



February 24, 2011

Theo Kowalchuk  
1 Life Workplace Safety  
175 Marion Street  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in regards to Theo Kowalchuk from 1 Life Workplace Safety, and the impact she has had on our business. Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit organization that builds safe, decent affordable housing for low-income families to purchase. This puts us in the Construction Business, which is a dangerous place to work. One of the ways we achieve our goals is by using volunteers to help us build the homes, which comes with its own set of concerns regarding safety and training.

As part of our commitment to safety, we contacted Theo as a consultant (about 4 years ago) to try to create a safety program that wouldn't scare away our volunteers, but rather would empower them to tackle a volunteer role that was foreign to them, and help keep them safe, as well as everyone else on the build site. Theo worked tirelessly in helping us develop a Safety, Health and Environment Program, which we use to this day, as well as a Safety Training course for our volunteers. The first year we introduced the program, we asked that the volunteers attend once in 3 years, and have been whittling that down to where we are now, which requires everyone to take Safety Training on a yearly basis.

Theo would conduct training courses here at our office, and in the case of large groups volunteering from a company, she would attend their workplace and present the safety course during their lunch hour, so as not to inconvenience them. You must know that this was an inconvenience to Theo, however, her commitment to us was so strong that she would sacrifice her time, to ensure that our volunteers had received the training prior to building with us. There was one year where Theo did more than 20 individual

presentations on our behalf. When there were fees for service, she would provide us with a cut rate, being very aware of our budgetary limitations, to ensure that our volunteers were safe on site, rather than worrying about her bottom line. This type of commitment is hugely commendable, and quite rare in this day of every man for himself. Theo embraced the idea of Habitat, and has found a way to make it work while not compromising her own ideals. We share a common goal for everyone who volunteers for us (and works for us) that they go home in the same condition that they arrived in the morning. Through her gentle coaching techniques we have managed to attain this goal, and expect to continue on for many years to come.

Theo has provided site inspections at no charge to us, just to ensure we have a clear snapshot as to any potential safety hazards and acknowledged and encouraged us for the positive way that we have dealt with potential hazards.

As we enter year 5 partnering with Theo and 1 Life Workplace Safety, our relationship is still one of respect, and genuine affection, as this is a person of integrity, good will and a giving spirit. As Theo has grown her business, we have had the pleasure of working with her colleagues who embrace the same principles and moral standards that she does. Theo has introduced an on-line training course for our staff and volunteers, and has graciously offered to have our volunteers take the on-line course free of charge. This offer is the equivalent to a \$15,000 donation to Habitat, of which we very graciously accept.

I can, with good conscience, recommend Theo Kowalchuk as Manitoba Business Woman Entrepreneur of the year. If you have any questions, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me as I would be delighted to provide more insight to this deserving woman.

Kindest Regards,  
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