

Innovative LIFE Options



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Connections Newsletter

January, 2014

LIFE News

Sometimes “new” means something that was created recently. Other times “new” means something that has been improved upon and freshened up. Happy New Year is an acknowledgement that we are moving from yesterday to a new day...building on where we have been and moving into a next phase! Here it is, 2014 and we all have many new and improved things to celebrate at LIFE.

We have a new name, logo and website.

After being “Living in Friendship Everyday” for 13 years, Innovative LIFE Options, Inc. became our new legal name on July 15, 2013. The staff and Board of LIFE decided it was time to build on what and where we have been and reintroduce ourselves. Our new logo is a little graphic of a person reaching high up to the stars, exploring dreams, looking for bigger, better possibilities. We believe it is a reflection of the 66 individuals who receive ICOF funds and have chosen to live within that paradigm. In the past 6 month we have been transitioning and introducing our new brand that we hope is a better representation of who we are and what we do.

We ARE **Innovative** and full of **LIFE** and all about **Options**.

To publicize the news and to reach out to Manitoba and broader community we have developed a new and improved website. It is an exciting multi-media location on the web where people from all over the world can get to know us. Through our tracking, we can already see that we have had over 16,000 hits with visitors from Manitoba, Canada, the United States, Lithuania, Poland, Mexico, Thailand, United Kingdom, Sweden and more. You will find basic information about our organization, resources, stories, videos, links and contact information. You can also find basic information about *In the Company of Friends*. There are several ways to get there, we think we have covered all the bases....here you go:

www.innovativelifeoptions.ca
www.innovativelifeoptions.com
www.innovativelifeoptions.org
www.icof-life.ca

Happy New Year to each of you as you move along with your lives, building on what has come before and reaching for the future! We wish you an innovative 2014 and a life full of opportunities and options.

Come along for the ride!



The New Story

As you can see in this first newsletter of 2014, much of the information being shared is about 'new' things that have happened since our last publication. The new name, new website, new year...so keeping in alignment with the theme, we'd like to share some ideas learned about the 'New Story'.

Some of you will already be familiar with the work of John Lord. As a community researcher, author and facilitator, John has extensive experience with social inclusion. For decades he has made it his mission to initiate positive change in how vulnerable people are supported, with the desired end result being inclusion and belonging in the communities where they choose to live. He has coined the phrase 'New Story' to describe the values, principles and strategies that are guiding these new approaches.

"The New Story challenges us to reflect on how we live and act in the world. Many questions arise when we consider the idea that everyone should be able to access an everyday life...the New Story advocates work to reduce barriers, while at the same time developing community alternatives that enable everyone to experience an everyday life."

John Lord



As John says "the New Story reflects the research and awareness of a new paradigm of support that include key elements, including individualized funding, independent facilitation, community engagement, strong family networks, and person-centered approaches". *In the Company of Friends* is one of a few models offered in Canada that fully supports individuals being able to live the 'New Story' by embracing each of those elements. He goes on to say "a New Story is relationship-centered work. It involves connecting, relating, and honoring relationships. It means being intentional about supporting and developing relationships".

We were so pleased to bring John to Winnipeg for a workshop in this past year and to spend 3 days digging deeper and deeper into mechanics of facilitating the New Story for individuals funded through ICOF. It is, after all, what the model is all about!

We have a couple of John's books in the office and are pleased to lend them out. Talk with your Resource Coordinator on ways that she can help you, your support network, your staff and all your supporters move forward in your new story. What better way to start the new year!

Website and Books

www.johnlord.net

Pathways to Inclusion

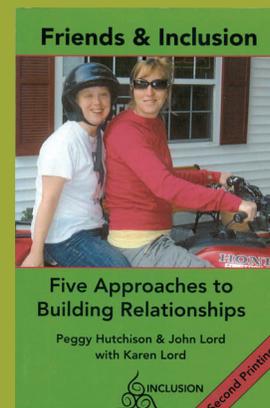
Building a New Story with People and Communities

By: John Lord & Peggy Hutchison

Friends & Inclusion

Five Approaches to Building Relationships

By: Peggy Hutchison & John Lord with Karen Lord



The first 5 people to submit their **"Celebrating ICOF 20th Anniversary"** submission will receive a copy of John's book "Friends & Inclusion" from LIFE.

Thank you to Marlene and Mark for the 1st submission!

Send your submissions to the LIFE office or you can email it in. Better yet, if you are in the area, drop it off and have a visit!

Email to: info@icof-life.ca



Our New Story

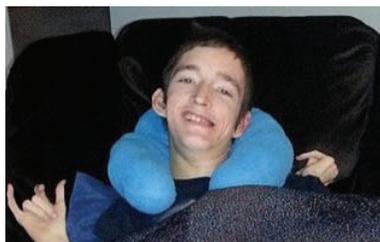
In Manitoba we have much to celebrate. *In the Company of Friends* had a 20th Anniversary in 2013 and in our 21st year, we are just now “coming of age”. Those people who have been around since the early days tell us how much they have learned and grown over the years. **Seven of the original 10 individuals who were phased in during 1993 continue to be assisted by a support network and receive ICOF funding.**

Congratulations to the 7 of you for pioneering Manitoba’s first (and only) self-directed model. We will be contacting each of you and personally inviting you to attend the AGM in June!

On January 1st, 2014, we had 2 new ICOF employers start their journey. We welcome them both to ICOF. One of the new ICOF employers is named Ryan and he lives in Westman. He sent out an email recently to his friends and supporters and has agreed to have it printed in this newsletter.

"Hello from Brandon! I have been here (ICOF) for two weeks yesterday but seems longer. Mom and I have been very busy trying to get my life on the go and I am enjoying it so far. We have done so many things already and everyone has been so nice. I have met so many new people that I have lost count. We have learned so much in two weeks. We have interviewed several people and have picked three women. They have come for orientation and training starts tomorrow. We have trained some girls already and they are awesome. Some girls are really pretty! Ha Ha! It is tiring hearing the same speeches over and over and I'm getting impatient a little. Overall though Mom says I'm pretty good. Mom is tired but a good tired as she knows this is what I want and it will be worth it in the end. Mom is homesick for her dogs and I'm not homesick at all. I miss some special people though and you know who you are. Better come visit me as soon as the weather gets warm and it is safe to travel. Thank you to everyone for your help and all the other support network people at home, Saskatoon and Montreal! My next adventure will be skiing at Asessippi. Love you guys!

Ryan



We would like to compile a commemorative package to celebrate ICOF turning 21. We recently sent a package asking you to tell your story, send in a picture, a quip—something to acknowledge this important passage in Manitoba.

Celebrating ICOF

We are extending the deadline to February 28th.

If you have been here from the beginning, or are just starting your ICOF journey, or you fall somewhere in between—we would love to hear from you. Anyone is welcome to submit—ICOF employers, Support Network members, families and employees—be part of the history.

Ask your Resource Coordinator if you would like help putting something together.

Depending on the quantity of information we receive, we may put together a book, a newsletter, a website—but it starts with you!

Send your submissions to:
info@icof-life.ca

Be creative, reminisce and have fun!

Upcoming Events at LIFE

Information will soon be coming about an evening panel session geared towards ICOF families and support networks. This evening will be held on May 20th in Winnipeg.

**May 20,
2014**

**Panel
Discussion
for ICOF
Families and
Support Networks**

**May 23,
2014**

Day Long Event

Over the past few years LIFE has hosted several successful conferences on various topics for ICOF employers, their staff and support networks. They have provided a wonderful opportunity for people to share, learn and grow together.

This year we are planning another inspiring day! We hope you will join us at the Norwood Hotel in Winnipeg on May 23. Information and details are coming soon!

**June 14,
2014**

AGM and Panel Discussion



On Saturday, June 14th, LIFE is pleased to host our Annual General Meeting and a panel session geared towards ICOF families and support networks.

In the morning, we invite you to attend the panel discussion where the conversation will focus on common challenges and successes as support networks continue to age and evolve.

In the afternoon, we will be hosting our Annual General Meeting to discuss responsibilities of our organization, but also to share in the celebration of ICOF reaching it's 20th year! We are excited to share this day with you to honor all of the lessons learned and challenges overcome.

We will be hosting the day at the Victoria Inn in Brandon.

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

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