

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Level 3 and climbing— Employee Development Program raises the bar on quality care and, ultimately, the quality of life for HomeLife clients

Kalamazoo, MI: HomeLife, Inc. of Kalamazoo, with an office in Battle Creek, announced today that the first two levels of a **5-level Competency Based Employee Development Program** have been implemented and completed yielding great results in staff performance. While the skills and credentials learned thus far already meet and exceed State mental health and licensing requirements, HomeLife isn't stopping there. The third level of staff training has been introduced this summer and the standard of care continues to rise above and beyond for the benefit of HomeLife clients.

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 six Kalamazoo area programs each 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. According to President, Barry 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 feel 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*

Standards are established in each of these three requirements for each level of competence. 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 and newest competency based training level** focuses on advanced clinical skills including behavioral assessments and data recording techniques. Level three trainees are also required to complete a five part series on traumatic brain injury, neurological impairment, mental illness, and behavior. Additional topics of study include ethics, corporate compliance, quality procedures, and advanced topics in medication management. Employees completing this third level of training will have **Behavior Technician** added to their title.

Beyond the third level currently being implemented, a fourth and fifth level will be introduced over the next year, providing quality care for HomeLife consumers that exceeds anything else available in the area.

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