LIFETIME Networks

FRIENDSHIP · SUPPORT · COMMUNITY

Strategic Plan

2017 to 2020

Strategic Plan 2017 to 2020

INTRODUCTION

At the end of January 2017, over 3 days, 22 people, who were passionate about the direction of our dynamic organization, met and discussed the next 3 years of our organization's future. The group that met involved members of the board of directors, directors, management, front line staff and volunteers.

The strategic planning meeting consisted of two issue identification sessions and one full day session for solution seeking and strategizing. From the initial meetings three key initiatives were identified: Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks, Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in Pursuit of Excellence and Build Even Stronger and More Resilient Relationships for Individuals in Pursuit of Lifelong Support. On the morning of the full day session these initiatives were further refined to identify 3-5 Tasks in each Initiative. In the afternoon, the working groups defined assignments that would help lead to the achievement of each task.

Each assignment is a snap shot of the thinking of the group on one day in January 2017. It is by no means a prescription for work to be done, merely a leaping off point for idea generation. It is anticipated that the working groups who take on these tasks will be enabled by the assignments and not restricted to them.

Each Task has a context statement associated with it. This statement can be thought of as the intention of the task and captures some of the questions and concerns that led to the creation of the task. As you read you will notice a high degree of interrelatedness between tasks.

Readers of this plan are encouraged to continue the work that was begun in the last week of January 2017, with full license to try new approaches and assignments which are not in the plan but are in line with the context or intention of the Task.

Attached behind the Initiatives and tasks, readers will find the "SWOT" analysis which was used to identify common issues and deepen our understanding of priorities over the next three years.

In Appendix one, readers will find anecdotal and historical   information on Lifetime Networks which was created in 2014 and has been updated to reflect the current status of Lifetime Networks and the environment it exists in.

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SWOT-STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

The SWOT Analysis process is commonly used in business planning exercises. It examines an organization's internal characteristics (the strengths and weaknesses) and the external environment (opportunities and threats), and looks for matches or common issues. These can then lead to quantifiable goals and objectives.

The following evaluation data was developed from a survey of the executive team and management.

Strengths

1. Passion & commitment of the staff

2. Openness of the organization

3. Culture of caring and inclusion

4. Flexibility, accountability, intentionality, responsiveness

5. Staff work together as an effective team

6. Long-term commitment of the staff and the served families

7. Provides great career opportunities for the staff

8. Diversity of the staff and volunteers

9. A history of connection to the Community Living philosophy

10. Excellent reputation

11. The fee-for-service funding model

12. Experienced with Individualized Funding and fee-for-service

13. Creates a great first impression

14. Can evolve new services and opportunities as participants' needs change

15. The organization's Vision

16. Quite successful at fundraising

17. Very effective at using the available funding well

18. The Board is supportive and has a variety of skills

19. Complete set of formal policies and procedures in accordance with The Policy Governance Model, created by Dr. John Carver.

Weaknesses

1. The Networks program is only financially sustainable if much of the associated overhead costs are borne by other Lifetime Networks programs.

2. Generational shift could result in lack of knowledge of history of organization and Community Living movement.

3. Poor visibility among youth aged 16-18.

4. Lack of a plan to better support older participants if we are truly "Lifetime".

5. We need to continue to market Lifetime Networks, and we need more skills and resources in this area.

6. Employee benefits are lacking, and can adversely effect staff retention

7. The Board is small, needs some additional skill sets, and needs to participate more.

8. Loss of any key staff would be very problematic (especially in view of the growth rate).

9. Space is at a premium, and is exacerbated by the growth rate.

Opportunities

1. Community Living British Columbia is shifting from Global Contract funding to Individualized Funding (our speciality).

2. "Networks" is becoming the in-word in the Community Living movement.

3. Potential to create cross-program opportunities at Lifetime Networks.

4. As we grow, more group activities, social functions, and niche groups become practical because we have a critical mass of supported individuals. (such as the Music program, and Guys Group)

5. An increase in our size makes it practical to consider having Network Nights.

6. Potential to increase business connections from the Chamber of Commerce.

7. We are well-regarded in the community.

8. Many youth aged 16-18 and their families are searching for organizations like Lifetime Networks.

9. Community Living British Columbia's new Individual Family Preference policy plays to our strengths.

10. Additions to the Board could expand our skill set and contact list.

11. Partnership opportunities with other service providers.

12. Opportunities with seniors; particularly with regards to Networks.

Threats

1. We are no longer seen as being unique with Individualized Funding.

2. Because families now have a choice of provider, we must continue to create a great first impression.

3. High growth rate and a generational shift could result in the organization's history being lost.

4. Community Living British Columbia funding is flat, even though demand for services is growing.

5. Becoming over-extended (trying to meet too many needs).

COMMON ISSUES

The SWOT Analysis outlined above has identified a number of common issues that Lifetime Networks needs to consider and/or embrace:

- Long-term financial sustainability

- Individualized Funding and fee-for-service uniqueness

- Leveraging the whole Network concept

- Exploiting our experience and reputation

- Succession planning; reliance on key individuals

- Board development

- Handling vigorous growth (systems, facilities, management, staff training, diminishing returns, while still creating a great first impression and quality programming).

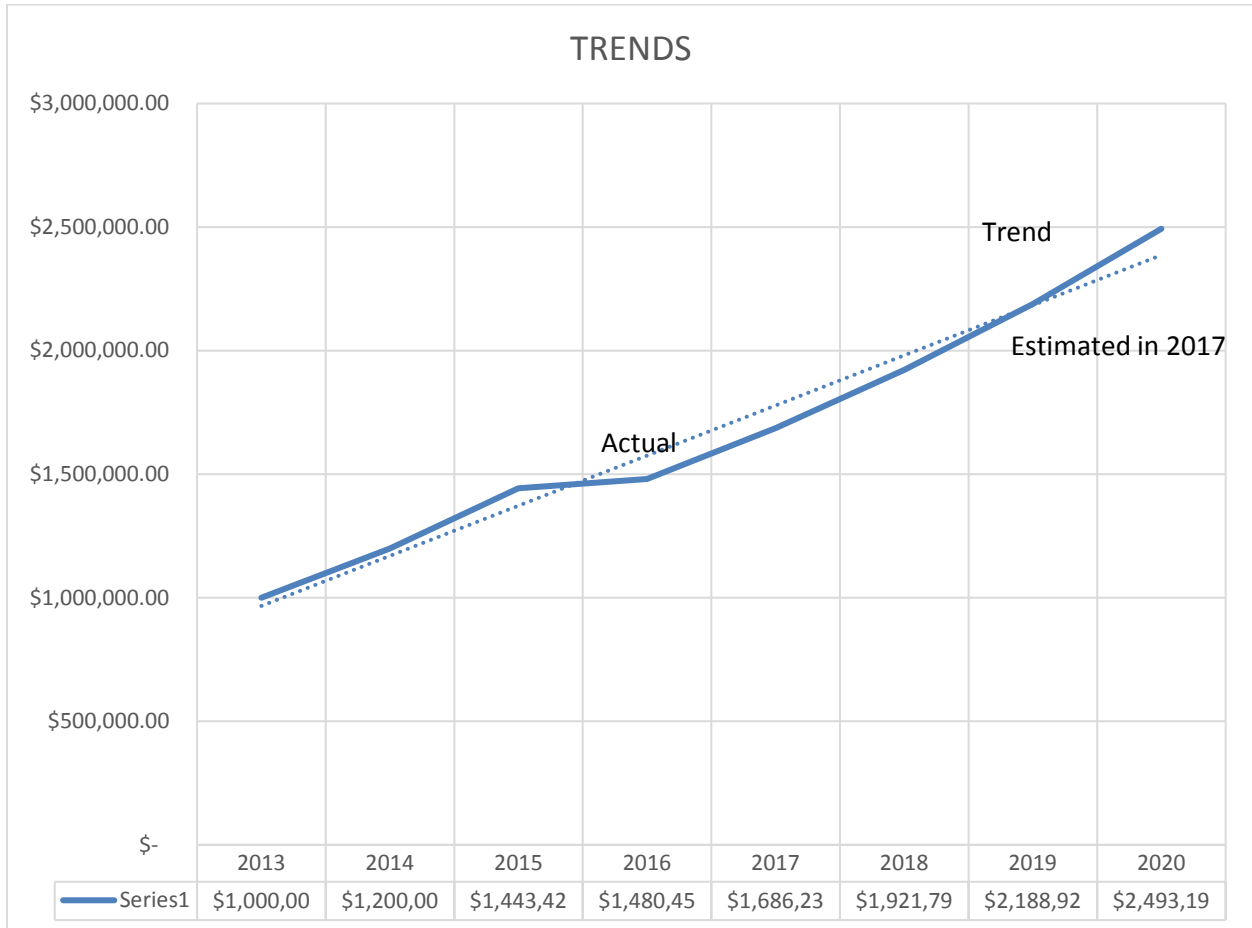- Keeping Lifetime Networks' staff flexible, passionate, and efficient

FINANCIAL

Estimated Financial Trends

REVENUES

TRENDS

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Series1	$1,000,00	$1,200,00	$1,443,42	$1,480,45	$1,686,23	$1,921,79	$2,188,92	$2,493,19

Based on a Compound Annual Growth rate of 13.97% (2013-2016)

SURPLUS

TRENDS
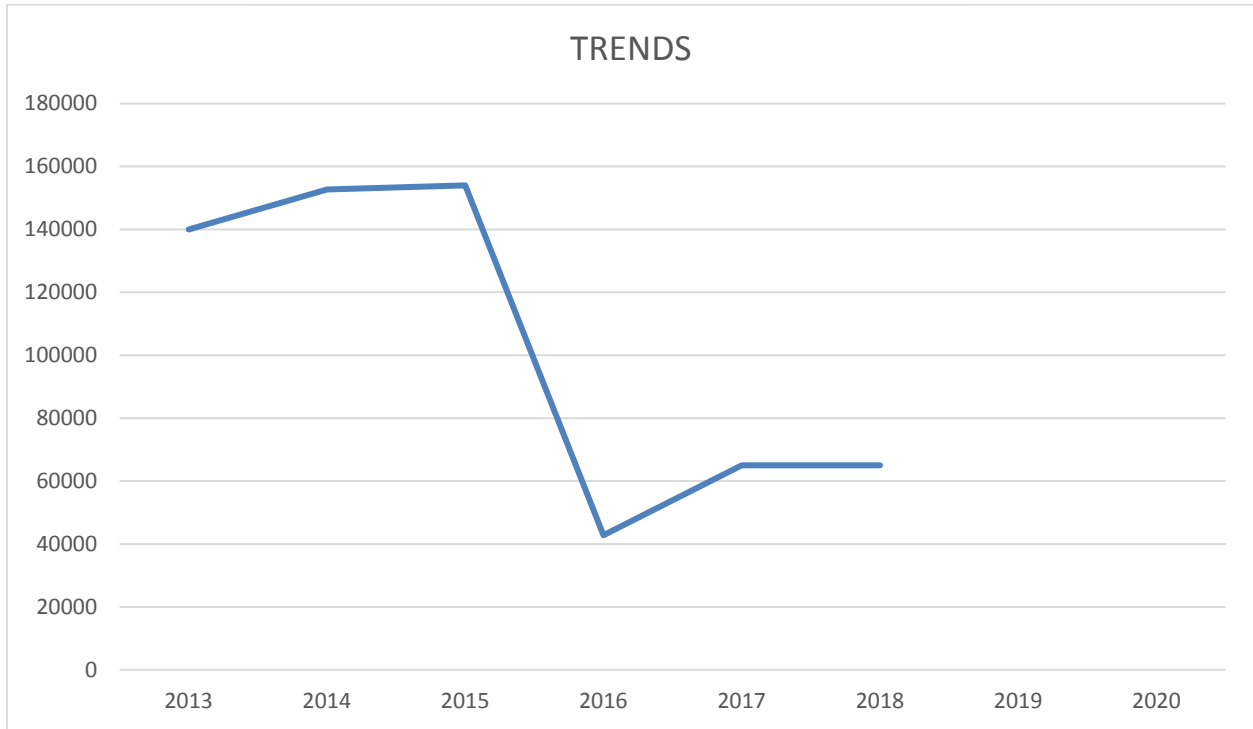
Anticipated Surplus of $65,000/year to meet previous strategic goal of $750,000 in Reserve fund by 2018. Investment in Human Resources, rental spaces and program design decreased surplus in 2016 in anticipation of increased capacity for managed growth as laid out in the strategic growth.

INITIATIVES

Initiative #1

Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." – Margaret Mead

Task A. Recommitment to Lifetime Networks mission, vision, values and principles

Assignment	Details
1	review Lifetime Networks Mission, vision, values and principles to ensure shared understanding of their meanings.

Context: The board expressed that by reviewing the vision, mission and values together to gain a mutual agreement and belief about the intention of the statements they felt they could better generate "buy in" on "principle to practice" leadership. It was also felt that this renewal and "re-ignition of passion" should happen with all volunteers, staff and members of Lifetime Networks, this is captured more completely in initiative 2 and 3. It is suggested that this work is best planned for as an ongoing and cyclical schedule.

Initiative #1 **Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks**

Task B. Clarify, define and strengthen Lifetime Networks' role in advocacy and self-advocacy support.

Assignment	Details
1	Create a policy regarding Lifetime Networks and advocacy work
2	Create a new self-advocate advisory committee or strengthen the ambassadors initiative to clarify its role in self-advocacy development and support

Context: The board and members of the staff all expressed concern that, organizationally, we did not have a policy and plan for the role of the agency, the board, senior managers or staff in regards to advocacy. Specifically, if a situation is occurring which is in contradiction to our vision mission and values but is not something we can directly affect (ie. Not our contract, not our organization or program) what role are we expected to play? The people involved in strategic planning felt it was important to consider the following levels of advocacy: personal, programmatic, local, regional and provincial as well as which level of the organization will be involved in what types of advocacy. The strategic plan also brought forth the belief that Lifetime Networks should focus on self-advocate development and inclusion in all Lifetime Networks planning. They were adamant that Lifetime Networks be intentional in this approach and safeguard against tokenism (the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality).

Initiative #1 **Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks**

Task C. Plan to guide growth and sustainability for Lifetime Networks

Assignment	Details
1	Create a communication plan for both internal and external communications about the Lifetime Networks story and expertise. The purpose of the communication plan would include attracting and keeping staff, employers, participants and also raising issues of concern.

2	Create a financial development and diversification plan that addresses: amount, type, diversity of funds and initiative specific funds and also addresses, technology, core program needs, space needs and assessment of future needs for funds over an annual, three year and five year time period.
	- The financial development plan will also review fundraising capacity focusing on:
	    ▪ Grants,
	    ▪ Donors,
	    ▪ sponsors and
	    ▪ events

Context: This task can best be described as the Roadmap for the Future of Lifetime Networks. It will demand a continuation of the discussions which were held during the strategic planning sessions which focused on the positives and negatives of growth in the organization's public profile and organization size. Some of the main negative implications of growing Lifetime Networks discussed were a concern of loss of quality programming and a goal displacement (understood to mean a lack of focus on Lifetime Networks main goal, creation of support networks) as well as a loss of ability to be innovative if our profile is too large. It was suggested that the first task of the communications plan committee would be to thoroughly explore all benefits and risks and participate in planning to mitigate the risks as they are laid out. Many felt that the communications plan would help Lifetime Networks to share the expertise and success of our organization when we had completed the collection and evaluation of the data to support our thoughts. Many also felt that a strong internal communications plan would help guard against "Organizational memory loss" and promote the Lifetime Networks culture. The financial development committee may also want to look at new ways for determining community needs/wants/desires to determine where best Lifetime Networks could spend their energy growing. Many also felt that the physical space of Lifetime Networks needed addressing, the space was thought to be crowded and even unsafe. It was noted that the current condition of the existing Lifetime Networks space appears worn, somewhat crowded and run down and this does not accurately represent how Lifetime Networks feels about the

people it serves. It was also discussed that if Lifetime Networks continues to grow, we may outgrow our current staffing structure, a focus group could help to uncover potential strategies to better manage an influx of new families and individuals who want to be part of Lifetime Networks endeavours.

Initiative # 2

Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in Pursuit of Excellence

"Let's do what we're doing now except let's do it better. Let's do more of it (…) let's duplicate it and then let's tell everyone what we've done." – Strategic Planning participant

Task A. Reinvigorate the commitment of all programs and staff to Lifetime Networks' person centered approach.

Assignment	Details
1	Clarify and Define Lifetime Networks' Person Centered Approach and Planning
2	Continue to strive to approach the work of responding to individuals and their families "differently" with a careful, continued commitment to trying new approaches
3	Continue to enhance the "individualization" of group programming where limitations of funding and requests by individuals and families requires group programming.
4	Offer staff training on User-driven design.

Context: The people who participated in the strategic planning session asked this question: "Might we risk becoming 'just another gov't funded service provider'". This spurred conversations that while currently much of the programming is highly person centered, where families and individuals have requested group programming (due to preferences/needs or lack of available funding) careful consideration needs to made to ensure that as much as possible this programming is created to be as "individualized" and user-driven as possible. Many who participated in the strategic plan felt that in order for Lifetime Networks to continue to be a leader in our field we would need to be open to trying approaches that were new to us and perhaps different from the way current programming is offered. Careful consideration will also need to be made to balance user-driven design with the intention and mission of Lifetime Networks.

Task B Increase the influence and clarify the role of other members of Lifetime Networks Staff and volunteer team in Lifetime Networks decision making

Assignment	Details
1	Explore creation of an advisory group with a focus on fundraising capacity, ideal funders/partnerships. (This group would be a contributor to the Financial development and diversification plan in Initiative #1)

Context: Lifetime Networks has been increasing input from staff in all programming decisions at Lifetime Networks on the Leadership Team and other teams. It was felt that this has increased staff satisfaction and has led to a greater sense of cohesiveness and value. It was felt that there could be better communication and more attention paid to team building with members of the board and other volunteers (eg. suggestions of a social get together for board members). Role clarification was a topic of discussion amongst all groups present at the strategic planning sessions. It was felt by the group in many areas of the strategic plan that Lifetime Networks needs to address the role of advocacy at all levels (Board, Staff, volunteers) for and with the people and families we support as a part of our duties. There was also some discussion around Lifetime Networks' staff role as knowledge resources for families (ie. Transition planning, Community Living British Columbia negotiations, additional external resources) it was discussed whether the current roles could contain this piece or if an additional role needed to be created. The group felt that an advisory group would be beneficial in helping Lifetime Networks gain more access and planning around fundraising opportunities. It was suggested throughout the strategic planning sessions that all people involved in Lifetime Networks could benefit from internal relationship building.

Initiative #2 **Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in Pursuit of Excellence**

Task C Explore careful and intentional growth without compromising integrity

Assignment	Details

1	Create a focus group to help exploration and discussions about growth of organizational size.
	- This group will research the benefits and shortcomings of:
	    ▪ franchising,
	    ▪ distributed delivery and
	    ▪ expansion
	It is recognized this list is not exhaustive, the above list is a snap shot of the ideas brought out during strategic planning. This group's findings will serve to facilitate a decision by the directors and Board on moving forward with growth.

Context: The topic of growth and growth management for Lifetime Networks was a key discussion point across the entire strategic planning session. **Participants in strategic planning gave strong voice to the "pressure" on Lifetime Networks to grow and serve more people.** "Growth" includes but is not limited to: expansion to other geographical locations (Eg. Westshore), additional services (residential, focus on child support), physical space and increased demand for direct services being provided by Lifetime Networks with current program offerings.   Questions that were explored and expressed were: Might we get too big too fast? What are any risks associated with growth? Can the risks be addressed or mitigated? Is expansion an option? What about distributed delivery? With increased demand for direct services (Community engagement) will more support be needed for current managers or a different structure?

All agreed that growth needed to be carefully looked at and explored so that quality and integrity of programs at Lifetime Networks are not sacrificed to growth.

Initiative #2 **Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in the Pursuit of Excellence**

Task D Sharing Lifetime Networks expertise and experience

Assignment	Details
1	Study, define, and evaluate the programs and processes for building informal and formal networks at Lifetime Networks.
2	Share the Lifetime Networks story, expertise and lessons internally within Lifetime Networks and externally to other who might be interested.

Context: It was felt that if Lifetime Networks is going to maintain excellence and integrity in all programming we need to ensure that all people who interact with Lifetime Networks have easily accessible information about our story, lessons and expertise. It was also felt that as we generate an even greater understanding of the "how" of what we are doing we might be able to better share it with other interested parties (other service providers/funders/partnerships). This deeper understanding of our approaches coupled with stronger evaluation of the networks themselves will help answer some of the questions of rapid growth and the negatives that may be included with that.

Initiative #3
Build Even Stronger and More Resilient Relationships for Individuals in Pursuit of Lifelong Support
"A friend is one who walks in when others walk out." - Walter Winchill

Task A. 1) Increase all Lifetime Networks staff's ability to build, maintain and measure effective support networks for individuals in all Lifetime Networks endeavours while maintaining over all staff satisfaction.

Assignment	Details
1	Regular re-commitments to the vision, values and principles of Lifetime Networks, at orientation and regular intervals for all members of Lifetime Networks.
2	Work to ensure all staff and volunteers receive professional development and ongoing support in creating and maintaining networks of support. - Improve and create in-house training resources to be used with all staff on the importance and "how-to's" of building and maintaining formal and informal networks for individuals with disabilities.
3	Create space (either a session or other avenue) for sharing of successes and challenges in direct relation to building support networks for individuals in all programs.
4	Explore the role of advocacy and support workers, facilitators and other staff.
5	Add a question to the annual survey about recognition for work.
6	Create a tool to measure and define "quality networks". - This tool will be used to measure and enrich the quality of existing formal and informal networks within all programs at Lifetime Networks.

Context: It was thought that since the vision, values and principles of Lifetime Networks apply to all programs at Lifetime Networks, and our staff are at the heart of the creation of programming at Lifetime Networks; a regular re-commitment to the vision, values and principles by staff could help reinvigorate the purpose and direction of all programming at Lifetime Networks. It was agreed that the most important role of all staff members at Lifetime Networks is the creation of informal and formal support networks for the people we support. There was concern that our programs and staff who were not involved in the Networks program (and some who are involved in Networks) may not have the tools to be able to be intentional in the creation of support networks for individuals at Lifetime Networks in whichever program they were involved in. There was also concern that much of the good work that has already been done in this way has gone unrecognized, the people at strategic planning wondered if we were missing an opportunity for continued "buy-in" by not being intentional in

our recognition of this work. It was also suggested that by creating more spaces for sharing with a focus on the successes and challenges of creating community and networks we could encourage a deeper shared understanding of the importance of these connections in our organizational culture. The people who attended Lifetime Networks' strategic planning sessions were concerned that with an increased demand for Networks and other programs at Lifetime Networks we may lose quality (here tacitly agreed to mean: deep, lasting and positive relationships of support). One program participant described this as "Managing growth without compromising quality". It was then discussed that there was currently no tool or device to measure the depth, resilience and impact of the networks both formal and informal within all Lifetime Networks programs. It was discussed that our Networks Program manager may need additional assistance to obtain and maintain enhanced quality and quantity of Networks in the Networks Program. It is acknowledged that the core mission of Lifetime Networks is challenging and demands continuous attention and careful leadership towards pursuing our goals.

Initiative #3 **Build Even Stronger and More Resilient Relationships for Individuals in Pursuit of Lifelong Support**

Task A. 2) Deepen intentional practice of using all Lifetime Networks endeavours to build informal and formal networks and relationships.

Assignment	Details
1	Create, purchase or find a resource that teaches friendship skills for use in all Lifetime Networks programming.
2	Consider creating social events to increase interaction for more isolated individuals.
3	Consider adding agenda item to meetings to discuss "potential participant connections"

Context: The challenge presented to the strategic planning team was " How to better maximize a person's participation in any Lifetime Networks programs as a direct gateway to a stronger personal network for them?" It was felt that Lifetime Networks programming could benefit from more crossover of supports to increase and maximize interactions for the individuals we support. It was also felt that all programs could benefit from an intentional practice of "increasing the band in the 'doughnut' model about informal networks" (see 2014 strategic plan pg..?)in essence, a re-focussing on using all programs at Lifetime Networks to achieve the same goal of creation of community, friendship and support networks.

Initiative #3 **Build Even Stronger and More Resilient Relationships for Individuals in Pursuit of Lifelong Support**

Task C. Explore various ways to share Lifetime Networks' expertise and story internally and externally.

Assignment	Details
1	Research and develop standard messaging throughout all Lifetime Networks publications including online and other marketing materials.
2	Explore methods of recording the collective memory of the staff at Lifetime Networks regarding program beginnings, success stories and the process of creation for new ideas.

Context: The people at Lifetime Networks strategic planning session believed it would be important to have an even deeper understanding of what it is that we are doing well. This might include but not be limited to recorded story telling and a process for data collection which is covered in initiative two. The groups in initiative three spoke mostly of how to disseminate the knowledge gathered, internally and externally. Some felt it was important to begin to record some of these stories and data to protect against organizational memory loss and to help foster an organizational culture in which all people know why and how Lifetime Networks is always attempting to "do the work differently". Similarly, it was felt that by having standard messaging in all descriptions of the programs and services offered at Lifetime Networks regarding our stated vision, mission and values we could strengthen our sense of unified purpose. On this point, as in all Lifetime Networks endeavours, we underscore the importance of using, as much as possible, accessible language. This is especially important for all public materials and information.

BUDGET ALLOCATION

Initiative #1: Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks

Tasks in order of priority per initiative	Person/Committee Responsible	Timeline	Budget Allocation $0-$500 = $ $501-$1000 = $$ $1001 + = $$$	Status/Results
Recommitment to Lifetime Networks mission, vision, values and principles	**The Board – John will take the lead**	Sept - Oct	**$**	
Clarify, define and strengthen Lifetime Networks' role in advocacy and self-advocacy support.	Advocacy Committee made up of some staff, some board and self advocates Staff will arrange time	1 day or 2/3 part days	**$**	
Plan to guide growth and sustainability for Lifetime Networks	Board/staff or start of the Advisory Group?	November	**$$$**	

Initiative #2: Manage Growth and Continue to Perform to Excellence

Tasks in order of priority per initiative	Person/Committee Responsible	Timeline	Budget Allocation	Status/Results
Increase the influence and clarify the role of other members of Lifetime Networks Staff and volunteer team in Lifetime Networks decision making	Covered in Initiative 1. Oversight by management/leadership teams		$	
Explore careful and intentional growth without compromising integrity	Focus group – I also see this is addressed in other initiatives	2/3	$	
Sharing Lifetime Networks expertise and experience	CQI and informed by the Advocacy Committee		$$	

BOARD GOAL GRID

#		Initiative #1 Guide, Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks							
	2017 IMPROVEMENT GOAL	**INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS**	**HOW**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE**	**2017 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2018 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2019 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**
Task A	**Recommitment to Lifetime Networks mission, vision, values and principles**	Lifetime Networks' Mission, vision, values and principles are reviewed to ensure shared understanding of their meanings.	One day workshop	John	March 1st 2018			
Task B	**Clarify, define and strengthen Lifetime Networks' role in advocacy and self-advocacy support**	Operational policies include direction for advocacy.		Directors and staff (Julie Mason)	2018			
		Either a new self-advocate advisory committee is created or the ambassadors initiative is strengthened to clarify its role in self-advocacy development and support	Revised Ambassadors: discuss issues affecting lives of people locally and provincially and identify how to be part of a solution. Rights, government, effective ways of approaching solutions. 'Think Bigger'.	Board/ Janet Danielson	Fall 2017	Group meets monthly. Working to accomplish new mandate.		
Task C.	**Plan to guide growth and sustainability for Lifetime Networks**	A communication plan is created for both internal and external communications about Lifetime Networks' story and expertise		Recruitment/Retention committee	2019	Staff committee established		

		A financial development and diversification plan is created.		John and Carlene	Summer 2018			

Context statements:

Task A: The board expressed that by reviewing the vision, mission and values together to gain a mutual agreement and belief about the intention of the statements they felt they could better generate "buy in" on "principle to practice" leadership. It was also felt that this renewal and "re-ignition of passion" should happen with all volunteers, staff and members of Lifetime Networks, this is captured more completely in initiative 2 and 3. It is suggested that this work is best planned for as an ongoing and cyclical schedule.

Task B: The board and members of the staff all expressed concern that, organizationally, we did not have a policy and plan for the role of the agency, the board, senior managers or staff in regards to advocacy. Specifically, if a situation is occurring which is in contradiction to our vision mission and values but is not something we can directly affect (ie. Not our contract, not our organization or program) what role are we expected to play? The people involved in strategic planning felt it was important to consider the following levels of advocacy: personal, programmatic, local, regional and provincial as well as which level of the organization will be involved in what types of advocacy. The strategic plan also brought forth the belief that Lifetime Networks should focus on self-advocate development and inclusion in all Lifetime Networks planning. They were adamant that Lifetime Networks be intentional in this approach and safeguard against tokenism (the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality).

Task C:This task can best be described as the Roadmap for the Future of Lifetime Networks. It will demand a continuation of the discussions which were held during the strategic planning sessions which focused on the positives and negatives of growth in the organization's public profile and organization size. Some of the main negative implications of growing Lifetime Networks discussed were a concern of loss of quality programming and a goal displacement (understood to mean a lack of focus on Lifetime Networks main goal, creation of support networks) as well as a loss of ability to be innovative if our profile is too large. It was suggested that the first task of the communications plan committee would be to thoroughly explore all benefits and risks and participate in planning to mitigate the risks as they are laid out. Many felt that the communications plan would help Lifetime Networks to share the expertise and success of our organization when we had completed the collection and evaluation of the data to support our thoughts. Many also felt that a strong internal communications plan would help guard against "Organizational memory loss" and promote the Lifetime Networks culture. The financial development committee may also want to look at new ways for determining community needs/wants/desires to determine where best Lifetime Networks could spend their energy growing. Many also felt that

the physical space of Lifetime Networks needed addressing, the space was thought to be crowded and even unsafe. It was noted that the current condition of the existing Lifetime Networks space appears worn, somewhat crowded and run down and this does not accurately represent how Lifetime Networks feels about the people it serves. It was also discussed that if Lifetime Networks continues to grow, we may outgrow our current staffing structure, a focus group could help to uncover potential strategies to better manage an influx of new families and individuals who want to be part of Lifetime Networks endeavours.

#		Initiative # 2 **Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in Pursuit of Excellence**							
	2017 IMPROVEMENT GOAL	**INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS**	**HOW**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE**	**2017 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2018 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2019 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**
Task B	**Increase the influence and clarify the role of other members of Lifetime Networks Staff and volunteer team in Lifetime Networks decision making**	An advisory group exists with a focus on fundraising capacity and ideal funders/partnerships.		Board	December 2019			
Task C	**Explore careful and intentional growth without compromising integrity**	A focus group meets regularly to explore and discuss the growth of organization. This group researches the benefits and shortcomings of: • franchising, • distributed delivery and • expansion	Linked to Financial Development Plan	John	Fall 2018			

Context Statements:

Task B: Lifetime Networks has been increasing input from staff in all programming decisions at Lifetime Networks on the Leadership Team and other teams. It was felt that this has increased staff satisfaction and has led to a greater sense of cohesiveness and value. It was felt that there could be better communication and more attention paid to team building with members of the board and other volunteers (eg. suggestions of a social get together for board members). Role clarification was a topic of discussion amongst all groups present at the strategic planning sessions. It was felt by the group in many areas of the strategic plan that Lifetime Networks needs to address the role of advocacy at all levels (Board, Staff, volunteers) for and with the people and families we support as a part of our duties. There was also some discussion around Lifetime Networks' staff role as knowledge resources for families (ie. Transition planning, Community Living British Columbia negotiations, additional external resources) it was discussed whether the current roles could contain this piece or if an additional role needed to be created. The group felt that an advisory group would be beneficial in helping Lifetime Networks gain more access and planning around fundraising opportunities. It was suggested throughout the strategic planning sessions that all people involved in Lifetime Networks could benefit from internal relationship building.

Task C: The topic of growth and growth management for Lifetime Networks was a key discussion point across the entire strategic planning session. **Participants in strategic planning gave strong voice to the "pressure" on Lifetime Networks to grow and serve more people.** "Growth" includes but is not limited to: expansion to other geographical locations (Eg. Westshore), additional services (residential, focus on child support), physical space and increased demand for direct services being provided by Lifetime Networks with current program offerings.   Questions that were explored and expressed were: Might we get too big too fast? What are any risks associated with growth? Can the risks be addressed or mitigated? Is expansion an option? What about distributed delivery? With increased demand for direct services (Community engagement) will more support be needed for current managers or a different structure?

All agreed that growth needed to be carefully looked at and explored so that quality and integrity of programs at Lifetime Networks are not sacrificed to growth.

OPERATIONAL GOAL GRID

#		Initiative # 1 **Guide Protect and Sustain Lifetime Networks**						
	2017 IMPROVEMENT GOAL	**INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS**	**HOW**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE**	**2017 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2018 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2019 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**
Task B	**Clarify, define and strengthen Lifetime Networks' role in advocacy and self-advocacy support**	Additional/alternative strategies are researched to strengthen self-advocate input into Lifetime Networks decisions.	Include individuals on committees	Leadership Team CQI Team	Fall 2017	Have self advocate sitting on OH&S and Accessibility. Availability for meetings has been a challenge.		
Task C	**Plan to guide growth and sustainability for Lifetime Networks**	A 'space' committee is created to address limited physical office space.	explore new options/lease/build	Directors	Fall 2018	Secured realtor Lisa Stewart Devon Crop		
		A 'growth' focus group is created to broaden input into staff capacity strategies and safeguards	Standing agenda item on Recruitment and retention committee, creation of audit tool to determine staff capacity and workload management	Recruitment and Retention Committee	December 2018			

Context Statements:

Task B: The board and members of the staff all expressed concern that, organizationally, we did not have a policy and plan for the role of the agency, the board, senior managers or staff in regards to advocacy. Specifically, if a situation is occurring which is in contradiction to our vision mission and values but is not something we can directly affect (ie. Not our contract, not our organization or program) what role are we expected to play? The people involved in strategic planning felt it was important to consider the following levels of advocacy: personal, programmatic, local, regional and provincial as well as which level of the organization will be involved in what types of advocacy. The strategic plan also brought forth the belief that Lifetime Networks should focus on self-advocate development and inclusion in all Lifetime Networks planning. They were adamant that Lifetime Networks be intentional in this approach and safeguard against tokenism (the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality).

Task C:This task can best be described as the Roadmap for the Future of Lifetime Networks. It will demand a continuation of the discussions which were held during the strategic planning sessions which focused on the positives and negatives of growth in the organization's public profile and organization size. Some of the main negative implications of growing Lifetime Networks discussed were a concern of loss of quality programming and a goal displacement (understood to mean a lack of focus on Lifetime Networks main goal, creation of support networks) as well as a loss of ability to be innovative if our profile is too large. It was suggested that the first task of the communications plan committee would be to thoroughly explore all benefits and risks and participate in planning to mitigate the risks as they are laid out. Many felt that the communications plan would help Lifetime Networks to share the expertise and success of our organization when we had completed the collection and evaluation of the data to support our thoughts. Many also felt that a strong internal communications plan would help guard against "Organizational memory loss" and promote the Lifetime Networks culture. The financial development committee may also want to look at new ways for determining community needs/wants/desires to determine where best Lifetime Networks could spend their energy growing. Many also felt that the physical space of Lifetime Networks needed addressing, the space was thought to be crowded and even unsafe. It was noted that the current condition of the existing Lifetime Networks space appears worn, somewhat crowded and run down and this does not accurately represent how Lifetime Networks feels about the people it serves. It was also discussed that if Lifetime Networks continues to grow, we may outgrow our current staffing structure, a focus group could help to uncover potential strategies to better manage an influx of new families and individuals who want to be part of Lifetime Networks endeavours.

#		Initiative # 2 **Manage Growth and Continue to Perform in Pursuit of Excellence**						
	2017 IMPROVEMENT GOAL	**INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS**	**HOW**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE**	**2017 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2018 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2019 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**
Task A	**Reinvigorate the commitment of all programs and staff to Lifetime Networks' person centered approach.**	Lifetime Networks' Person Centered Approach and Planning is defined.	Expand on person centered in orientation Allow CSW's, staff and participants to plan in their own way.	Leadership Team	Fall 2018	Achieved exemplary status for person centered approach during CARF accreditation		
		LN strives to approach the work of responding to individuals and their families "differently" with a careful, continued commitment to trying new approaches	Create viable 'break' programming for people at SIDES/Camosun- summer, Christmas, March	Leadership Team		Participated in provincial ANSO trials Created POD program to pilot Dec 2017		
		The 'individualization' of group programming is enhanced when limitations of funding and requests by individuals and families requires group programming.	Assess Citizen groups. Are we best meeting the needs of all individuals? Friday employment needs more individualization	Citizen Team	.	Created two streams for Citizen. Revised Employment – each person supported to work on own goals		

		Staff receive training on User-driven design.	Advancing New Support Options component trial	Heather and Nicki	Fall 2017	Participated in 3 month component trial through CLBC		
Task B	**Increase the influence and clarify the role of other members of Lifetime Networks Staff and volunteer team in Lifetime Networks decision making**	Input from all positions at Lifetime networks is increased by adding more diverse voices and positions to leadership and planning meetings.	Create regular/meaningful opportunities for input	EX Director	On going	Established Leadership, CQI, Steering committees Network Retreat, Satisfaction Survey follow up		
		Roles are clarified for all positions in regards to advocacy, transition planning and other resources.	A listing of roles and duties per position?					
		Staff, board member and volunteer satisfaction and retention is addressed at least annually.	Increase opps for conversation, input Create coordinator of volunteers role			Survey follow up complete Role created and hired		
Task D	**Sharing Lifetime Networks expertise and experience**	The programs and processes for building informal and formal networks at Lifetime Networks is studied and defined.	Involve Networks Mentor and consultation	Program manager Directors Senior staff Senior volunteers	2019	Networks retreat began to address issue Secured a consultant		

Context Statements:

Task A: The people who participated in the strategic planning session asked this question: "Might we risk becoming 'just another gov't funded service provider'". This spurred conversations that while currently much of the programming is highly person centered, where families and individuals have requested group programming (due to preferences/needs or lack of available funding) careful consideration needs to made to ensure that as much as possible this programming is created to be as "individualized" and user-driven as possible. Many who participated in the strategic plan felt that in order for Lifetime Networks to continue to be a leader in our field we would need to be open to trying approaches that were new to us and perhaps different from the way current programming is offered. Careful consideration will also need to be made to balance user-driven design with the intention and mission of Lifetime Networks.

Task B: Lifetime Networks has been increasing input from staff in all programming decisions at Lifetime Networks on the Leadership Team and other teams. It was felt that this has increased staff satisfaction and has led to a greater sense of cohesiveness and value. It was felt that there could be better communication and more attention paid to team building with members of the board and other volunteers (eg. suggestions of a social get together for board members). Role clarification was a topic of discussion amongst all groups present at the strategic planning sessions. It was felt by the group in many areas of the strategic plan that Lifetime Networks needs to address the role of advocacy at all levels (Board, Staff, volunteers) for and with the people and families we support as a part of our duties. There was also some discussion around Lifetime Networks' staff role as knowledge resources for families (ie. Transition planning, Community Living British Columbia negotiations, additional external resources) it was discussed whether the current roles could contain this piece or if an additional role needed to be created. The group felt that an advisory group would be beneficial in helping Lifetime Networks gain more access and planning around fundraising opportunities. It was suggested throughout the strategic planning sessions that all people involved in Lifetime Networks could benefit from internal relationship building.

Task D: It was felt that if Lifetime Networks is going to maintain excellence and integrity in all programming we need to ensure that all people who interact with Lifetime Networks have easily accessible information about our story, lessons and expertise. It was also felt that as we generate an even greater understanding of the "how" of what we are doing we might be able to better share it with other interested parties (other service providers/funders/partnerships). This deeper understanding of our approaches coupled with stronger evaluation of the networks themselves will help answer some of the questions of rapid growth and the negatives that may be included with that.

#		Initiative #3 **Build Even Stronger and More Resilient Relationships for Individuals in Pursuit of Lifelong Support**							
	2017 IMPROVEMENT GOAL	**INDICATORS FOR SUCCESS**	**HOW**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**	**TARGET DATE**	**2017 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2018 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**	**2019 COMPLETION DATE/STATUS**
Task A.	1) **Increase all Lifetime Networks staff's ability to build, maintain and measure effective support networks for individuals in all Lifetime Networks endeavours while maintaining over all staff satisfaction.**	A regular re-commitment to the vision, values and principles of Lifetime Networks happens at orientation and at least annually for all members of Lifetime Networks.						
		All staff and volunteers receive professional development and ongoing support in creating and maintaining networks of support.	An OFL module? Lunch and learn? CSW night? Create in-house training/resources for all staff re the how-to's of building and maintaining informal	Heather, Directors, Management		Discussed at Network Retreat.		

			networks for individuals. Creation of a workshop on building friendships					
		A sharing of successes and challenges occurs regularly in direct relation to building support networks for individuals in all programs.						
		The advocacy role of support workers, facilitators and other staff is explored and identified.						
		The annual survey includes a question about recognition for work.		Heather	Fall survey	Complete. Heather taking 5 languages of appreciation training to train staff on person centered ways to give recognition.		

		A tool is created to measure and define "quality networks".	Create a tool at facilitator retreat	Heather and Network Facilitators	October 2017	Plan to have regular discussions with facilitators re effectiveness of networks. Decided a tool is too prescriptive.		
Task A.	2) Deepen intentional practice of using all Lifetime Networks endeavours to build informal and formal networks and relationships	A resource that teaches friendship skills for use in Lifetime Networks programming is available to all staff.	Creation of LN friendship workshop	Heather/ Mark				
		For individuals who wish to participate social events are planned to increase interaction.						
		Leadership and Management agendas include a standing item for "potential participant connections"			January 2018	complete		
Task C.	Explore various ways to share Lifetime Networks' expertise and story internally and externally	Messaging is standardized throughout Lifetime Networks publications including online and other marketing materials.		Ex Director	January 2018	Working with Hot House. Office staff can now adjust website. Securing all print from		

					Digital Direct for consistency.		
		There is a method to record the collective memory of staff at Lifetime Networks regarding program beginnings, success stories and the process of creation for new ideas.	Creation of history of community living movement presentation workshop		Fall 2018		

Context Statements:

Task A 1:It was thought that since the vision, values and principles of Lifetime Networks apply to all programs at Lifetime Networks, and our staff are at the heart of the creation of programming at Lifetime Networks; a regular re-commitment to the vision, values and principles by staff could help reinvigorate the purpose and direction of all programming at Lifetime Networks. It was agreed that the most important role of all staff members at Lifetime Networks is the creation of informal and formal support networks for the people we support. There was concern that our programs and staff who were not involved in the Networks program (and some who are involved in Networks) may not have the tools to be able to be intentional in the creation of support networks for individuals at Lifetime Networks in whichever program they were involved in. There was also concern that much of the good work that has already been done in this way has gone unrecognized, the people at strategic planning wondered if we were missing an opportunity for continued "buy-in" by not being intentional in our recognition of this work. It was also suggested that by creating more spaces for sharing with a focus on the successes and challenges of creating community and networks we could encourage a deeper shared understanding of the importance of these connections in our organizational culture. The people who attended Lifetime Networks' strategic planning sessions were concerned that with an increased demand for Networks and other programs at Lifetime Networks we may lose quality (here tacitly agreed to mean: deep, lasting and positive relationships of support). One program participant described this as "Managing growth without compromising quality". It was then discussed that there was currently no tool or device

to measure the depth, resilience and impact of the networks both formal and informal within all Lifetime Networks programs. It was discussed that our Networks Program manager may need additional assistance to obtain and maintain enhanced quality and quantity of Networks in the Networks Program. It is acknowledged that the core mission of Lifetime Networks is challenging and demands continuous attention and careful leadership towards pursuing our goals.

Task A 2:The challenge presented to the strategic planning team was " How to better maximize a person's participation in any Lifetime Networks programs as a direct gateway to a stronger personal network for them?" It was felt that Lifetime Networks programming could benefit from more crossover of supports to increase and maximize interactions for the individuals we support. It was also felt that all programs could benefit from an intentional practice of "increasing the band in the 'doughnut' model about informal networks" (see 2014 strategic plan pg..?)in essence, a re-focussing on using all programs at Lifetime Networks to achieve the same goal of creation of community, friendship and support networks.

Task C: The people at Lifetime Networks strategic planning session believed it would be important to have an even deeper understanding of what it is that we are doing well. This might include but not be limited to recorded story telling and a process for data collection which is covered in initiative two. The groups in initiative three spoke mostly of how to disseminate the knowledge gathered, internally and externally. Some felt it was important to begin to record some of these stories and data to protect against organizational memory loss and to help foster an organizational culture in which all people know why and how Lifetime Networks is always attempting to "do the work differently". Similarly, it was felt that by having standard messaging in all descriptions of the programs and services offered at Lifetime Networks regarding our stated vision, mission and values we could strengthen our sense of unified purpose. On this point, as in all Lifetime Networks endeavours, we underscore the importance of using, as much as possible, accessible language. This is especially important for all public materials and information.

APPENDIX ONE: ANECDOTAL AND HISTORICAL-INFORMATION ON LIFETIME NETWORKS

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Introduction

Lifetime Networks is a not-for-profit organization based in Victoria, British Columbia that provides services and support to individuals with developmental disabilities, people with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and others who face barriers developing friendships, are lonely and/or isolated and would like to access the supports of Lifetime Networks.

Organization History

The organization was originally founded in 1998 by a group of determined families wanting to establish a viable organization to secure the future of their children with developmental disabilities, by establishing personal support Networks that did not rely on continuing government funding. The concept was to establish Networks of individuals to provide support and friendship to the individual being supported, and that these Networks would endure beyond the lifetimes of the families. Associated costs would be paid for by the parents (and eventually by their estates), supplemented by income from fund-raising activities, and by income from an endowment fund (that would hopefully be built up over time).

Legal Structure

Lifetime Networks is registered as a charity under the name "Greater Victoria Lifetime Networks Society" under the terms of the Society Act – RSBC 1996.

LIFETIME NETWORKS VISION, MISSION, VALUES

The Vision, Mission, and Values of Lifetime Networks have not changed since the last Strategic Planning session in 2011.

VISION – An organization's Vision Statement outlines how it wants the world to be. Lifetime Networks Vision is:

We see a future where people with disabilities live safely in their communities, where they can fulfill their potential, and enjoy lifelong friendships and support.

MISSION – A Mission Statement describes the fundamental purpose of the organization. The Mission for Lifetime Networks is:

We build and maintain networks of lifetime friendships to support people with disabilities.

VALUES – Values are the beliefs shared and demonstrated by an organization's stakeholders. The Lifetime Networks Values are:

- *Person-centred planning rather than program-centred planning.*

- *A commitment to maintain Networks for the lifetime of the person being supported.*

- *Accessibility to services with no eligibility restrictions.*

- *Respectfulness through recognition and celebration of the inherent worth of each person.*

- *Financial responsibility by working diligently to keep services and supports cost effective and affordable.*

- *Volunteerism through belief in the importance of unpaid relationships in the lives of people we support.*

- *Lifetime friendships and support for people with disabilities.*

CURRENT BUSINESS

Programs/Opportunities
Lifetime Networks was originally founded specifically to create Networks for individuals who are supported (focus person), which would continue after family members have died or are no longer able to provide care. Operational costs for these Networks are typically paid by the family members and after their death, by their estates. A typical Network consists of the focus person, a part-time Network Facilitator, and several non-paid friends recruited by the Network Facilitator. Members of the Network keep in touch with the focus person, and provide regular support in an informal and friendly basis. As of early 2017, there are 39 Networks and 31 Network Facilitators. The core business of Lifetime Networks is the maintenance and expansion of the Networks program.

The Network business of Lifetime Networks does not require any government funding or interaction. Networks do not have a specific duration or expiration date; the intent is that a Network lasts for the lifetime of the focus person. The focus is on relationships and friendships.

The Networks program is funded through individual and family contribution paid via the Network fees and with the receipt of grants

In addition to Networks, Lifetime Networks offers a series of customized support services, programs, and classes on a fee-for-service basis. These programs address specific needs, and can have specified durations. The program fees are provided directly by the participant or family members, from the participant through their Community Living British Columbia Individualized Funding, using personal funds, or through subsidies provided through fundraising efforts by Lifetime Networks. These programs serve over 300 individuals, and represent a much larger business activity than the Networks program. As of early 2017, the programs offered by Lifetime Networks are:

- Networks

- Being a Citizen Continuing Education

- Employment Services

- Fine Arts/Socials

- Independent Living/Outreach

- Community Engagement

- Best Buddies (in partnership with the University of Victoria and Best Buddies Canada)

Although it is not the largest entity in terms of revenue at Lifetime Networks, the Networks program is the heart of the organization. The other programs promote informal networks that create the culture of Lifetime Networks. This can be graphically illustrated as follows:
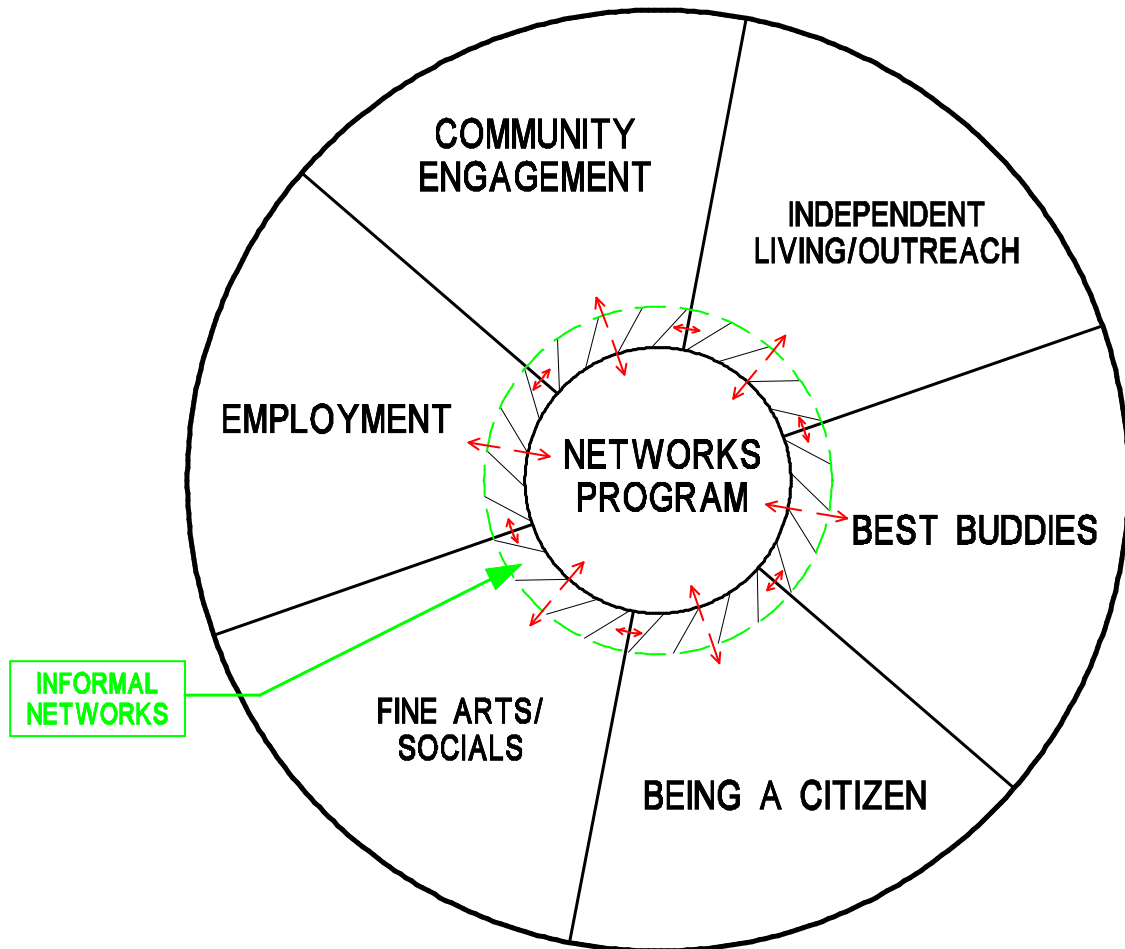
All of the programs engage in building relationships known as informal networks, which also support the quality and longevity of the formal Networks. The chart above shows that the informal network space (outlined within the green circle) touches all of the programs; this area is actually expanding as Lifetime Networks grows and evolves. Interactions and relationships develop between the programs via the informal network space as is indicated by the small red arrows.

Staff

As of February 2017, Lifetime Networks has 113 active staff and 34 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) based on a 37.5 hour work week. Each program has a Manager. The program Managers are supported in some cases by supervisors, instructors and facilitators, and sometimes oversee more than one program. All Managers report to the Executive Director, who reports to the Board.

Current Sources of Revenue

Most government-provided funds come through Community Living British Columbia (CLBC). Traditionally, CLBC signed Global Contracts with various service providers to offer specific programs with a specified number of participants (spots) for a specific period. If a participant left a program, the service provider was still paid, but CLBC would then substitute a different participant to use that spot.

In recent years, CLBC has instituted Individualized Funding and the Personal Supports Initiative that each allocates funds directly to an individual, who is then free to choose a program with a service provider of their choice or develop services on their own.

Lifetime Networks never did have Global Contracts, and has always specialized in a fee-for-service model, even before Individualized Funding was embraced by CLBC.

Fees for the Lifetime Networks Employment program are paid by either CLBC-provided Individualized Funding, the Employment Program of British Columbia (EPBC), which is part of the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation, or by the individual supported or their family.

All services provided by Lifetime Networks are on a fee-for-service basis, but in special cases the organization subsidizes the fees. This is possible through grants (United Way, Direct Access, and BC Gaming), various fund-raising activities of the organization (Gala Dinner & Auction, GoodLife Fitness Victoria Marathon, the Golf Tournament, Thrifty's Smile Card etc.), and donations.

Best Buddies is an international organization dedicated to establishing one-on-one friendship opportunities. The local chapter is offered through a partnership with Lifetime Networks and the University of Victoria. Interested students pair with an individual supported by Lifetime Networks. There are no fees for this program; however, fund-raising initiatives such as bake sales, and bottle drives are necessary to fund and/or supplement events like karaoke night, theatre excursions, and Royals hockey games. This partnership also provides Lifetime Networks with a future network of candidates who might be interested in working or volunteering for other Lifetime Networks' programs.

ENVIRONMENT

Potential Size of the Market/Opportunity

In traditional Strategic Planning (for public or private companies), the focus is often on how to grow the business by developing products or services that address new or rapidly-growing markets. In the case of Lifetime Networks, the maximum size of the available opportunity is limited by the number of individuals in the served region who request support. Lifetime Networks would consider it extremely successful if every person with a need for support had a Network and received services.

In British Columbia, the Crown Corporation, Community Living British Columbia (CLBC), is the conduit through which government funds are transferred to adults with developmental disabilities and also to adults who qualify for the Personal Support Initiative program (for those with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders). Children under the age of 19 receive funding through other channels, including from the offices of the Ministry for Children and Family Development (MCFD). Lifetime Networks is primarily focussed on adults 19 or over, so CLBC data is pertinent to the Lifetime Networks organization. The following information is taken from the CLBC Service Plan 2016/17-2018/19:

"It is projected that by March 31st , 2016, approximately 18,870 adults will be registered for CLBC services, an increase of 6.6% over the previous year, and 38.3% over five years. This increased demand for CLBC services is due to a number of factors including: general population grow; advances in health care and extended life expectancy; increased identification and referral rates of youth to CLBC by the school system; increased service requests by young adults leaving their family home and by adults with complex needs; and aging family members who need greater assistance with caring for their adult sons and daughters at home.
CLBC expects this growth rate to continue to increase by 5-6% annually for the foreseeable future. Overall, the number of individuals with a developmental disability served by CLBC is lower than the 1.05% estimated prevalence rate of developmental disabilities in the general population (based on an internationally accepted definition of developmental disability used by the World Health Organization. Over time, CLBC expects its numbers to more closely match the estimated prevalence rate as more youth are now accessing CLBC supports when they turn 19."

Further, CLBC anticipates an increase to funding for supports and services of about $39 million in the 2016/2017 budget with increases between $18.6 and $31.1 million in the 2017/18 and 2018/19 planned. (Community Living British Columbia 2016/17-2018/19 Service Plan)

Lifetime Networks primarily serves individuals in the core Capital Regional District, with focus on the communities of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, View Royal, Saanich, Sidney, Langford and Colwood. The primary limitation is one of transportation (either participants travelling to Lifetime Networks, or staff travelling to the person supported).

CLBC's South Island Region currently serves about 1500 adults. Their region extends from Port Renfrew to Duncan and the Gulf Islands, as illustrated below:
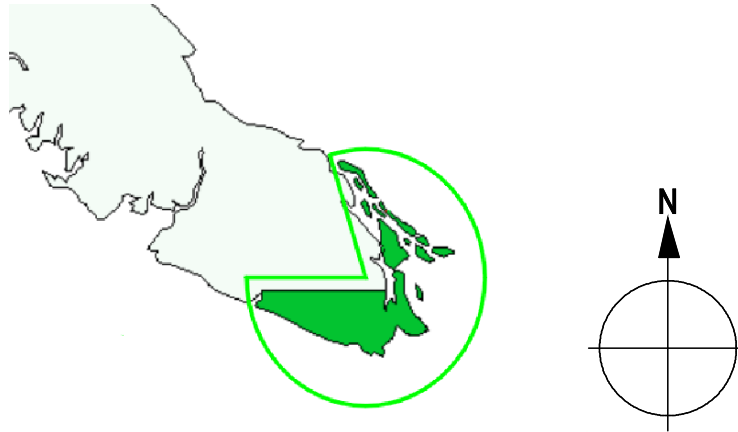
It is estimated that Lifetime Networks' geographical reach covers about 60% of the CLBC South Island Region, or about 900 adults. This population is currently increasing by about 50-70 per year.

It appears that the budget for service provision will grow close to the amount of anticipated growth in people requesting services, with that in mind, Lifetime Networks will need to anticipate continued growth for the next 3 years.

LIFETIME NETWORKS' UNIQUENESS

Lifetime Networks is unique in that all of its program offerings are on a fee-for-service basis. With respect to the Networks program, this is appealing to families who want to be assured that political changes will not affect the support that their child receives. A unique aspect of Lifetime Networks is that the Networks which are created do not have a defined period of operation; they are designed to thrive for as long as the supported person is alive.

In the non-network sector, it initially appears that Lifetime Networks might be just another service provider operating in a competitive field. However, a closer look at the organization shows three characteristics that make it truly unique in this field:

Funding Model

Lifetime Networks does not have Global Contracts with CLBC. Instead, a potential participant applies to CLBC for funding for specific services, and the supported person then uses this funding to purchase the requested services directly from Lifetime Networks. This model results in more uncertainty over Lifetime Networks' future revenue stream (because a participant can drop out of a program and take their funds elsewhere), but it provides more flexibility to the supported person (and to CLBC).

Customization

Lifetime Networks custom-designs programs to meet the needs of individuals after meeting and discussing the individual's wants and needs. Unlike many Globally-funded programs in which the person "fits in" to the program, Lifetime Networks develops programming around the person.

Relationships

An underlying theme at Lifetime Networks is the development of relationships and friendships. Not only are these the primary focus of the organization's Networks program, but the Lifetime Networks staff in all of the programs specifically work toward the establishment of relationships and friendships.

Identifying the Customer

Using traditional business terminology, the customer is the person who actually makes the purchasing decision. However, the end-user of Lifetime Networks' services may not actually be capable of making this decision independently but rather using supported decision-making. The fee-for-service model has allowed the supported person and their family (or caregiver) to make the purchasing choice, making Lifetime Networks directly accountable to the individual.

The Value Proposition

It is often instructive to understand what a potential customer expects to receive in terms of value for their purchase. The Value Proposition is a concept frequently used in marketing. Although not directly applicable to Lifetime Networks, the concept is useful in understanding why someone might decide to enter into a relationship with Lifetime Networks.

A value proposition for Lifetime Networks is hard to convey in a single sentence, but might be expressed in point form as follows:

> *"I choose Lifetime Networks because:*
> - *I trust them to be there as long as there is a need*
> - *It was started by, and continues to be steered by families*
> - *They are autonomous, and insulated from the government changes*
> - *They are always willing to find a way to meet a need*
> - *They provide security, and will be there for a lifetime*
> - *They foster lifetime friendships and relationships*
> - *They provide personalized supports"*