

Living In
Friendship
Everyday Inc.

Connections Newsletter

Spring Issue
April 2011

A Matter of Managing

Welcome back to spring – what a relief to feel the warmth coming back to Manitoba! We're pleased to bring you our spring 2011 edition of our newsletter - this edition is called 'A Matter of Managing'.

At the heart of ICOF is the Support Network. Each person receiving ICOF funding is surrounded by a loving, caring group of people who are concerned about, spend time with and ensure that he/she is living a full and connected life. That is the essence of the model!

There is another very important role that the Network plays in the life of the ICOF employer. It is crucial to the success of each individual receiving ICOF funds. It is related to the self-managing part of the model. It requires that each person, along with his/her Network manages the staffing, money, and other daily living tasks that we all need to do as we live our lives. The key word here is *managing*.

We have dedicated this newsletter to the matter of managing. It is just a brief snapshot of things that need to be tended to but..... don't worry you are not alone. Your LIFE Resource Staff is available to help you every step of the way!

Managing...ugh! The good news about receiving ICOF funding is you get to manage your own life. The bad news is it takes work to do it!

Self-managing in ICOF focuses on some functional things that you and your Support Network are responsible for. Managing means that you and your Network are in charge of making sure that these things are done.

The two major ones are:

- **Managing your money**
- **Hiring and supervising your employees**

Both functions need to be done fairly well to keep things on track so that you can get down to the real business of living your life!



Welcome Tara Martin

Hi everyone, I'm Tara Martin and I joined the LIFE team on Valentines Day as a Resource Staff for the Westman area (Brandon). Up until May 2010, I was a team leader for 3 1/2 years with an individual receiving ICOF funding in Brandon. My husband and I have been embracing all the challenges of parenthood with the birth of our baby girl, Sophie last May. I am so pleased to be working for LIFE where I can stay connected to the philosophy of ICOF and people that I have come to know. I have felt so welcomed by everyone since I began working for LIFE in February. I am honoured to come aboard!



Accounting for your money...

Let's start with what you know.

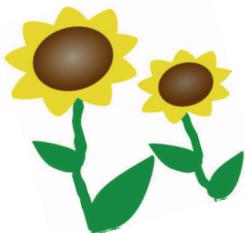
You receive money that is deposited into your bank account each month to help you pay your rent, buy food, insurance, and other things. It also allows you to hire your own employees to support you each day. One of your Support Network members likely works with you to organize and keep track of where your money goes. That's important to ensure you have what you need. It also helps you stick to your budget. Keeping an accounting is important because you need to send a statement to LIFE every 3 months just to let us know how you are doing. The government requires that.

But, did you know that there is money in your budget to hire a bookkeeper to do this for you if you choose? That means you would give them all your receipts and they would do the statements for you. We know that some Networks have simply asked the bookkeeper to send the statements directly to LIFE. The problem with that is you, (with the help of your Network) are the manager and need to have a good understanding of where things are at with your money.

So here is what is important for you and your Support Network to remember.

Even if you hire a bookkeeper to do the statements or organize your money, you must still review the forms and make sure you understand and agree to everything before you send them on to us.

In other words, you are still managing the overall task but simply asking someone else to do the work for you.



Hiring and Supervising your Staff

Hiring employees is likely one of your most challenging tasks. But it's time well spent because when you don't have the right people doing the job, things may not go well for you. Sometimes we see ICOF employers and their Support Networks doing this together very well.

Other times, we see people really struggling. Sadly there are times we see ICOF employers go into crisis because the people providing their direct service support are either not the right people, do not understand exactly what it is they are supposed to be doing or have not received the appropriate training and feedback to help them do their jobs well.

ICOF employers and Support Networks are often not experienced in human resources. Actually, most of us aren't! Thankfully there are lots of people who are though.

We have recently updated our resources and each of you will be receiving a copy of "LIFE's Guidebook". It is filled with all kinds of information about advertising, putting together job descriptions, interviewing, hiring, supervising etc. In this newsletter we wanted to highlight three important functions: Creating a job description, training and supervising.





JOB DESCRIPTIONS

If your employees do not know what they are hired to do, how can you expect them to do it? It makes sense yet so often we see people that are confused in their jobs. The easiest way to ensure that this is clear is to develop a job description. It doesn't have to be complicated or formal. It can be a letter or a list that includes things that you expect the person to do. Here is a good example of an actual situation:

An employee sat around and watched TV a lot with his ICOF employer while Support Network members were rushing around buying groceries and cutting the lawn. It's no wonder the network members were burning out. They were doing everything. They were very frustrated with the employees for "not doing anything", but no one had sat down to make it clear to them that this is what they were expected to do.

You might be surprised how many employees are really not clear on what you and your Support Network expect of them. Ask them and see what they say. Make sure when you hire new people that you include this in your discussions even before they start the job. Remember...your employees are not just your companions. The government gives you money to hire people to help you do the things you need help with in order to live your life.

So be really clear. Have that discussion with each employee. Be detailed in everything you want him or her to do. You have a right to that. More importantly you have a responsibility to do that. It is part of what you and your Support Network need to do to manage your staff.

TRAINING

While you are discussing exactly what you expect your employees to do, ask each of them what kind of information or training they will require in order to do it. Here is a simple example:

You may expect someone to help a person cook dinner. This is fine for someone who cooks but it's not so easy if someone who has never turned on the oven.

If you hire a Team Leader and expect him/her to supervise the other staff, ensure that you provide the kind of training or information to help this happen.

These seem like simple examples but we see things like this happening every day. Make sure that everything that is part of the job description is something that the employee feels able to do. Make sure that each employee understands that they are part of a team of people who help you live your life. That includes staying as healthy as possible, working, making and being with friends, learning new things, growing, contributing etc. Give them the help that they need to understand just how to get better at assisting you in each of these areas.



SUPERVISING

Once the employee knows what he/she is expected to do and has the information and training that is needed, it is your job to make sure they are doing it well. That means supervising. Again, it doesn't have to be formal. It means communicating, communicating and more communicating. Take time every month to tell them one thing they are doing well and include something that you would like them to do a bit better.

It seems like it is a bit scary to do this but if you don't, your employees will not know how they are doing. Supervising is about finding a way to communicate openly with the employee. We know this may be new for you and your Support Network to do. We can't stress enough how important it is that you and your Network discuss how you are going to do this and what help you may need.

Even if you do everything right, you still may not have the right people doing the job. **Don't settle for the wrong person.** You may think it's easier to keep who you have working even if he/she is not really good at the job. The staffing team that surrounds and supports you is such an important group of people. Keep trying. Keep searching. Call your LIFE Resource Staff and ask for help. That's what we're here for!

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REMEMBER: Managing matters.

LIFE's job is to help you and your Support Network get better and better at what you do.

- Would you like to meet with other individuals and their networks to share information?
- Would you like someone to actually sit with you and coach you with some of the tasks?
- Is there something else that would be more helpful?

Call Us!



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**Living In Friendship
Everyday Inc.**

Providing resources
to ICOF employers
since 2000



**To attend the AGM, please register
with the LIFE office.**

**You can call Laureen 772-3557 or
toll free 1-888-516-5445.**

You can also email info@icof-life.ca

**In early May, you will be receiving a formal
invitation to the AGM
and revised draft of the By-laws.**

Watch for it in your mail.....



Why do we have an AGM?

As an organization supported by the government and the community, it is the law that LIFE must have an AGM every single year. It is a time when people get together and talk about all the things the organization has done over the year and the way in which money was spent. An AGM is there to ensure that LIFE is accountable. Being accountable means LIFE is being responsible to the members and letting them know that they are doing the best work they can.

LIFE



LIFE'S Annual General Meeting

What is an AGM?

AGM stands for Annual General Meeting. An AGM happens once a year for members of an organization so they can find out how the organization has been managed for the past year.

Every participant of In the Company of Friends and his/her Support Network is a member of LIFE automatically, at no charge. That means, you and your entire Support Network are invited to attend the LIFE AGM on June 4, 2011.

Other people in the community can become members if they are interested for a \$5.00 fee.



**LIFE's AGM will take
place on
Saturday,
June 4, 2011
Victoria Inn
1808 Wellington Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

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