

For Immediate Release

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Contact: Scott Christ, Vice President
HomeLife, Inc.
5420A Beckley Rd, PMB 234
Battle Creek, MI 49015
Phone (269) 660-0854
Fax (269) 660-0964
Web site: www.talkhome.net

Level 4 and Level 5 of Employee Development Program creates a “win, win” scenario for HomeLife, Inc. and the professional community at large.

Kalamazoo, MI: HomeLife, Inc. of Kalamazoo, with an office in Battle Creek, announced today that the final levels of a **5-level Competency Based Employee Development Program** have been introduced and are yielding further competence and excellence in staff performance. While the skills and credentials learned in the first three levels of training already meet and exceed State mental health and licensing requirements, HomeLife isn't stopping there.

HomeLife, Inc. was established in 1996 by Barry Bruns and Scott Christ. Their vision was to provide care to individuals with disabilities, and those struggling with the long-term effects of injury and illness. Today HomeLife's seven Kalamazoo area programs provide stable and optimal care that dignifies their clients as individuals while meeting their unique challenges. Skilled caring employees are essential for consumers to maintain behavioral and medical stability. Without stability, it is difficult for consumers to benefit from skills training, therapy, community integration or greater independence. A key HomeLife objective is to focus on employee development to achieve these outcomes.

Levels 4 and 5 of the Competency Based Employee Development Program address the skills required beyond direct care, by addressing issues in leadership, management, and logistics. This includes such items as coordination of medical care and medications, leadership and supervision of personnel, records management, effective problem solving, and effective communication with external stake holders such as social workers, physicians, guardians and family members. "It is our hope that by developing competent and qualified professional level employees, that we are contributing not only to the quality of services provided to our customers, but we are also contributing to the community of skilled professionals working in healthcare." said Barry Bruns, President of HomeLife, Inc.

This competency based approach also addresses succession planning within the organization. As employees who choose to further develop their careers move up, there are competent employees who can advance within our organization. The 5-level Competency Based Employee Development Program creates a “win, win” scenario for the organization and the community of caring professionals.

According to Bruns, “the skills of our employees make a big difference in the progress and quality of life our consumers’ experience. That is why at HomeLife we believe staff development is a key objective.” HomeLife's competency based employee development system requires each employee to:

- (1) have a certain amount of employment experience with individuals with disabilities
- (2) pass classroom training and testing
- (3) complete competency based on-the-job training and performance reviews

Employees who pass each level become trainers for others, reinforcing their own proficiency. The **first level** of training focuses on basic health and safety, crisis intervention, medical, care-giver and basic customer service skills. The **second level** of competency focuses on more advanced health and medication procedures, emergency procedures, staff training procedures, advanced customer service skills, and leadership. The **third level** focuses on advanced clinical skills including behavioral assessment, observation, and data recording skills. Level three trainees are also required to complete classroom sessions on traumatic brain injury, neurological impairment, mental illness, autism, and behavior. Employees completing this third level of training have **Behavior Technician** added to their title. The **fourth and fifth levels** of competency focuses on leadership, management, and logistics and applying skills in scenario based training situations. “Our focus is on advancing employee knowledge and skills beyond just answering questions on a test. We want them to be able to reliably perform on the job in real situations,” Bruns stated.

Employees completing these advanced levels of training will be prepared to manage the challenges of balancing customer and stakeholder needs, while adhering to standards set forth in the areas of ethics, corporate compliance, quality procedures, and advanced clinical topics. Bruns stated, “We anticipate that the introduction of the fourth and fifth levels of competency based training will further contribute to our ability to provide care to our consumers.”

For more information, contact Scott Christ at (269) 373-5919, call 888 825-5466, or visit www.talkhome.net