



# Life Builders

## Resident Handbook

June 2010

## WELCOME TO LIFE BUILDERS!

We are glad you have chosen to participate in Rights of Life Builders. Entering a new program can be difficult and, at times, overwhelming. We wrote this handbook for you. This handbook outlines what you can expect from Life Builders and what Life Builders expects from you. This is an agreement between you and the KIHA: Tenant and landlord. Our goal is to provide an environment that is realistic and provides the skills necessary to achieve independence. If this handbook does not address all your questions, please do not hesitate to ask staff for clarification. Staff is here to assist and support you. Please keep this handbook for your reference.

Life Builders is a transitional living program designed to provide you with the opportunity to pursue employment, education and vocational goals in a safe and healthy environment. It is our hope that when the time comes for you to leave the program, you will have saved money and learned new skills, which are necessary to achieve successful independent living.

**We are happy to welcome you to the community of Life Builders!**

## Resident Rights and Responsibilities

As a resident of Life Builders, you are guaranteed the following rights:

- Right to live in an alcohol- and drug-free environment.
- Right to be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
- Right to work with staff on an individualized case plan.
- Right to be assured confidentiality.
- Right to be given reasonable privacy consistent with the need for safety.
- Right to be assured freedom from abuse, neglect, exploitation, or any corporal punishment.
- Right to be assured that any search and seizure is carried out in a manner which is consistent with program standards and only to clearly insure the safety, security, and well being of residents and staff.
- Right to be assured the opportunity to reside at Life Builders for up to eighteen months, with up to six months of aftercare provided.

Your responsibilities as a resident of Life Builders are to:

- Take full advantage of this opportunity to grow.
- Respect yourself, other residents, staff, and the Life Builders' home.
- Follow the program structure and guidelines that have been presented to you.
- Learn to live independently and successfully.

Life Builders will provide you with the opportunity to achieve:

- Vocational development- vocational skills will be updated and advanced through a series of workshops, groups, and other training.
- Basic needs- through the provision of secure housing and access to services in the community.
- Educational development- through assistance with vocational and academic schools, private tutoring, vocational testing, and remedial assistance.
- Emotional support- through group counseling on substance abuse and other issues; and stable, adult relationships with staff, mentors, and fellow residents.
- Social skills development- through instruction in daily living and self-care skills.

### New Resident Status: Orientation

The first month of your entry into Life Builders, you are under New Resident Orientation Status. This one-month period will allow new residents to adjust to living in the Life Builders community. During this month you are expected to abide by a curfew. Your curfew will be 8:00 pm. . Any special needs should be discussed with your Case Manager (CM). After your first month at Life Builders your curfew will be based on your performance in the program.

During the orientation phase you will also participate in an intake process that will include the following:

- a. Reviewing the Resident Handbook
- b. Obtaining necessary legal documents (release forms, social security card, ID, etc.)
- c. Life Skills Assessment
- d. Job Skills Assessment
- e. Education Assessment (If you have not completed High School Diploma or GED)
- f. Mental Health/Substance Abuse Assessment (Based on the assessment, mental health and/or substance abuse treatment may be a condition of your case plan at Life Builders.)

Once your orientation has been completed, a case plan will be developed between you and your case manager. Your case plan is an individualized plan specifically designed to develop skills necessary for successful independent living. Your case plan will define your goals and the necessary skills needed to achieve those goals.

## Expectations of YOU: Landlord/Tenant Agreement

As a resident of Life Builders, you are granted privileges and entrusted with responsibilities. As part of your commitment to the program, there are several expectations of you:

### Weekly meeting with your Case Manager:

You are expected to make and keep an appointment with your Case Manager (CM) on a weekly basis. The purpose of meeting regularly with your CM is to maintain open communication around your goals and progress at Life Builders. At these meetings, you and your CM will discuss any issues of concern. You will also develop a Case Plan, outlining your current goals and priorities. These may include your employment, financial stability, and independent living skills. It is your responsibility to schedule your weekly appointment with your CM. Finally, you are asked to turn in a copy of your pay stub to your CM each time you receive a paycheck. This is necessary to accurately determine the amount of your monthly rent.

### Weekly meeting with your Self Sufficiency Coordinator:

You are expected to make and keep an appointment with your Self Sufficiency Coordinator on a weekly basis. The purpose of meeting regularly is to maintain communication about your goals and progress at Life Builders

### Education

Life Builders believes education is the doorway to self improvement and self sufficiency. If you have not graduated from high school or obtained a GED, you are required to enroll in the education program of your choice and successfully complete your secondary education.

If you are interested in post secondary education or training, you are expected to discuss this with your case manager and design a plan to reach your post secondary goals. Your self sufficiency coordinator and CM will assist you in accessing post secondary opportunities. Education hours count with employment hours to reach the mandatory 30 hours of work per week.

### Employment:

Maintaining secure employment is a primary component of Life Builders, as well as an important life skill. You are expected to maintain full-time employment or part-time employment/education classes or training (minimum = 30 hours/week) while you are a resident of Life Builders. You are also expected to communicate openly and honestly with your CM and self sufficiency coordinator regarding your employment.

If you are having problems at work, or if you lose your job for any reason, you are expected to inform your CM promptly.

#### Unemployed Resident Status:

If at any time during your stay at Life Builders, you lose your job, you will be under Unemployed Resident Status. Residents are expected to gain full-time employment within two weeks, or face consequences, including suspension or discharge. While unemployed, you will be required to abide by an 8:00 pm curfew.

Upon losing your job, you will meet with the CM and the Self Sufficiency Coordinator as soon as possible. Residents who are job-searching will be required to attend Job Group each morning at 9:00 am at Life Builders. You will be required to job search full time Monday-Friday from 9am-5pm or be at the home doing house chores when not actively seeking employment.

Upon gaining full-time employment, your early curfew will be lifted.

#### Rent:

Rent is determined according to your monthly income. Therefore, it is necessary that you turn in a copy of your paystub to your CM each time you receive a paycheck. Your CM will review the Life Builders rental policies with you when you enter the program. Rent is 30% of your monthly net income, and is due by the fifth of each month. If rent is paid after the fifth of each month, there is a \$15.00 late fee assessed.

#### Community Fund:

Each resident is also expected to contribute \$10 each month to the Community Fund. This fund money can be used for house activities, community outings, concerts, new recreation equipment etc. The Community Fund is spent according to the consensus of a majority of residents, and is usually voted on at the weekly House Meeting.

#### Life Builders Savings:

You are expected to maintain a Savings Account with Life Builders while you are a resident. This is to support you in establishing a substantial savings account and in developing effective saving habits. You and your Case Manager will develop a Savings Agreement within your first week at Life Builders. You are expected to save a minimum of 20% of your income at Life Builders. As you approach graduation, your Case Manager will assist you in setting up a Savings and/or Checking Account at a bank in the community. The majority (80%) of your Permanent Fund Dividend (if you receive one) must be saved, in accordance with your independent living goals. Any individual needs you have may be discussed with your Case Manager.

### Weekly House Meeting:

You are expected to attend the weekly House Meeting. This meeting is an opportunity for residents to discuss concerns and make suggestions regarding issues affecting the Life Builders community. Here, you will also be updated on information and activities. You may only be excused from House Meeting if you are working. If you are unable to attend the House Meeting, it is your responsibility to inform your Case Manager in advance.

### Chores:

As residents of a community, you are expected to share responsibilities in keeping the household clean and comfortable. Therefore, chores are assigned on a monthly, rotating schedule. Throughout the month, you are responsible for maintaining your assigned area on a daily basis. Upon completion of your chore, please have staff check your area, and you and a member of staff should each initial the Chore List. Chores are to be completed by 7:00pm each night. It is important to schedule your time so that you are able to complete your household responsibilities.

### Sign In and Out

You are required to sign in and out when leaving or entering the building. The Sign in and out board is located in the rec room.

### Life Skills Workshops:

Throughout your stay at Life Builders, you are required to attend Life Skills Workshops. The purpose of these workshops is to teach you fundamentals of independent living. Attendance in these groups will be considered in your grant application upon graduation from Life Builders. Some Life Skills topics include:

- Employment Skills
- Financial Management (filing income taxes, Permanent Fund Dividend, etc.)
- Nutrition and Health Education
- Housing – apartment hunting and Landlord/Tenant laws
- Cultural Awareness
- Healthy Relationships
- Communication Skills
- Sex Education
- Anger Management
- Decision Making Skills

Necessary Life Skills groups are determined by the resident and the CM and/or self sufficiency coordinator. Participation is mandatory and you are excused from

attending only if you are working. In this case, you are required to make up the Life Skills group individually with Life Builders' staff. Workshops are coordinated with the self sufficiency coordinator and excused absences are obtained through the self sufficiency coordinator.

#### Mentorship Program:

One of the most valuable components of Life Builders is the Mentor/Protégé program. Within the first three months of entering Life Builders, you will be matched with a mentor if mentors are available.

#### Grant:

If you successfully transition out of Life Builders and have met the guidelines for successful completion of the program, you will be eligible to apply for a grant. This grant is a percentage of the rent you have paid during your stay at Life Builders. The grant is to be applied to your independent living upon leaving Life Builders (security deposit, first month's rent, utilities, furniture, etc.). This is an incentive to complete the program, and to meet the goals you have defined through your Case Plan. If you are discharged from Life Builders for disciplinary reasons or leave in an unplanned manner, you forfeit your opportunity to receive a grant.

### Life Builders Community Living

#### Accessing the Life Builders Home

You will be given a key card that gives you access to the rec room door and your bedroom. This is the entrance that residents should use to enter the home. The key card will allow only you and your roommate access to your bedroom. Staff will have a master access card. If you lose your key card there is a \$25 fee for replacement. You are responsible for your key card and should not give it to anyone else. This will assure the safety of residents and staff.

### Smoking:

Life Builders is a smoke-free building. Cigarette smoking is only allowed on the back deck. The door must remain closed while smoking and cigarette butts are to be placed in the containers provided. It is the responsibility of residents who smoke to keep the deck clean of cigarette butts.

### Guests:

You are allowed to have up to two guests visit at a time. Guests are welcome in the living room, dining/ kitchen area, and on the deck. Resident bedrooms are off limits to guests. Guests should be requested at least one hour in advance, so that staff can ensure that the activity of the house does not become overwhelming. Guests may be denied if there is an unresolved conflict between a guest and another resident. Each guest will be required to sign a Guest Agreement and to show a picture I.D. to Life Builders staff. All guests must be at least sixteen years old. You are responsible for your guests' behavior and must remain with them throughout the visit.

### Visiting hours:

Guests are welcome at Life Builders during the following hours:

Sunday – Thursday            10am – 8pm

Friday / Saturday            10am – 11pm

### Phones/ Messages:

There are two phones available for residents' use. Any messages taken should be written down clearly with the time and date, and placed in the resident mailbox located next to the staff offices. When answering the phone, you are asked to be respectful at all times. Long Distance calls must be made with a calling card.

### Common Areas (kitchen, dining room, living room, great room, and rec room):

Residents are responsible for keeping these areas clean. Eating is allowed in the kitchen and dining room only. You may drink in the living room, but you are required to clean up after yourself at all times. House furnishings belong to the program and you are asked to treat the home respectfully.

### Bedrooms:

Bedrooms are set up for two residents. You and your roommate are responsible for keeping your room clean. Please clean your room at least weekly, or more often as needed: empty trash, vacuum, pick up clothes, change your sheets, and dust. **Because of fire codes, you are not allowed to burn incense or candles in your bedroom. Smoking is not permitted in bedrooms.** For health reasons, food is not allowed in

bedrooms. All visible materials (posters, etc.) are subject to approval by Life Builders staff. Your bedroom is your room and your roommate's room please do not allow visitors or other residents in your room. Because you are sharing a bedroom with another resident it is essential that each resident be respectful of the other's space, belongings and privacy. If problems arise between you and your roommate that you are unable to resolve on your own it is your responsibility to discuss the situation and determine a plan of resolution with staff.

#### Bedroom Inspection:

Your room will be inspected on a regular basis. You will receive at least 24 hours notice of a room inspection; this allows you time to clean your room. We do room inspections for health and safety reasons. Room inspections are different from Room Searches.

#### Room Searches:

Bedrooms and belongings are subject to random, complete searches by staff, in order to protect residents' safety. This will occur if Life Builders staff has reason to believe there is contraband in the home. There will be no advance notice given. We will make every effort to have you present during a room search. However, circumstances may require that we proceed without you.

#### Medication:

You are responsible for taking, storing, and refilling any prescribed medications. You will be asked to inform your Case Manager of any medications you are taking so it can be noted in your file. In case of an emergency, this information will be passed on to medical personnel.

#### Wake-Up:

You are responsible for waking yourself up to get to work, appointments, etc. on time. Life Builders staff does not wake up residents. You will be provided with an alarm clock upon entry into Life Builders.

#### Quiet Hours:

You are asked to respect your housemates at all times. Quiet hours are in effect daily from 10pm-10am weekdays and 11pm -10am weekends. During these hours, you are asked not to play loud music or have loud conversations in your bedroom or hallways. This insures that you and your housemates will have the opportunity to sleep peacefully.

## Consequences

Staff and residents will discuss problems and potential consequences prior to consequences being implemented. Consequences may be imposed without discussion in the event of immediate safety concerns.

### Suspension:

A resident suspended from Life Builders will be required to sleep elsewhere. Residents on suspension may enter the home for appointments only. He/she must take all clothes and items necessary (including any medications) for the duration of the suspension. Types of behavior meriting a suspension from Life Builders may include (but are not limited to):

- Failing to comply with program expectations
- Prolonged period of unemployment or underemployment
- Threatening
- Unauthorized entry/exit to Life Builders home

There is no rent reimbursement due to a suspension.

### Discharge:

A resident who demonstrates a chronic pattern of noncompliance with the program structure, or who commits dangerous acts, may be discharged from Life Builders.

Types of behavior meriting discharge include (but are not limited to):

- Possession of drugs or paraphernalia
- Possession of a weapon
- Fighting and/or physically attacking another resident, guest or Life Builders staff member
- Chronic, on-going failure to follow Case Plan
- Tampering with security

A discussion between Life Builders staff and the resident involved will always precede any suspension or discharge. There is no rent reimbursement due to a discharge.

### Vacations/Expenses

Life Builders is an opportunity for you to gain stability, in terms of your employment, your finances, and your independent living skills. A primary goal of Life Builders is that, upon graduation, you will be able to fully support yourself. This includes more than meeting your basic needs; after Life Builders, you will be hopefully able to afford some of your non-essential wants (car, vacations, etc.). With this future-oriented goal, Life Builders does not support residents in pursuing non-essential expenses. Residents are not allowed to take vacations while in the program, without approval of the Services Coordinator.

## Volunteering

At Life Builders, we believe that part of being a healthy, responsible adult is contributing to the community. During your stay, Life Builders will provide a wide range of opportunities for you to volunteer in the community. You are encouraged to take part in these activities to meet new people and gain a sense of personal fulfillment.

## Life Builders Car Policy

Automobiles are a very important part of independent living; however, cars can be expensive in many ways. Because we feel a vehicle will be too great of a financial burden for a resident while in the program, no residents are allowed to have a vehicle while in the Life Builders program.

## Mentors

One of the most important aspects of Life Builders is our mentoring program. You will be matched with a mentor within your first six weeks in the program. We believe that every young person has the right to be accompanied on the road from youth to adulthood. The purpose of the mentor program is to provide you with a trustworthy adult friend who is committed to helping you on your journey from dependence to independence. As you know, making it on your own is not easy. The obstacles that you face at times may seem insurmountable. You are facing many challenges at this time of your life, but you need not face them alone.

Our volunteer mentors have gone through an extensive selection and training process. They have demonstrated high moral character, enthusiasm, and commitment to Life Builders young adults. They are successful in both their business and personal lives. Most importantly, they have experienced and overcome many of the same obstacles that are facing you today.

Their job is not to tell you how to live your life, or to rescue you from your circumstances. Their primary responsibility will be to provide you with friendship, support, and inspiration. Your mentor will act as a sounding board for you as you plan and begin to achieve your life goals. They are here to help you develop your own vision for your future.

You will be known as a protégé to your mentor. We use the term protégé because we consider you a promising young adult with a bright future. Your mentor's goal is to empower, guide, and equip you with the tools you need for success.

### Guidelines for Successful Graduation from Life Builders

These guidelines are outlined to assist Life Builders residents and staff in setting achievable, realistic goals and to provide a measure for progress toward their attainment. The successful Life Builders Graduate will have:

- Demonstrated a successful employment record (i.e. stayed on the job at least six months) and improved employment situation (i.e. pay raise, increase in responsibilities, part-time to full-time, benefits).
- Maintained checking and savings accounts for at least four to six months with minimum supervision by Life Builders staff.
- Saved at least \$1,500.
- Obtained a High School Diploma or a GED.
- Participated in at least twelve Life Skills classes.
- If enrolled in college, completed at least two semesters and made financial arrangements to continue schooling.
- A valid proof of residence (i.e. a signed lease or receipt of deposit).
- Established an Aftercare plan with assistance from Life Builders staff.
- Demonstrated control of past behaviors such as emotional or substance abuse problems, if applicable, through counseling, AA, or related methods.

### Moving Out of Life Builders

You are asked to give at least thirty days notice of your intent to leave Life Builders. This also gives you, as a resident, time to plan your move, find a reasonable apartment, obtain household items you will need, and develop an appropriate after care plan.

Giving less than thirty days notice may reduce the amount of money you are eligible to receive as a grant. Residents who do not give thirty days notice may not be refunded any rent for the month they leave. Exceptions may be granted with the approval of the Case Manager and the Services Coordinator.

Upon leaving Life Builders, you are expected to pack your belongings and thoroughly clean your room. Your room must be inspected and approved by staff

before you leave. Also, please turn in your room key and your grant application (if you are applying), and leave information as to how you may be contacted.

If you are considering leaving Life Builders for any extended period of time (more than two days), it is necessary that you discuss this with your Case Manager. If you are absent from Life Builders for three days without any contact with your Case Manager, you will automatically be discharged from the program.

### **Congratulations and Welcome to Life Builders!**

This is a time to learn and practice independent living skills and acquire the resources necessary to live on your own.

Remember you are a role model. You worked hard to earn your position in Life Builders. You deserve the privileges and responsibilities; however, please take care to monitor yourself and take responsibility for your actions.

The Resident Handbook has been reviewed with me by a Life Builders staff member. I understand that I am responsible for following the program structure and guidelines. I understand that staff will notify me of all program policy changes as they occur.

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Resident Signature

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Date

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Staff Signature

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Date

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Services Coordinator

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Date