



Connections Newsletter

Fall Issue
September 2011

Important Election Information

It's Election Time in Manitoba....

We hope you all had a wonderful summer with lots of holidays, sunshine, swimming and visiting with friends. We are moving into fall and a very important time in Manitoba.

On October 4th, we will have a provincial election.

It means that voters will elect the people they want to run the government of Manitoba.

Each of you has the right and responsibility to vote for the person you want to speak for you in government. Government makes laws that we all have to follow and decides where and how money is spent. The Government of Manitoba provides all the funding for In The Company of Friends, for example.

This newsletter is directed at each person in Manitoba who receives ICOF funding, but it's also an important reminder to all individuals who circle ICOF participants. Consider focusing on this election as a "team" - get together, talk about it, vote together—have a special election night party at someone's home and watch the results together. You'd be surprised how many people don't vote. This is an opportunity for each of us to stand up and be good citizens!

If you receive money every month through the In The Company of Friends funding stream you may have never voted before. If you have never voted before, you can change that this year! It is important that you vote for people you believe will support ICOF and other things in the community that are important to you.

Here's how it works:

- You must be on the voter's list in your area. You will receive a card telling you where to vote if you are on the list. If you do not receive that card you will need to contact Elections Manitoba at 945-3225 or toll free 1-866-628-6837. They will ask you for your address and then will tell you where to call or go to have your name put on the list.
- Once you are on the list you will receive a card telling you where you will vote; that place is called a polling station. Take that card with you to the polling station on October 4th. At the polling station you will get a ballot with the names of candidates in your area and you will put a mark next to the name of the candidate that you are voting for. (Candidates are the people who want to get elected and speak for you in government). Make sure to ask the person there to show you exactly what kind of a mark you should use when you fill out your card and exactly where you should put that mark.
- When you are finished voting you can leave the polling station and feel proud of yourself for being a responsible citizen of Manitoba!!

Every adult in Manitoba has the responsibility to vote so make sure that your Support Network members, your staff, your friends and family all vote. Help them understand how important it is for you, for them and for your community. One more thing you need to know. Who you vote for is a very private thing. You do not have to tell anyone who you vote for. It is your right to keep it to yourself. However if you choose to tell others – go ahead. That's your decision! Don't forget that you need to respect other's privacy too. They can decide to keep their decisions private as well. So if your father or brother says that who they voted for is private, tell them that you understand.

Mark down October 4th on your calendar.

You can vote anytime during the day.

The polling station is open from early in the morning
until the evening.

Candidates, Political Parties and More!

Now that you know how to vote and how important it is, you need to decide who to vote for. This is a very important part of voting.

There are many ways to help you make your decision. You can go to candidate meetings, listen to what they have to say and ask them questions. Most places hold candidate meetings where all the people who want to be elected come to talk about the issues. You could also write a letter or send an email to the candidates in your area and ask them questions that are important to you. Or you can phone them and leave them a message.

You can also talk to the people who are important in your life to get their advice and thoughts. Ask them to help you in this important decision. Sit down together and make a list of questions that you might want to ask. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

Sample questions to ask the candidates; ask them.....

- If they know about In The Company of Friends? (This will be a great opportunity for you to educate the candidates on ICOF! If you want to send them some information call the LIFE office at 772-3557 and we will make sure you have some to send. Tell them about the website www.icof-life.ca where more information is available.)
- If they will continue to support ICOF if they are elected.
- If they will speak up for the rights of people with disabilities on important issues that affect their lives.
- What they will do to help people with disabilities live and participate in their communities.
- What they will do to create jobs for people with disabilities who want to work.
- If they will meet with people with disabilities if they are elected so that they understand all of the issues.

These are just some of the questions. What other questions can you think of that will be important in helping you decide who to vote for? Ask your Support Network for help in thinking about this. They may have some ideas that you haven't thought about. The important thing is don't feel shy about asking. It is the job of the candidate to tell you and other voters what is important to them and what they will fight for if they are elected. They understand that asking questions and gathering information will help you make your own voting decisions.

Did you know.....

There are 3 major political parties in Manitoba. A political party is a group of candidates who have certain ideas about how to run the government. A candidate usually belongs to a political party. The parties are:

The New Democratic Party

The Conservative Party

The Liberal Party

The New Democratic Party is the party that was elected in the last election and has been making decisions for the past few years.





The Rights and Responsibilities of Voting

Why should you vote?

Your right to vote is one of the most important rights you have. It is the way you help choose who will represent you in Manitoba's government. When you vote you are participating as a full citizen in our society. By expressing your choice at election time you are taking part in a democratic process that generations of Canadians have worked to build.

Whenever you have a "right" you also have a "responsibility". One goes with the other.

Here are your rights and your responsibilities regarding voting and elections.

Your Rights

Your Responsibilities

You have the right to get on the voters list.



You need to check to make sure you are on the voters list.

You have the right to vote.



You need to find out who the candidates are and what they believe in so you will know who to vote for.

Your vote is your own personal choice. It is a secret and you don't have to tell anyone unless you want to.



You need to make your own decision but you can talk it over with your Support Network, friends and family for advice.

You have the right to talk to the candidates and ask them questions.



You need to prepare your questions. Bring a friend along that you trust if you need or want some help.

On October 4th, when the polling stations close down, all the votes from all across Manitoba are counted. The candidates with the most votes will win the election. You can watch TV that evening and it will tell you who won the election in your area and how many votes your candidate received.

**When you see how many votes your candidate received
you will know that your vote is one of them!**



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News from the Board of Directors!!

In January of 2011 the Board and staff of LIFE held a one day retreat to brainstorm and share thoughts on the direction LIFE is taking. Facilitated by Bob Jones, the group spent a productive day sharing information and experiences, successes and challenges. At a later Board meeting there was general agreement that the discussion continue and that the LIFE Board take the lead in facilitating an ongoing process to explore some of the key themes that continue to arise for participants and Support Networks. We want to know better how to help make things stronger. In May a small committee was struck consisting of Marion Robinsong, Past President of LIFE, Pat Gouldie, Vice-President of LIFE and Charlene Farrell, Resource staff. They continue to seek input and advice from others that are involved with LIFE and ICOF. Information is coming in to the committee from Resource Staff and also from some Team Leaders of staff who work for ICOF participants. We'll let you know how things develop as they unfold.

www.icof-life.ca

By now you have likely had a look at the LIFE/ICOF website. We continue to update it with information, resources, news from the Board, staff, etc. We are always striving to make the website as useful as possible and full of things to inform and guide people. Did you know for example that....

- The full workbook that was developed for the Supported Decision Making conferences is on ICOF side of the website.
- An updated list of the Board of Directors is on the LIFE side.
- You can advertise your staffing positions on the ICOF side of the website—click on ‘employment opportunities’
- The full ICOF Guidebook is on the website with all the links and forms that you might require.
- You can send us a story about any part of your life that you would like to tell people. Tell us about a vacation or a new business venture that you are involved in. To read some of the submissions go to the ICOF side and click on: participant stories and news.
- Let us know if there is other information that would be helpful and we'll do it!

We're on the
web!
www.icof-life.ca



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