

Breaking News Bulletin....



Winter, 2012

Hello everyone! It's the end of February, winter is having it's last stand and before we know it spring will be here. There is change in the air—good change—welcome change so sit back and have a quick read on our 'Breaking News Bulletin'.....

Breaking News for ICOF Employers only!

There is exciting news regarding changes to the Pension and Benefits program offered through the Department of Family Services. (SS3 - Staff Stabilization Initiative III).

We have been working with senior staff in the Department of Family Services for the last few months to review and refine the benefit package that ICOF employers are able to offer their staff. The Department recognizes that ICOF employers may have a more challenging time finding and retaining staff and for that reason we can now confirm that as of April 1, 2012:

- ICOF employers will be able to include wages for employees with at least an average of 20 hours/week on the funding calculations. That replaces the way it works now - with staffing hours needing to be fulltime in order to be eligible.
and....
- ICOF employers are able to include associated costs of the distribution of pension and benefits as part of the funding request to Family Services (e.g.: CPP, EI, admin fees). Previously ICOF employers were responsible for paying for those 'extras' themselves. There will be no additional dollars provided for those costs however the costs can be subtracted from the full amount.

In addition, Family Services has now confirmed that they will require confirmation documents from the institution confirming the distribution of funds. Personal letters from ICOF employers or employees will no longer be accepted.

We're very excited about these small steps towards helping you offer more and better stability to your staff. We'll be sending out a letter shortly with more details on the process. In the meantime if you have any questions contact Vale directly at vale@icof-life.ca or 414-6398.



Welcome Back Margo!

Yes it's true—Margo Powell (former Executive Director of LIFE) is moving back to Manitoba and coming back to LIFE. On April 1st Margo will be returning to LIFE as coordinator of a special project called "*Life is Good in ICOF*". Her role will be to develop, coordinate and oversee a public relations campaign around the province that is intended to raise the profile of ICOF. Our hope is that the ICOF model will become better known in communities around the province which will help recruit new support network members and staff for you and ensure that individuals and families are aware that self-managing is an option.

We'll be talking more about this project at the AGM in Brandon on June 2nd, so join us in welcoming Margo back.....

Changes Changes and More Changes—

LIFE has made some changes to the titles of our staff.

Lynda Dobbin Turner, formerly referred as Resource Coordinator will now be referred to as **Senior Coordinator**.

Each of the 6 Resource Staff will now be referred to as **Resource Coordinators**.



Disability Tax Credit Information

It's that time of the year again. Soon we will all be pulling together our financial information in preparation for filling out those income tax forms, in hopes of a financial return. When you visit your accountant this year ask him/her to explore two credits that you might be eligible for, specially:

The **Disability Tax Credit** which is a federal tax credit available for people who have a disability and loved ones who care for them. To apply for the Disability Tax Credit, you need Form T2201, Disability Tax Credit Certificate, which is found on the Canada Revenue Agency website:
<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca>

The **Primary Tax Credit** which is a provincial tax credit offered to people who volunteer their time to help somebody who lives with a disability. People receiving ICOF funding can identify one person from their SN to apply for this. More information about this credit can be found at: <http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/tao/pdf/caregiver/application.pdf> or speak to your LIFE Resource Coordinator.

ICOF participants and all adults living with an intellectual disability in Manitoba are already in the system so all you need to do is fill in the required information on the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit form. To fill out the form, ICOF participant information is entered in part A and part A is signed by the ICOF participant. Part B is completed by one support network member and is signed by one support network member. You may claim back to 2009.

The form can then be mailed to:

Manitoba Family Services and Consumer Affairs
Provincial Services
PO Box 3000
203 South Railway Street East
Killarney, MB R0K 1G0

Once you get a letter of approval and a stamp of approval on your application, you will use this information when you apply for your primary caregiver tax credit at tax time.

For more information on the Primary Tax Credit:

- <http://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/tao/caregiver.html>
- Manitoba Government Inquiry: 1-866-626-4862
- Manitoba Health and Healthy Living: 1-204-788-6646

There are some family members who have been enjoying these credits for the past year or two so definitely mention it to the people who are preparing your taxes.

Don't forget to mark you calendar.....

LIFE AGM

June 2, 2012

Riverview Curling Club
420 Maryland Avenue
Brandon, MB

Following our AGM,
we will be hosting a **BBQ**
and are planning an evening of fun!

Watch for detailed registration information in your mail!

