which includes day use picnic sites, horse staging area, recreation trails, boat launch, wagon tours, concession and interpretive museum.



## Summer Time Fun You could explore Manitoba (cont'd)



**Gimli, Manitoba** is a resort beach community on the western shores of Lake Winnipeg. There are many beaches to visit, a New Iceland Heritage Museum and the Viking Statue.

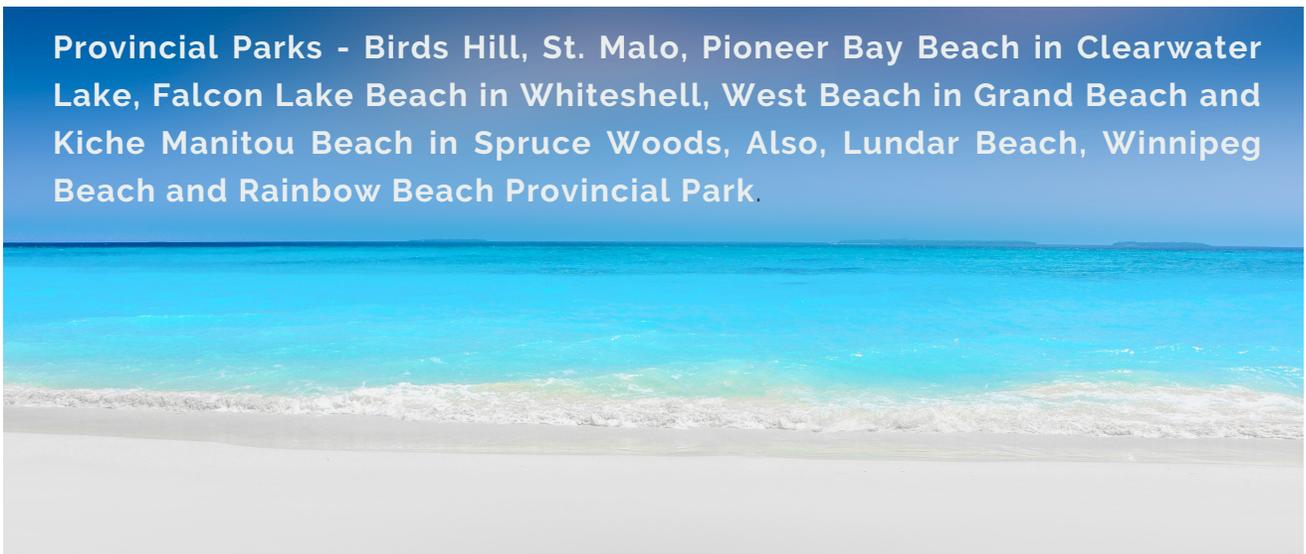
**Souris, Manitoba** features the longest swinging pedestrian bridge in Canada. The townsite shares it's space with wild peacocks that stroll through and claim the right of way? Don't forget to visit the Rock Shop and Victoria Park Bird Sanctuary.

**Austin, Manitoba** features the annual Thresherman's Reunion, a display of equipment and pioneer farming. You will also find the Manitoba Agricultural Museum which has a focus on accessibility including ramps, access to a golf cart and complimentary access to one support person.

**Whiteshell Provincial Park** has beautiful Manitoba views! From the Precambrian Shield to the multitude of lakes and rivers, the views are worth the drive. There are many beaches, parks, hiking trails and canoe routes to explore.

**The following beaches have introduced mobi-mats (mobility mats) to their locations.**

Provincial Parks - Birds Hill, St. Malo, Pioneer Bay Beach in Clearwater Lake, Falcon Lake Beach in Whiteshell, West Beach in Grand Beach and Kiche Manitou Beach in Spruce Woods, Also, Lundar Beach, Winnipeg Beach and Rainbow Beach Provincial Park.



## Summer Time Fun

You could stay closer to home:



If you stay closer to home, there are still many great summer activities to connect with your family, friends and community. All these activities can and should be done in accordance with current Public Health Orders. For example, if you choose to host a themed dinner party, you could have your guests join you on a patio, in the backyard or at a local park. Check out these great summer ideas. How many can you fit in this summer?

- Create a craft
- Host a themed dinner night
- Do a random act of kindness in your community
- Host a comedy night and share your favorite jokes
- Make a music video
- Host a game night
- Challenge your family and friends to a bake-off
- Plant something together with others
- Help your neighbor
- Visit a town, city or community that you've never visited before
- Take a road trip
- Host a music trivia night
- Host a spa day
- Go for a walk or hike or take pictures of your favorite nature scenes
- Attend a concert or performance (outdoor or virtually)
- Try a new recipe for dinner - share the recipe or dinner with a friend
- Lead a group exercise class
- Host a book club or movie club meeting
- Invite your family or friends to join you in your favorite activity

You could also take virtual tours from the comfort of your home. Visit:

The Royal Ontario Museum  
 The National Ballet of Canada  
 National Gallery of Canada  
 Canadian Museum for Human Rights

There are many online museums and galleries offering free virtual tours!



# Innovative LIFE Options

## The 8 principles that guide the work of LIFE

1. We know relationships are the spirit of life. We will nurture meaningful connections based on what is important to you.
2. We believe in choices. We guide a process of informed choice through avenues of supported decision making. We do this by offering information, guidance and resources. We believe choices are individualized, unique and result in opportunities for growth and reflection.
3. We take the time to listen. We listen by using more than our ears. We use our eyes, our hearts and our intuition. What's important to you matters for us and defines our role. We listen to what you want to communicate and we respect what you don't.
4. We are committed to learning and growing. We maintain a strong contact with others around the world to share best practices. We learn from you, keep teaching us.
5. We are strong, determined and we won't give up. We are committed to exploring all possibilities and find what works for you. We are here to help.
6. We honor each person's uniqueness. We believe your individuality guides the supports we offer – you are safe to be who you are.
7. We never stop dreaming. We hold a vision of greater possibilities.
8. We are creative and resourceful. We are innovators. We think within and beyond the box by drawing upon your collective gifts.

*We embrace these principles in our lives and are committed to help you do the same in yours.*