

Community Congregational Church of Clinton Heights UCC
Meeting with Lifesong
January 26, 2024

Meeting commenced at the Church at 11:00 AM

Members Present: Tracey P, Brian F, Bruce G, Joanne B

Guests Present: Scott and Sue, Representatives from Lifesong

Members absent: Nicole F, Tom P, Cindy M, Elaine W, Bob H, Julie K, Tina K

Scott started the conversation by telling us that Lifesong is a community-based program without walls run by Christians. The people they support provide assistance where they can throughout the community. While they have no walls, they do have places where they can hold music classes, do woodworking projects and have art classes.

The facilities that utilize Lifesong must be not-for-profit and provide jobs that no one else is paid to do. Much of their work is performed in churches, firehouses and libraries.

Lifesong does not advertise; people hear about them from word-of-mouth. The group is comprised of Management, Life Skill Coaches and the people they support. Many of the Life Skill Coaches have degrees in this field and are high-quality employees who are well-compensated for their work. Because of the way the employees are treated, there is low turn-over. In fact, there is a waiting list for Coaches, as well as a waiting list for people to support. Lifesong keeps the ratio of Coach to People to support about 4:1. They don't want to grow too big; they want to maintain the quality work they do as well as the personal relationship they have with each person they support.

Lifesong is state-funded under Social Services. They also hold fund-raisers, such as the Lifesong Dash in Clifton Park for runners.

Lifesong provides opportunities to the people they support to do many things. They have week-long camping sessions where everyone is given a job(s) to do from a chore chart. Many campers look forward to their camping sessions and the responsibility of performing their chores.

The church is currently going through a transition period and struggling with membership, so we are trying to connect with the community and reach out where we can. Working with Lifesong may give us an opportunity to not only get our name out there, but provide Lifesong with support from us. Perhaps we can commit to volunteer to assist at the Fun Run. We have kitchen facilities that Lifesong may wish to use for their cooking lessons.

The church also has other projects that the people Lifesong supports may be able to do. We need Sunday School cabinets cleaned out and organized. We need flower beds planted, fences repaired and eventually some painting needs to be done. The people Lifesong supports are a very diverse group of all skill levels. Sue makes sure the workers chosen to perform tasks are paired with the skill level required.

Lifesong is also looking for unique opportunities for the people they support, such as clerical, printing bulletins and programs. They want to expand into vocational training and do meaningful jobs. Once we start working together, other ideas will come up.

The people Lifesong support work Monday through Friday, 9:30 to 2:30. One suggestion is to have them make soup on a Friday for the Church to enjoy after services on Sunday.

Scott can do a video presentation to share with the congregation.

In return for all Lifesong will do for us, they ask that we give them acknowledgment and let them use our kitchen for their cooking classes.

There was a discussion regarding who would provide the food for their cooking classes, whose equipment would be used if we were to have them do landscaping (it depends on what we have and what's available). Most of that will be worked out later. Lifesong will be on the agenda at our next board meeting.

Because our kitchen has been dormant for quite a while, we may want to have the gas lines inspected before we allow usage.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Boel, Secretary

