

Innovative LIFE Options

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Message from our Executive Director....

Spring/Summer, 2015



Hi, my name is **Patti Chiappetta**. I am the new Executive Director of Innovative LIFE Options. My warmest regards to all of you! I am so happy to have joined the LIFE TEAM. I feel honoured to be working with such an energetic, inspiring, and deeply committed group of people—the Staff and the Board have been so welcoming and helpful. I am now eager to get the chance to meet with ICOF employers, networks, families, friends, and the many colleagues we have from community organizations and government.

I want to thank Marsha Dozar, the outgoing Executive Director, for her extraordinary contributions to LIFE. Marsha helped pave a road with many successes. I am excited to continue down this road as I start my journey with all of you. We are grateful to Marsha for her fortitudinous, passion and dedication. Best wishes Marsha as you travel along your new path in life.

My journey with LIFE began in December and I have been having a very busy trip so far! Let me tell you about some of the exciting adventures the staff and I have been involved in—

Our Resource Coordinators have started an exciting new adventure with many of the networks within the ICOF model. We call them **Network Cafés!** The feedback has been so positive! Please join us at a Café closest to you! (dates in the newsletter) Another one of our endeavors is our **Options for Life project**. We are full speed ahead with a number of inspiring kitchen table discussions already completed.

Recently we applied to facilitate a workshop about ICOF at a National Conference entitled

Claiming Full Citizenship taking place in B.C. in October. We are anxiously awaiting their response and will keep you up to date. We have also been invited to be a host organization for visitors from Europe who are travelling across the country hoping to learn more about innovative self determination models.

We met with the Minister of Family Services (The Honourable Kerri Irvin Ross) in February. We shared information about ICOF and LIFE and we discussed issues and opportunities.

As a TEAM we will continue to explore opportunities to celebrate LIFE, and ICOF. A time to do just that is just around the corner at our **AGM on June 13th**. Our plans are unfolding for this event, we will have a chance to learn, connect and celebrate! Please do not miss out—mark your calendars.

This new journey of mine has certainly shown me we have a lot to be proud of when talking about this story of ours. ICOF is certainly a best seller! And nothing is impossible. Together, we can create even stronger partnerships, creative solutions, innovative pathways, and solid relationships. This sentiment has me pause, and reflect on the words of Francis of Assisi, who said, *"Start by doing what is necessary, then do what is possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible!"*

I am looking forward to meeting all of you over the next few months. Please call me or drop by the office. My door is always open! I would love to hear more about your life.

Patti

Innovative **LIFE** Options 

Presents... The Network Café

The *Network Cafes* are designed to bring Support Network members together to explore important questions, generate thoughts and explore possibilities.

We invite you to contribute, share and explore ways to keep ICOF networks strong and inspired.



Our first network café was held in Dauphin on February 28th. It was a huge success with representation from 5 ICOF networks.



We hope you will join us at one of the following locations near you!

Thursday, March 26th in Brandon 6:30pm - 9pm
Brandon Sportsplex, 30 Knowlton Drive

Wednesday, April 29th in Winnipeg 6:30pm - 9pm
LIFE Office, 120 Maryland Street

Monday, May 4th in Morden 6:30—9 pm
Morden Access Centre, 111 Gilmour Street

Please RSVP Charlene to confirm your attendance.

Email: charlene@icof-life.ca

Phone: 204-784-4812



20th Anniversary Fund

Please remember if you wish to donate to the Fund you can do so at any time throughout the year. We will send you an income tax receipt.

Did you know you can make your donation online on our website?

www.innovativelifeoptions.ca

Did you know....

Written by Michelle Pinette who attended CHMA's Mental Health First Aid training.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CHMA) is an organization dedicated to connecting people with the resources they need to improve mental health and recover from mental illness. In Canada, it is estimated that one in three people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime. Essentially, it will affect each of us directly or indirectly at some point in our lives.

CHMA offers an informative course called **Mental Health First Aid**. It provides people with a basic understanding of mental health and the stigma that surrounds it. It teaches people how to recognize different symptoms of mental health problems, provide initial help and guide the person towards appropriate professional help. It touches upon four types of mental health disorders such as mood disorders, substance abuse disorders, anxiety and psychotic disorders.

Some people with an intellectual disability also experience a mental health disorder so it is important as friends, family and support staff to learn how to identify, respond and treat each symptom separately. How you provide day to day supports to someone may look different than when they are experiencing a mental health disorder.

Mental Health First Aid does not enable you to be a therapist but helps build awareness and can provide information on community resources.

For more information on this course or other resources:

www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca

www.winnipeg.cmha.ca

**June 13,
2015**

AGM and Discussion

On Saturday, June 13th, LIFE will be hosting our Annual General Meeting at the Victoria Inn in Winnipeg.

We are organizing a day of events, with plans The feedback we received after our last AGM was very positive and continues to inspire us to provide you with a fun and informational day.

More detailed Information will follow in the spring time, but mark your calendars as we look forward to seeing you!

Remember to check out our website for additional information on events and other exciting stories.

www.innovativelifeoptions.ca





A word from the OFS Senior Coordinator



It has been almost two years that *Options for Services* has been a permanent program of Innovative LIFE Options and we continue to serve a steady stream of ICOF participants and their support networks. I have enjoyed getting to know many new people as part of this position, and look forward to meeting many more. OFS has been an incredibly fun way to help people achieve their goals. From helping reduce the administrative load, to helping people get connected, or to getting to those things that always fall to the wayside... we just love to be creative in how we can be used! If you have an idea, please call or email us and we will brainstorm "Why not?" instead of "Why?"

As always, finding skillful contractors is a main priority and we continue to advertise and screen in all areas of the province. I am proud to say that we now have fifteen contractors in our database; four in Brandon, one in Portage la Prairie, one in Altona, and nine in Winnipeg. I believe we have the strongest group of contractors to date and am very thankful for all of their hard and professional work. My aim is to develop small pockets of contractors in communities all around the province to provide the most accessible service possible. While we work toward that goal, OFS is still available to you even if there isn't a contractor in your community area. We believe that everyone should have access to this service and as such LIFE will cover the cost of travel to get our contractors out to you.

Last year OFS engaged in an exciting endeavor with Family Services and a family accessing self-managed respite dollars. We were approached to help the family set up a payroll system that met both their needs as well as the needs of Family Services. Its success has shown us that we can be helpful to individuals not receiving ICOF funding and we are exploring other possibilities. ICOF participants

will always remain our number one priority, but we are delighted that this service could be beneficial to a variety of populations.

Your feedback is always appreciated, so please let us know if there is anything we can be doing to help make this service more useful.

Please email optionsforservices@icof-life.ca or call 204-772-3557 ext 3.

"It takes off a level of pressure or extra work for primary supports and can bring in expertise, a different perspective, or skill set".

A Support Network Member

"Before, (staff was) not very good. Wrong food, did not show up and allowed bad company. After Options for Services, (staff was) very good, real good. (The Options for Services contractor) helped me to get the right staff who knew what they are doing, and the staff now do the right thing for me."

An ICOF participant

The LIFE Team

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