

JANUARY 2021

NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

- January Birthdays
- January Program Calendar
- Weekly Virtual Programs
- Other Programs & Supports
- An Important Notes About the Holidays
- Peer Support Lines
- Tips for Warding off the Winter Blues
- Mental Health & Crisis Resources
- Overdose Prevention
- Warming Locations
- Things To Do in January During Lockdown
- From the Kitchen of Our Place
- Mental Health Tip of the Month
- Writing Group Submissions
- Chinese New Year
- January Word Search



OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

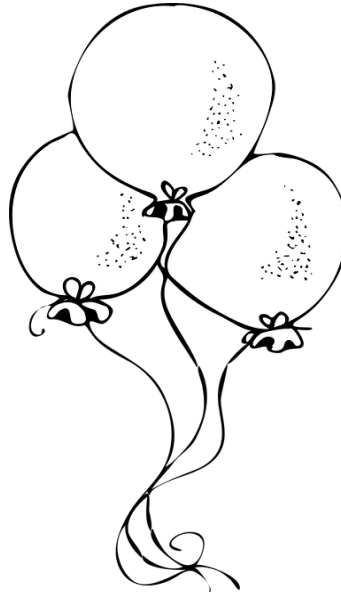
1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919

info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com

January Birthdays

Our Place Birthdays

Teresa C. – Jan. 9
Rachel S. – Jan 16
Gordon S. – Jan. 17
Emma B. - Jan. 18
Norman B. – Jan. 23
Raymond D. – Jan. 30
Dave B. – Jan. 30



Famous People Born in January

Elvis Presley – Jan. 8, 1935
David Bowie – Jan. 8, 1947
Kate Middleton, Duchess of Cambridge – Jan. 9, 1982
Martin Luther King Jr. – Jan. 15, 1959
Dolly Parton – Jan. 19, 1946
Ellen DeGeneres – Jan. 26, 1958
Oprah Winfrey – Jan. 29, 1954



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 now 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

If you would like to book a time to come into the centre to use one of the computers, WiFi and/or telephone – either to participate in a program or for personal use - please let us know! We would be happy to have you!

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.

JANUARY 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR

OUR PLACE PROGRAMS January 2021				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
TO-GO MEALS 2-5 Appointments to use computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone 12:00-2:00 Online Discussion Groups Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30 	TO-GO MEALS 2-5 Appointments to use computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone 12:00-3:00 Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30 	TO-GO MEALS 2-5 Appointments to use computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone 12:00-3:00 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30 	TO-GO MEALS 2-5 Appointments to use computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone 12:00-2:00 Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30 	*CLOSED JANUARY 1ST* Appointments to use computer, Wi-Fi and/or phone 12-1:00 & 3-4:30 Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30-2:30 
TO Go Meals * 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 	Virtual Programs & Appointments to Use Computers/Phone/Wifi * Please book time to come into the centre to use the phone/computer/Wifi for either group participation or personal use. * 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. * Everyone will need to be screened before entering the centre. * Please keep your mask on at all times while inside and practice physical distancing.			

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

1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919 | info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com

Our Place Weekly Online Programs

Monday Discussion Groups

Women's - 2:30pm

This group is an open discussion group for all female-identifying people. We will discuss all topics including depression, anxiety, body image, health/wellness, addictions, victimization/survivor issues and more.

Link to join Women's Discussion Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93541305742?pwd=TUVzWkhCNHdTVEN5aE5rTEQ3UjROdz09>

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

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 935 4130 5742 and Passcode: 969998

Men's - 3:30pm

This group is a space for male-identifying people to check in and talk about how you're doing. We can talk about what's on your mind, what's going well for you, or what you're coping with. Possible topics will be stress, relationships, or life goals. We'll focus on what you're interested in and what matters to you.

Link to join the Men's Discussion Group via Zoom:

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

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

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 923 5713 2760 and Passcode: 075601

Online Trivia – Tuesdays at 3:30pm

A casual, fun online space for trivia with friends!

Link to join Online Trivia via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93121462646?pwd=dJlxM2R1eEdSMElL3VTa0x2b0tBUT09>

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

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 931 2146 2646 and Passcode: 945094

Peer Support Group – Wednesdays 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 and Passcode: 211350

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 and Passcode: 812561

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.

The Holidays, Your Mental Health & COVID-10

Canadian Mental Health Association is hosting a virtual webinar that takes a deeper look into how the Coronavirus has and will impact the 2020 Holiday season while focusing on concrete strategies to maintain your mental health and still stay connected to our loved ones during this time. There are three opportunities to join: Wednesday, December 2, 7-8pm; Tuesday, December 9, 12-1pm and Tuesday, December 15, 12-1pm. To register, talk to Our Place staff or visit:

<https://cmhahamilton.ca/news/the-holidays-your-mental-health-covid-19/>

Recovery in Action (RIA)

A virtual 7-week program that aims to build skills and provide individuals with the supports they need to navigate and personalize recovery.

Depending on where you are in your journey, the group-based recovery program uses CBT-p to focus on everything from grief and loss around aspirations and relationships; the importance of medication adherence and community supports; revisiting goal-setting; and, understanding relapse prevention and negative symptoms, like anxiety, depression and lack of motivation.

The next cycle begins in January and will take place on Wednesdays from 1pm-3pm.

For more information, check out <https://www.iamentalhealth.ca/Find-Support/Individuals> or call one of the counsellors at 1-855-449-9949.

You can refer yourself or Our Place staff can refer you.

Check out these awesome organizations that also offer virtual programs:

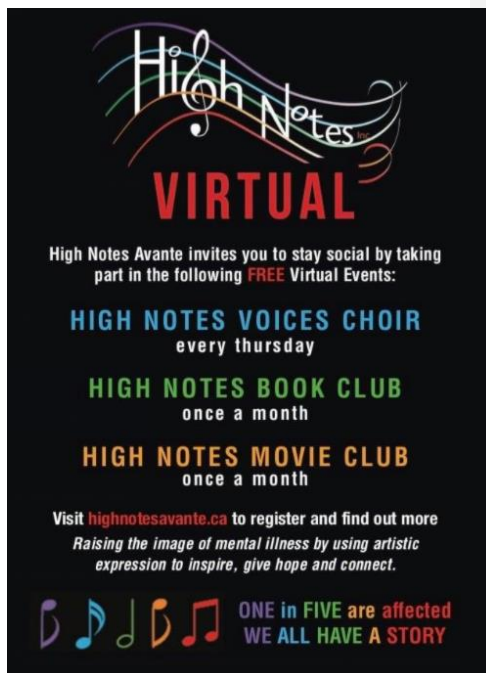
- * Progress Place - <https://www.progressplace.org/virtual.html>
- * Mood Disorders AoO
<https://app.acuityscheduling.com/schedule.php?owner=19361959&appointmentType=category%3APeer+Support+Groups>
- * Sound Times - <https://soundtimes.com/>
- * i am mental health [former schizophrenia society] - <https://www.iamentalhealth.ca/Find-Support/Individuals>
- * CMHA courses - <https://cmha.ca/recovery-college/courses>

Online Mental Health Choir, Movie Club, and Book Club

High Notes Avante offers an online choir, movie club, and book club. The choir is from 6:30pm-8:00pm every Thursday, the movie club is at 7pm-8pm one Wednesday per month, and the book club is at 7:30pm-8:30pm on a Monday every 4-6 weeks. There is more information about these groups on their web site - <http://highnotesavante.ca>

To sign up and find out more you can e-mail highnotesavante@gmail.com. Or you can ask us at Our Place to help with e-mailing High Notes Avante.

The choir, movie club, and book club are for people who are "touched by mental illness" so family and friends are also welcome to join.



Krasmancentre
Inspiring Excellence in Peer Support One Connection at a Time

Cooking for Connection

Virtual Zoom Group

Please join us on the following dates from 11am – 1pm:

December 8th	December 22nd
January 12th	January 26th
February 9th	February 23rd
March 9th	March 23rd

For questions or to register, please contact
Outreach Peer Supporter Emily Big Canoe:
416-303-5606 or e.bigcanoe@krasmancentre.com

Online Mental Health Cooking Group

Every other Tuesday there is an online cooking group at 11am. The group is led by a peer support worker at the Krasman Centre who has experience with mental health issues.

The group can be joined by phone or over Zoom if you have an Internet connection.

Mindfulness group

Routes offers mental health programs to connect with a community of peers.

A weekly online Mindfulness group on Mondays at 3pm is part of their weekly schedule. This Mindfulness group can help with learning about yourself, connecting with other people, and having a calm and positive attitude.

To join this group or any of the other groups offered by Routes, you can contact Tania (tbarrie@cmhato.org) or Our Place can send her your phone number. After signing up you can see the full schedule of Routes programs.

In the Mindfulness group there are 12 topics week-to-week -

- 1) Mindfulness Basics
- 2) Paying Attention
- 3) Discovering Inside
- 4) Connecting Authentically
- 5) Practicing Gratitude
- 6) Mind-Body Connection
- 7) Emotional Intelligence
- 8) Noticing Emotional Triggers
- 9) Exploring Open-Mindedness
- 10) Handling Conflict Skillfully
- 11) Nurturing Compassion
- 12) Being the Change

You can start any week with one of these topics. The topics are covered in order and then the group returns to the first topic again.

Each Monday meeting starts with a 3 minute mindfulness practice and a check-in to see how everyone is feeling. Then there is discussion about the topic of the week. The meeting ends with another mindfulness practice such as a body scan.

An Important Note About Lockdown

Commented [KD1]: I edited this piece from Dec 2020 newsletter to take out references to the holidays a

We know that the COVID lockdown may be a very difficult time for a lot of people.

It may appear as though everyone but you is doing well. However, many people are mentally, emotionally and physically struggling. So if you are feeling this way, **you are not alone**.

Mental health experts want everyone to know that **it is OK to not be OK** during the COVID-19 lockdown

If you are struggling, **please reach out** to us at Our Place, to friends, or to any of the supports listed in this newsletter.

You
are
♥
not
alone

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



4 Ways to Ward off the Winter Blues

Sourced from: <https://www.medbroadcast.com/channel/mental-health/depression/5-ways-to-ward-off-the-winter-blues>

- 1. Exercise.** Exercise is known to increase your levels of serotonin and endorphins, leading to a happier mood. You can walk inside or outside, or listen to music and dance in your home. You can also do yoga online. Yoga with Adriene is the world's most popular, easy, free, online yoga program: <https://yogawithadriene.com/free-yoga-videos/>
- 2. Socialize.** Build and maintain social networks is an important way to keep a positive outlook. During COVID, you can still call friends and family and set times to regularly talk to each other.
- 3. Keep a regular sleep schedule.** Research has shown that lack of sleep may lead to anxiety and depression. To keep a regular sleep-wake cycle, make sure you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. It's important to avoid naps throughout the day as they can throw off your sleep schedule.
- 4. Eat well.** When you're feeling down, it's natural to want to turn to comfort foods that are loaded with fats and sugars. Stick to healthier foods. This will keep you healthy while giving you the energy you need to stay active and social until a brighter season comes along.



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.**



Overdose Prevention

At Our Place...

- Staff are trained to administer and dispense Naloxone!
- Naloxone kits are now located in each bathroom stall in case someone ever needs it.
- See staff if you would like a Naloxone kit – we would be happy to give you one!
- All assistance is confidential.

What is Naloxone? Naloxone is an antidote which can be used to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. It is very safe and has no effect on non-opioid users (for someone who has taken stimulants, alcohol, etc.).

What is an Overdose? An overdose occurs when a drug or combination of substances overwhelm the body, making it unable to control basic life functions such as breathing, heart rate, body temperature and consciousness.

Signs of Overdose:

- Deep snoring, gurgling or wheezing
- Change in skin tone: grey, white, or blue tinge to skin (usually lips and fingertips show first)
- Pale, clammy skin
- Won't respond to stimulation (yelling or sternum rub) or won't wake up
- Breathing is very slow, irregular or has stopped

What is Harm Reduction? Harm reduction is an approach that tries to reduce the harmful effects of substance use. It involves working with the person using substances so that they use more safely (e.g., needle and syringe exchange programs and supervised injection sites).

If you or someone you know is looking for harm reduction support, talk to Our Place staff, call 211 or check out these links for a list of locations:

- <https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/health-wellness-care/health-programs-advice/harm-reduction-supplies-and-locations/>
- <https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/community-resource-sheets/harm-reduction-resources-pdf.pdf?la=en&hash=A175EF581BD43ACE51D964DEEBD09DD2738CB7D7>

Warming Centres

Out of the Cold Update: The Out of the Cold (OTC) program previously offered meals and overnight spaces for individuals experiencing homelessness to sleep, delivered by a network of inter-denominational faith-based organizations. Due to the program model, rotation of locations each night and use of volunteers, the city feels the model is not feasible to operate during the pandemic within Ministry of Health guidelines for congregate settings.

For winter 2020/2021, new hotel spaces will be offered to replace the overnight capacity previously provided by the OOTC program. The rooms will be available between mid-November and April, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will be run by Dixon Hall. Information on how to access a space has not yet been released...

Warming Centres: The City will activate 4 Warming Centres if an Extreme Cold Weather Alert (ECWA) is issued by Toronto's Medical Officer of Health based on information from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Space will be offered at the following:

- * 129 Peter Street (15 spaces)
- * Exhibition Place, Better Living Centre (50 spaces)
- * 5800 Yonge Street (35 spaces)
- * Scarborough Civic Centre (30 spaces)

January 2021 COVID LOCKDOWN

What is open and what is closed

[Source: toronto.ctvnews.ca](https://toronto.ctvnews.ca)



Retail: groceries and pharmacies

- Supermarkets, convenience stores and indoor farmer's markets are open for in-person shopping at 50 per cent capacity.
- Pharmacies are open with 50 per cent capacity.
- Discount and big box retailers who sell groceries to the public, with 25 per cent capacity in a room.

Health care and social services

- Most health-care providers are allowed to stay open, including providers of home care services, regulated health professionals, in-person counselling and mental health and addiction supports.
- Laboratories and pharmaceutical producers, manufacturers and distributors will remain open.

Community services

- Businesses that will remain open: Those that deliver and support sewage treatment and disposal, potable drinking water, critical infrastructure, environmental rehabilitation.
- Administrative authorities that regulate and inspect businesses will remain open.
- Professional and social services will remain open.
- Government services, including policing and law enforcement.
- Community gardens will remain open.

Transportation

- Businesses and facilities that provide transportation services will remain operational.

Fitness

- Facilities being used by professional sports leagues may remain open.
- Outdoor recreational amenities will remain open, including parks, baseball diamonds, sport fields, golf courses, cycling tracks, horse riding facilities, shooting ranges, ice rinks, cross country and snowmobile trails, tobogganing.

For a complete list of all services open and closed, visit:

[Toronto CTV News](#)



From the Our Place Kitchen

Manisha's Garlic Knots Dressing

Commented [KD2]: Hi Kristel, going forward please let me know if you would like Peter or myself ... or both of us ... to contribute our recipes.

Ingredients (For Dough):

- 7/8 cup (207 ml) warm water
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 ¼ teaspoon active dry yeast
- 2 ¼ cups (300g) all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt

Ingredients (For Garlic Butter Coating):

- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon salt



Instructions

1. Proof the yeast: grab a small bowl and add all the warm water to the yeast. Add your sugar and stir. Let it sit for 3-5 minutes.
2. Make the dough: grab a large bowl and whisk flour and salt. Make a small well (hole) in the center of the flour and pour in your olive oil. Then add the yeast mixture and mix with your hands. *Remember to cover your hands in oil to make it easier to mix.* The dough should be soft and a bit tacky. If too wet, add 2 tablespoons of flour.
3. Cover the dough and let it rise in a warm spot for 1.5 hours to 3 hours or leave it in the fridge overnight.
4. Cut the dough into quarters.
5. Roll each section into 4 x 5 inch rectangles.
6. Slice the rectangles into 4 strips. You should end up with 16 long strips.
7. Now cut those strips in half, through the center. You should end up with 32.
8. Time to make your knots! Take a piece and roll in your hands to make a snake shape. Then tie a knot! Let your knots rest on your lined baking sheet and leave them to proof for 20 minutes while your oven preheats to 400°F.
9. Brush with olive oil and place in oven for 12-15 minutes or until brown on top.
10. Garlic Butter time! Melt butter in a pot on medium-low heat and add garlic. Cook down until melted for about 2-3 minutes.
11. When your knots are baked, top with the garlic butter and let them rest for 5 minutes. Sprinkles salt on top or some parmesan cheese. Enjoy! 😊



Alanna's Lentil Soup

Ingredients

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed or minced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 large can (28oz) diced tomatoes, lightly drained
- 1 cup brown or green lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups of water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Pinch of red pepper flakes
- 1 cup chopped fresh collard greens or kale

Instructions

1. Warm the olive oil in a large pan over medium heat.
 2. Once the oil is shimmering, add the chopped onion and carrot and cook, stirring often, until the onion has softened for about 5 minutes.
 3. Add the garlic, cumin, curry powder and thyme. Pour in drained diced tomatoes and cook for a few more minutes, stirring often.
 4. Pour in lentils, broth and water. Add 1 teaspoon of salt and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Season generously with black pepper. Raise heat and bring the mixture to a boil, then partially cover the pot and reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. Cook for 25 to 30 minutes or until the lentils are tender but still hold their shape.
 5. Add the chopped greens and cook for 5 more minutes or until the greens have softened to your liking. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in 1 tablespoon of lemon juice. Enjoy!
-

Mental Health Tip of the Month

By Kathryn Dorrell

New Year's Challenge: Start Writing!

"Whether you're keeping a journal or writing as a meditation, it's the same thing. What's important is you're having a relationship with your mind."

- Natalie Goldberg

Did you know that writing is good for your mental health? The website, [Positive Psychology](#), states that:

Journaling and/or expressive writing has been found to:

- Boost your mood;
- Enhance your sense of well-being;
- Reduce symptoms of depression before an important event, like a job interview;
- Reduce intrusion and avoidance symptoms;
- Improve your working memory;
- In particular, journaling can be especially helpful for those with PTSD.

Source: <https://positivepsychology.com/benefits-of-journaling>

Diane Dreher is a professor of English at Santa Clara University in California, a positive psychology coach, and the author of self-health books that discuss the healing powers of writing. In a blog post for the online magazine, *Psychology Today*, she talks about writing letters back and forth with a friend. Even letter writing can help us express our emotions and thoughts, which improves our mental health.

Here is a link to Diane Dreher's blog on "Why Writing Is Good for Your Health" in the online magazine, *Psychology Today*:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/your-personal-renaissance/201405/why-writing-is-good-your-health>

Looking for inspiration to start writing?

Tips from the Our Place writing group

Even writers who are considered the very best at their craft can struggle with *what* to write about, and *how* to express their ideas. Here are some valuable tips that I (Kathryn) have learned from the writing group:

Kimberly Acevedo sees the world through her faith in god. She has even created carrying bags with the words, “Faith” and “Hope” on them.

Teresa Carducci reads books and writes summaries on them. Everyone loves to hear about a book from someone who has read it, and then they can decide if they want to read it, too.

Peter Carter often writes from the voice of his cat, Iris. Everyone who knows Iris knows she is the wittiest cat in the world. Peter is also an avid reader (unlike me). Reading other people’s works of fiction, non-fiction, short stories, essays, reporting, and poetry, can teach us a lot about how to use words.

Rodney Frost is wonderful at rhyming. Write a poem. It can be very short. Next, challenge yourself to make the words rhyme and decide which version you like the best.

Josh creates and writes small books with illustrations. They are like little works of art. Josh also writes and performs songs. Try putting your ideas and words and feelings into lyrics. You don’t have to have the musical notes to go with them.

Kristel has written about her dreams. This was an idea we talked about in writing group back in the fall. Keep a pencil or pen and a piece of paper by your bed. When you wake up, write down what you were dreaming about. You can then write about your dreams, write a review of your dreams, or make them into a short-story, song, or poem.

Lisa Harrison writes poems, which have been featured in this newsletter. She cuts the words she has used out of magazines. This inspired the poem that Kathryn wrote, “Scribbling”, because Lisa’s style of creating poetry sound like a visual collage of words.

Writing Group Submissions

LAYDOWN BLUES

By Rodney Frost



Went to the doctor
Doctor said
If you don't lay down
you're gonna end up Dead

Went to the nurse
Nurse she said
Take this pill or you'll end up ill
Take this pill or you'll end up ill.

Went to the Chemist
Chemist said
You don't need drugs what you need is
Hugs.
Yeah, what I need is hugs
What I need is hugs.

What a scene

By Kimberly Acevedo



I love to see the first snowfall of the season.

It looks so amazing. It's like the world is god's canvas and he decided to paint it white with snow. The trees look so pretty, it is breathtaking, but a lot of people do not like it when it snows because they have to travel in it.

Also they have to walk in it and it gets slushy, and gets water in your shoes or your boots. Even sometimes after it snows it gets quite cold, but the first snowfall it's not.

The first snowfall it's such a beautiful scene to see when it's becoming a masterpiece. I will sit with a hot cocoa or a tea and watch the snow coming down. I'll put on some relaxation music and sit there and relax and meditate on the good things that God has made.

Next time you see it snow, take a moment and take a look how beautiful it is while others don't see it that way; they think of it as all bad because they have to travel in it.

It's a breathtaking scene that I will cherish forever.



From Christmas (Part 1) by Patricia Reid



Usually father would be away on his trapline for a week at a time tending his traps. But always at Christmastime he would come home early from looking to his traps and wait around for the plane to come in. He didn't make any more trips until after Christmas.

When the plane came in father would invite the pilot up and show him the northern hospitality trying to acquire as much news from him as he could. It had been a long time since anyone visited Donald Lake. My family and I were interested in news of anyone who had married within the last year, who had a baby—and it really didn't matter if we knew the folks or not.

Father would ask after the pilot's health, and his family, then serve him the Company Cookies and black tea. Once the pilot finished his tea he left.

Now the excitement of Christmas was upon us, for on Christmas Eve, my sister, brother, myself, and father would all tramp out into the bush looking for the perfect Christmas tree. It couldn't be just any tree, it had to be perfect. It had to have beautifully rounded boughs on all sides. An impossibility in the bush, where you have one-sided trees, the top limb trees only, and the trees with no limbs on at all.

But we'd find the best we could and I would run after father, panting hard as I dragged myself through the deep snow, the cold of winter catching in my throat until I coughed up a little blood. But I would keep up and not complain for it was Christmas. And of course one did not complain at Christmastime. Father would finally find a tree that was sort of good, and he would chop it down, cut a few extra limbs from another tree, and drag the tree home.

My sister, my brother, and I would run behind, trying to keep up. Then father would put the tree up in the house. He'd take his brace and bit and drill holes in the tree. Then he'd add the extra limbs in to make the tree perfect.

He would start decorating from the top of the tree slowly with the glass balls, going down, down, down until the bottom limbs were reached. Then Mary Lou, Gordie, and I were allowed to hang the plastic balls on those limbs.

Father would start hanging the icicles too, one at a time and I would watch him transform the little green spruce into a magical tree, a beautifully tree, a work of art. But he'd never help take the ornaments down after Christmas. We children and mother did that.

And always on Christmas Eve after we had wrapped the presents sometimes boughten, other times home-made depending on how rich we were, father would make doughnuts. This was something so very special for father believed cooking was not a man's work. It was women's work. And even though he would come home after a long trip when he had cooked for himself, he would demand that mother cook his supper for him. But on Christmas Eve he would cook the most beautiful doughnuts, when we had the ingredients. I really looked forward to that. I would go to bed early with my brother and sister, and the blanket was hung up to shut out the Christmas scene. When father cooked he would sneak me a doughnut that was all hot and sugary. I loved that. I would eat it quietly in bed, me and my sister Mary Lou. Gordie was always sound asleep by then.

Next morning we would wake up and see our presents under the tree but we had to eat breakfast before opening them. We usually had hot oatmeal, you know rolled oats with white sugar sprinkled on top, and sometimes at Christmastime we would even have powdered milk to put on it.

After eating breakfast we would all go to the tree and slowly open our presents. This one year I got the most beautiful satin ribbon I'd ever seen. Why it was three inches wide and it was so satiny-feeling that I ran it through my fingers, back and forth, oh, it felt good. It came from the summer-folk. Such a lovely rose satin ribbon for my hair.

Then mother told me to go out and play. So we all put our presents back under the tree as we were supposed to do after opening them, and we children were sent out to play.

Scrambled

By Kathryn Dorrell



Made-up magazine headlines.
Cut-out art.
Repurposed words,
have more purpose.
So much more to say.

What have you created?
A collage, a piece of art,
A journal entry, a grocery list,
Or a random note?

Poetry.
Stitching simple and grand words together.
A way to pass a gloomy day

Chinese New Year 2021 The Year of The Ox



Chinese New Year marks the transition between zodiac signs

2020 was the [year of the Rat](#)

2021 is the [year of the Ox](#)

Date: Friday, February 12th, 2021

Find out which Chinese zodiac sign or animal represents your birth year at:

[zodiac signs: https://chinesenewyear.net/zodiac/](https://chinesenewyear.net/zodiac/)

There will be more information on Chinese New Year 2021 in the February 2021 Our Place newsletter.

Source: <https://chinesenewyear.net/>

Name: _____

January Word Search



JANUARY
WINTER
NEW YEAR
RESOLUTIONS
MLK DAY

CELEBRATION
COLD
GLOVES
SNOWMAN
JANUS

GARNET
NEW START
JULIAN
GREGORIAN
WOLF MONTH



©Monsterwordsearch.com



Source: Free printable word search: <https://monsterwordsearch.com/season-word-search/january-word-search/>

Images: All images in this newsletter are free, downloadable files from
<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!*