

APRIL

2021

NEWSLETTER

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OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919

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April Birthdays

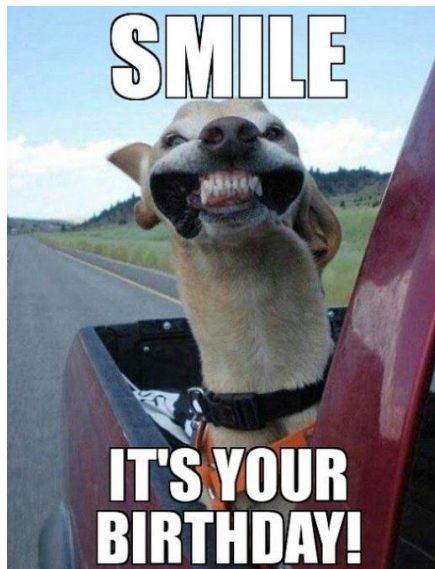


Our Place Birthdays

Marie P. – April 4th
Leslie L. – April 8th
Tobin S. – April 12
Liz G. – April 14
Chris W. – April 15
Pedro V. – April 17
Phillip B. – April 20
Hope S. – April 25
Rodney M. – April 27
Rianne N. – April 29

Famous March Birthdays

Marvin Gaye – April 2, 1939
Alec Baldwin – April 3, 1958
Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) –
April 8, 563 BC
Leonardo da Vinci – April 15, 1452
Emma Watson – April 15, 1990
Jennifer Garner – April 17, 1972
Queen Elizabeth, Queen of
England – April 21, 1926
William Shakespeare – April 26,
1564
Jerry Seinfeld – April 29, 1954



If you want to celebrate your birthday with us, let us know!

Meals

Meals to-go are served Monday-Friday between 2:00pm and 5:00pm.

Reminders:

- To make sure that everyone gets a meal, we are not able to give more than one meal per person. Seconds will only be given between 4:45pm and 5:00pm, *if we have enough. They are not guaranteed.*
- If you have a dietary restriction, please let us know before 12pm on the day you are coming so that we can do our best to accommodate you.
- Please be patient with us as we grab your meal, snacks and drink... we are going as fast as we can!

In light of the increase in COVID-19 numbers, we are asking for your cooperation with the following:

- * Practice social distancing (maintain a 6ft distance from others) while waiting in line for your meal. We also strongly encourage you to wear a mask while waiting to protect yourself and those around you.
- * Please do not approach the table until the person in front of you has left.
- * *Masks are mandatory while picking up your meal.* Need a mask?? No problem! Just ask us for one.
- * If you are not able to wear a mask due to a medical condition, please wait on the “x” in front of the table. Your meal will be placed on the table. Once staff are back inside and the door is closed, please take your meal and step away from the table so that others can safely get theirs.

We *really* appreciate your patience and understanding during these strange times. We know that wearing a mask is not fun and is more difficult for some than others. Please be mindful of the fact that people around you may be more vulnerable to the virus than you are, and so by wearing a mask and keeping your distance, you are helping to keep them safe.

We want to do everything we can to stay open to continue to offer meals and support, which is why we have these policies in place.


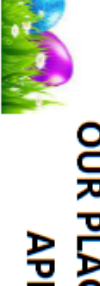








Computers, WiFi and/or Phone Use

These services are currently *unavailable* until further notice.

Weekly Check-Ins

Let us know if you are interested in receiving a weekly supportive phone call from staff to check in and see how you're doing.

APRIL 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR

<div>     </div> OUR PLACE PROGRAMS APRIL 2021				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>New! Name that Tune! 12:30 Games 1:00-1:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Virtual Trivia/Card Games 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>New! Meditation 3:15 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30- 2:30</p> 
<p>Virtual LIVE MUSIC w/Kevin & Chas 3:30 - 4:30</p> <p>*Center will be CLOSED on April 2nd (Good Friday)*</p>				
<p>Virtual Programs & Appointments to Use Computers/Phone/Wifi</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Appointments to use Computer/Phone/Wi-Fi are currently unavailable. * All virtual programs use Zoom - see staff for sign-up information * If you need help downloading Zoom/learning how to use it, just ask us! * There is an option to <i>phone in</i> to all Zoom groups. 				
<p>To Go Meals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Everyone welcome * Free of charge! * Seconds not served until after 4:45 & are Not guaranteed * If you have a dietary restriction, call before 12pm and we will do our best to accommodate you * Coffee served as we are able * Please wear a mask 				

NOTE: Programs and hours may change without notice in response to Public Health's COVID-19 safety recommendations.

Our Place Weekly Online Programs

NEW! Name that Tune! – Mondays at 12:30pm | **Games** – at 1:00pm

This hour is a time to chat and socialize. We can talk about your interests, your life, current events in the world, or anything that's on your mind.

Link to join Name that Tune & Games via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/92357132760?pwd=ZWltaXlsK3dQaXpnTTgydnNaWUd4Zz09>

Join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685.

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 923 5713 2760

Trivia & Card Games – Tuesdays at 3:30pm

Programs will be rotated bi-weekly. A casual, fun online space for trivia with friends! A place for people to gather and chat over Zoom while playing online cards together. Games will be decided by consensus on the day of, with a focus on Euchre and Crazy Eights.

Link to join Online Trivia & Card Games via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93121462646?pwd=dJxM2R1eEdSMElL3VTa0x2b0tBUT09>

To join by phone, dial: 647-558-0588

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 931 2146 2646

NEW! Meditation – Wednesdays at 3:15 | Peer Support Group – at 3:30pm

These meetings are a time to connect with others for support, encouragement, and hope. We'll learn from each other's experiences in conversations. We'll talk about relaxation, managing emotions, self-compassion, and self-acceptance. We'll look at positive steps that you could try to have a better life. There will be a different topic each week. Input on future topics is more than welcome.

Link to join Peer Support Group via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94221242340>

To join by phone, dial: **647-374-4685**

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 942 2124 2340

Anger Management – Thursdays at 2:30 (Women's) and 3:30 (Men's)

This virtual Anger Management course is for anyone who is interested in getting a handle on their anger and strong emotions.

The training utilizes Cognitive-Behavioural tools and techniques to help individuals navigate tough situations. With topics such as Communication, The Cycle of Violence, and Learning from Mistakes, participants can dive deeper into the root of their anger and learn more about themselves in the process.

There are also many opportunities for individuals to connect the lessons with their past and/or current experiences, as open discussion is encouraged. This group operates from a trauma-informed perspective, and aims to provide a safe, open, and non-judgmental space for individuals to explore their emotions and find new ways to grow.

To Sign Up: Email info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com or call the Our Place office: (416) 598-2919. To complete your registration, Tia or Clarence will call you to introduce themselves and have a quick chat with you.

Writing Group – Fridays at 1:30pm

Writing Group with Peter (a professional journalist!) is a time to connect with others, build friendships and get creative together.

Everyone is welcome to join in and no experience is necessary!

Link to join Writing Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93536287038?pwd=RVpzR1pMSGcxQ01UQXZ6YVBHTlI0UT09>

Join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 935 3628 7038

LIVE MUSIC w/ Kevin and Chas– Fridays at 3:30pm

Join us as we welcome back Kevin and Chas! Every *Friday* starting March 5th, come listen and sing-a-long to all their greatest hits!

Link to join Live Music via Zoom:

https://zoom.us/j/93816554001?pwd=ZEllbmNjQ214QXhhNFliUX_FkWFFnUT09

Join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685.

When prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 935 3628 7038

Other Programs & Supports

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Thinking of quitting smoking?? Talk to staff about how you can access support and free Nicotine Replacement Therapy with no wait.

Free Rapid-Access Psychotherapy

St. Michael's Homes is temporarily expanding their existing Psychotherapy program. They will be working with ten Student Therapists through to March 31, 2021 and are looking for clients ages 18 and up. Sessions can be done by phone, tablet, or computer and in-person sessions will begin when conditions permit. This is an amazing opportunity to access **free** one-to-one psychotherapy (up to 16 sessions per person). Please let the staff at Our Place know if you would like to register.

Mood Disorders Association supports and virtual programs

The Mood Disorders Association offers:

- Virtual peer support groups Monday to Friday
- One-on-one Peer Support
- One-on-one Counseling
- A recovery Focused Webinar Series

Virtual groups include: Early Psychosis Intervention Family Forum, Depression and Anxiety Peer Support Group, Courage and Compassion Peer Support Group for Depression, OCD Peer Support Group, Addiction Peer Support Group, and a Bipolar Peer Support Group

For more information or to sign up, call 1-866-363-6663 or contact QV at quangvum@mooddisorders.ca.



InkWell writing workshops

InkWell Workshops are free, drop-in creative writing workshops on Wednesday afternoons for people living with mental-health or addiction issues. Anyone in Toronto over the age of 18 who self-identifies as having a mental-health or addiction issue is welcome to attend. InkWell instructors are award-winning professional writers who have lived experience of mental illness. They lead workshops in fiction, memoir and poetry. Each session includes time for writing, reading and sharing with support and fun. The workshops can be joined by phone or internet. For further information e-mail info@inkwellworkshops.com or visit <http://www.inkwellworkshops.com>. A short intake will be required to join.





The call will either be picked up by friendly administration staff, or you can leave a message with your name and phone number. Their admin team will provide that information to one of their trained clinical staff to return the call and provide support. The staff who are dedicated to this service are social workers, clinical therapists, and occupational therapists.

Recovery College at CAMH

CAMH offers free education for people who have experienced mental health and/or addiction challenges, and who feel ready to set goals, gain skills, and make social connections as part of their personal journey. These courses are open to people who have experienced mental health and/or addiction challenges and/or social services use. The courses are also open to their family members, friends and health care providers, when appropriate. These courses are created and led with people who have lived experience of mental health and/or addiction challenges and/or social services use.

Programs include: Introduction to Mindfulness, Creative Writing Techniques: Braving The Elements, Working in Groups, Chat and Chow, Casual Wellness

For more information visit <https://recovery-college.camh.ca>, call 416 524-2137, or e-mail recovery.college@camh.ca



Peer Support Lines

Need someone to talk to who has lived-experience with mental health issues?

Check out a Peer Support Line. A volunteer will listen to you talk about your day or what's happening in your life. These are not crisis lines so you can call if you're doing OK and just want to talk.

Krasman Centre: 1-888-777-0979

Available any time every day, 20 mins/call

Mood Disorders Association: 1-866-363-6663

Available 9:30am to 5pm. 30 mins/call

Progress Place:

416-323-3721 - 12pm to 8pm

416-960-9276 - 8pm to midnight. 30 mins/call



Mental Health & Crisis Resources

1. Call **911** if you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical support.
2. Canada Suicide Prevention Helpline: **1-833-456-4566**
3. Text **WELLNESS** to 741741 to access the Crisis Text Line. Provides immediate support.
4. Wellness Together: **1-866-0445** (24/7). Provides free counseling and support.
5. Gerstein Crisis Centre: **(416) 929-5200** (24/7). This is a community-based crisis service for adults age 16+ in Toronto who are dealing with mental health issues and/or substance use issues and are currently in crisis. Also offers online face-to-face support, wellness groups, short term follow-up support, and referrals to other services.
6. Crisis Services Canada: **1-833-456-4566** (24/7) or text **START to 45645** (4pm-midnight). This is support for people who are thinking about suicide.
7. Distress Centre of Greater Toronto: **(416)-408-4357** (42/7). They provide emotional and crisis support.
8. St. Michael's Homes: **(416) 926-8267 ext. 110**. Addictions Services for men.
9. Assaulted Women's Hotline: **(416) 863-0511** or **1-866-863-0511** (24/7 crisis line)

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911.

From the Our Place Kitchen

Alanna's Baked Ziti

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 red onion
- ¼ tbsp. salt
- 2 cloves of garlic, pressed or minced
- 1 ¼ cups regular brown lentils, picked over for debris and rinsed
- 3 cups water



PASTE AND EVERYTHING ELSE

- 12 oz. whole grain ziti, rigatoni or penne pasta
- 8 oz. whole grain ziti, rigatoni or penne pasta
- Salt, to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Pinch of red pepper flakes (omit if sensitive to spice)
- Marinara (plus 1 cup extra sauce, if you like extra-saucy ziti like me), divided
- 1 cup cottage cheese or ricotta cheese
- Handful of torn fresh basil leaves, for garnishing

INSTRUCTIONS

1. To cook the lentils: In a large saucepan over medium heat, warm the olive oil until shimmering. Add the onion and salt. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the onion is turning translucent, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add the garlic and cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add the lentils and water, and stir to combine.
2. Raise the heat to high and bring the mixture to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low and gently simmer until the lentils are tender and cooked through, about 30 to 40 minutes. Drain the mixture well in a fine-mesh sieve and return the lentils to their pot. Set aside.
3. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit and bring a large pot of salted water to boil. Cook the pasta just until al dente, according to package directions. Drain and return the pasta to the pot.
4. Add the lentils to the pasta. Add ½ cup of the cheese, reserving the rest for later. Season to taste with salt (I usually add ¼ to ½ teaspoon), freshly ground black pepper and red pepper flakes (if using).
5. Pour 1 cup of the marinara sauce into a 13×9-inch baking dish. Spread the sauce around with a spatula so the base of the baker is evenly coated. Pour the lentil and pasta mixture into the baker and spread it so it's evenly distributed. Using a spoon, dollop cottage cheese in big spoonful's over the pasta, then just lightly swirl the mixture a bit so the cottage cheese is still concentrated in those areas.

6. Drizzle the rest of the sauce evenly over the dish (adding extra sauce if you'd like) and gently spread it over the pasta. Sprinkle the remaining mozzarella evenly over the dish. Cover the baker tightly with aluminum foil—don't let it touch the cheese—or stick a few wooden toothpicks down the center and place a generously sized piece of parchment paper, folded in the middle to make a "tent" over the baker.

7. Bake for 30 minutes, then remove the covering, increase the heat to 450, and continue baking until the cheese on top is golden and spotty, 3 to 9 more minutes. Remove the baker from the oven and let it cool for 10 minutes before serving (trust me). Sprinkle freshly torn basil on top, slice and serve.

Ellen's Filipino Sweet Macaroni Salad

INGREDIENTS

- $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. elbow macaroni
- 1 pack Lady's Choice Mayonnaise 220ml
- 1 can fruit cocktail 15oz.
- 12oz. pineapple chunks
- 1 can condensed milk 14 oz.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup raisins or dried cranberries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup kaong (sweet palm fruit)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup nata de coco (cream of coconut)
- 6 oz. cheddar cheese grated
- 2 quarts of water



DIRECTIONS

1. Cook the macaroni by boiling water in a pot. Add the macaroni. Stir and cook for 7 minutes. Drain the water and arrange macaroni in a large bowl.
2. Add fruit cocktail, pineapple, kaong, nata de coco, cheese and raisins. Gently mix all the ingredients.
3. Pour condensed milk and then add Lady's Choice Mayonnaise. Fold until all ingredients are well blended. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.
4. Remove from the fridge and serve. Share and enjoy!

Mental Health Tip of the Month

By Kimberly A.

What is stress?

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. Also, it is our reaction to being placed under pressure. A situation that does not bother you at all might cause someone else a lot of stress.

Stress may make you feel the following: anxiety; fear; anger; sadness; frustration; muscle tensions; fearful; and difficulty sleeping. Some people will experience tension headaches, low energy, and a change in their moods.

What can cause stress?

There are many reasons why someone would experience stress. Here are a few of them: facing big changes; worrying about something; times of uncertainty; not having much or any control over a situation or an overcome.

Ways to get rid of stress

I have found a few ways to get of stress:

- Make some lifestyle changes
- Use relaxation, for example having a bath
- Listen to some music
- Go for a walk
- Develop your interests and hobbies
- Do something that is completely different from whatever is causing you stress.
- Chatting with friends about the things that you find difficult can help you to relax and get

things off your mind

- Get enough sleep because stress may make it difficult to sleep
- Take a break from what is causing you stress
- Take some time to relax and do some positive things for yourself
- Have a support team of friends, family, and peer support groups. Sometimes sharing your experiences with people who have been through something similar can make you feel better because you will realize that you are not alone. You will feel calmer and more likely to move forward.

Ways to avoid stress

You need to identify what triggers your stress. Even though you cannot avoid the situation, being prepared can help.

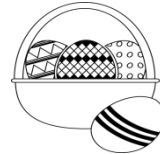
- Adjust how you use and organize your time
- Accept the things you cannot change; doing this will help you focus your time and energy on the things that you can change
- Look for things in your life that are positive
- Write a list of things that you are thankful for



Easter is a Christian holiday that celebrates the resurrection of Jesus. The event is said to have occurred three days after Jesus was crucified. The holiday begins with Lent—a 40-day period of fasting, prayer and sacrifice—and ends with Holy Week, which includes Holy Thursday (the celebration of Jesus’ Last Supper with his 12 Apostles, also known as “Maundy Thursday”), Good Friday (on which Jesus’ crucifixion is observed) and Easter Sunday.

Many traditions and symbols that play a key role in Easter have roots in pagan celebrations—particularly the pagan goddess Eostre—and in the Jewish holiday of [Passover](#).

Easter Eggs



There are many Easter-time traditions with roots that can be traced to non-Christian and even pagan or non-religious celebrations. Many non-Christians choose to observe these traditions while essentially ignoring the religious aspects of the celebration. Examples of non-religious Easter traditions include Easter eggs, and related games such as egg decorating. Eggs represented fertility and birth in certain pagan traditions that pre-date Christianity. Egg decorating may have become part of the Easter celebration in a nod to the religious significance of Easter, i.e., Jesus’ resurrection or re-birth.

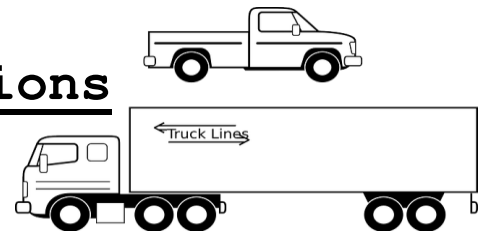
Source: www.history.com/topics/holidays/history-of-easter

Writing Group Submissions

Mike the truck driver

By [Bill Bain](#)

(according to a man walking his dog down the street)



There once was a driver with a very big truck
he liked to speed, he trusted his luck
along he sped, he tore up the road
but he hit a bump which shifted his load
rig started to turn - all on its own
he turned quite pale, the color of bone
the kingpin snapped, first time ever
he suddenly felt very un-cleaver
the cab went left, the trailer went straight
headed for cars, their number was eight
when a miracle happened, caused the trailer to sloth
cause the bolts were all loose and the wheels fell off.

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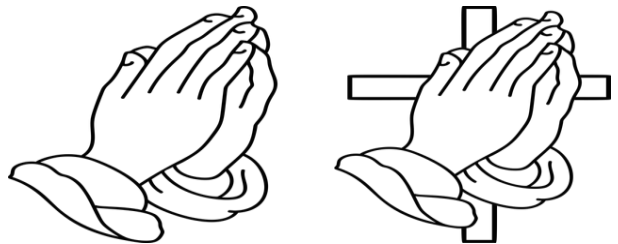
Out for the night by Pedro Vallejo

Another day, a setting sun passes as the time nears to crash for the night.
Thank you Lord ! - for most days, when, I'm out for the night - quickly.
I get a good rest with some deep sleep often rewarded with dreams; however,
there are those days when it takes some effort to shut down.
Not all - not all, but at times, it's very difficult to fall asleep.
I don't know when it happens, but I know it happens when I'm praying.
I eventually end up falling asleep and am out for the night.
The cause for not being able to fall asleep some may opine to the lack of 'feeling safe'.
I gather thoughts and emotions that help manifest 'feeling safe' in said opinion.
My challenge is 'being safe' from intrusive thoughts and emotions especially during my shutdown ritual.
I do have somewhat of a shutdown ritual beginning with the awareness of my breathing. I do this
meditation/prayer type of mix or cross.
I focus for a few minutes on performing some deep breathing exercises.
Every inhale and exhale eventually brings a calm relaxation and a profound peace.
Thoughts and emotions silently vanish and bring a bit of peace of mind.
It's as if the heart and the brain finally take a break, meet and handshake.
I can often hear my heart beating as I breathe in and out.

It is at this point, I think and mind the 'Lord's Prayer' focusing on every word.
The 'Lord's Prayer' is the prayer taught by Jesus of Nazareth unto his followers.
This prayer was taught by the one and only (I.N.R.I.) or Jesus (The Christ / The Messiah / The Anointed One) and I believe in him.
Jesus Christ is the author and finisher of my faith. He is the source of my hope and the authority in my life.
He is crucial to my shutdown ritual.
Though, I've been at this routine or shutdown ritual for a long time - randomly I still get sidetracked from finishing the prayer.
I liken it to a personal practice that is always in progress.
I just start again 'til I am through and I'm out for the night ... asleep ... maybe dreaming?

The Lord's Prayer - by I.N.R.I. (Jesus Christ)

Our Father,
Who art in heaven; Hallowed be thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done;
On earth as it is in heaven;
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;
For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory.
Forever and ever.
- Amen.



Walking and the Fitness Revolution

By Teresa Carducci



The most significant trend within the past decade in North American recreation has been towards endurance exercise. The roads seem to be filled with bicycles in the summer and in the winter ski tracks patch the nation's forests. These activities are popular because they provide pleasure and exercise. The importance of walking has been all but forgotten and it is an exercise that is so simple and basic to life.

If you do not want to jog, or run, or cycle, or ski you can achieve the same level of fitness by walking for exercise. It is a good exercise. It is simple work and it is very refreshing, rhythmic, economical, and easy to do. It is easier on your body than running. You consume about the same amount of calories whether you jog or walk. The distance you go is more important than the speed at which you travel. If you jog five miles it is good for you. Also walking five miles is good for you.

Journaling

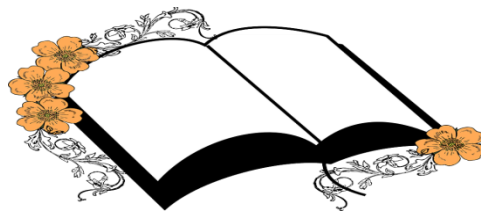
By Kimberly Acevedo

I recently started to do a journal. I am trying to make it a habit to do every day. Many people are making journals. A journal can be useful for many things. A journal can be an important tool to track important decisions in your life. One reason is to write down your thoughts and feelings. It is a way to get things off your mind instead of keeping them all bottled up inside. Keeping these things inside is not good for your health, especially mentally. Writing in a journal daily can be helpful. You can write about anything that you want ... feelings, events that have happened to you, even things that are positive and negative.

Journaling is also a way to look back at old entries and see how far you have come and even to see or to remember how you dealt with a situation. Journaling generally involves the practice of keeping a diary or journal that explores thoughts and feelings surrounding the events of your life. It can also help you with your anxiety and depression. Numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of journaling for health, happiness, and stress management.

Some ideas for what to write in a journal are:

1. Write down your goals every day.
2. Keep a daily log.
3. Journal three things you are grateful for every day.
4. Journal your problems.
5. Journal your stresses.
6. Journal your answer to "What's the best thing that happened today?" every night before bed.



I have found that writing a journal during this global pandemic is extremely helpful. It helps me to understand my thoughts and why I was feeling the way I was by joining the two together. I also find out what issues or events that can trigger my anxiety or depression. This way I can deal with it in a better way. Sometimes I forget to write in my journal. So, I keep it by my bed so that way I can write in it before I go to bed.

Please give it a try. You do not have to do it everyday. Write in it when you can. The benefit to writing a journal is amazing. Happy Journaling!

A Cry For Help - Part 1

By Josh Fogel

One day I was at the gym. I finished my workout and I went to the locker to get my things and I remembered in my knapsack I had two cans of beer. Well, I could have gone home and enjoyed them. I only live a 5 minute bike ride away but instead I went to the massage chair in front of the TV and drank those beers in the gym. It wasn't because I wanted to be drunk in the gym. It was because I wanted to get away with the behavior of something I wasn't supposed to do that was more intoxicating than the alcohol (much like a kleptomaniac steals for the excitement, not for the need of products). You see I'm so powerful I can do anything I want. I'm different from everyone else. I'm special. I drank the beer secretly and disposed of the cans in a shopping bag in the garbage beside the massage chair.

Then I went to my bike to ride home but by the time I got to my bike I had to pee so I went back to the gym to use the washroom. When I went in the manager greeted me and said, "Can we talk for a minute?" She said, "We found two empty beer cans in the garbage can and we know that they weren't there this morning because they were just cleaned. I need to tell you that we don't allow drinking alcohol in the gym." I said immediately, "It wasn't me." She said, "Okay, but I need to tell you that that the consequence for drinking alcohol in the gym is the suspension of membership." I said "okay" and left with an embarrassed and shamed smile. When I got on my bike and I was riding home I said to myself, "Josh that was a cry for help." I was forcing that gym manager to be my therapist or to be my parent and that wasn't right. That's not her job.

Before I got home I promised myself I would get that help: finally I would face this struggle of addiction that I've been dancing around for 30 years. I didn't know how to get that help. The only way I knew of getting help was going to a 12-step meeting or going to see a psychiatrist and I didn't want to do either of those things. I wanted to do therapy that was based in the community.

The next day I was at The Stop community center and I saw on the chalkboard: peer support, 1:30 p.m. I thought, "I don't know what that is but it might be what I'm looking for." So I asked if I could join that group and they said "yes." It turns out it was an arts and crafts activity and wasn't much of a therapy session but I asked the leader of that group if there was some kind of setting where I could talk about issues that were personal. She said she also works at another community center called Our Place Community of Hope and they also have peer support that is more talk-based.

On my way home I stopped into Our Place and I attended my very first class there called sketching. I took the sketch I drew and put it on a cork board by the door. It was the first of many paintings I would place up on the walls at Our Place.

Then I started to go to art therapy and I became completely immersed in the lessons each week: the teacher would give us an assignment each week. She said to paint with your non-dominant hand. Another week she gave us a spatula to paint with instead of a brush. Another time she said paint a fence and a garden. Another time she gave us a record and we painted on the record as a canvas. I painted a snake swallowing its own tail. The art lessons were like seeds of creativity planted in my brain each week and I decided I'm going to cover this place in art. I did and it was a wonderful accomplishment. I began painting upsets from my day and working out emotions through the art and I discovered I am an artist as much as a musician.

I miss art Annie very much! She really helped me!

To be continued!

A Message from **Caroline Mah**

I miss Our Place the drop-in, because I miss the social aspect, the bingo, dancercise, music and food. I hope they are open soon.

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<https://pixabay.com/>

**** A big thank you to Writing Group volunteer, Kathryn for her help with the newsletter this month and to everyone who contributed! ****

If you would like to contribute to the Our Place newsletter, please email info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com. We would love to hear from you!