

MARCH

2021

NEWSLETTER

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OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919

info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com

March Birthdays

Andre B. – March 1st

Jeff D. – March 23rd



Famous March Birthdays

Justin Bieber – March 1st, 1994

Jon Bon Jovi – March 2nd, 1962

Michelangelo – March 6, 1475

Albert Einstein – March 14, 1879

Ruth Bader Ginsburg – March 15, 1933

Bruce Willis – March 19, 1955

Brian Mulroney – March 20, 1939

Bobby Orr – March 20, 1948

Lady Gaga – March 28, 1986

Celine Dion – March 30, 1968



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 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

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.

MARCH 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR

OUR PLACE PROGRAMS MARCH 2021				
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Women's Discussion Groups Women: 2:30</p>  <p>Online Social Group 3:30-4:30</p>	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>TO-GO MEALS 2-5</p> <p>Online Card Games 12:30</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>NEW! VIRTUAL LIVE MUSIC w/Kevin & Chas 3:30 - 4:30</p>
<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 				
<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. 				

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

Our Place Weekly Online Programs

Women's – Mondays at 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

Social Group – Mondays at 3:30pm

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 the Social Group 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 and Passcode: 075601

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

Card Games- Thursday at 12:30

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. Hosted by June!
Link to join Online Card Games via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/91756608312>

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

NEW! LIVE MUSIC – 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 and Passcode: 143114

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.

Online meditation

Free Zoom meditations (online or by phone) on Mondays at 5:30 and Thursdays at 5:30. Sessions open at 5:20PM. All are welcome. No experience is necessary.

A typical meditation session consists of:

1. *Guided meditation (approx. 10-20 min)*
2. *Mindful movements/mindful stretching (approx. 10-15 min)*

You can join by computer:

<https://zoom.us/j/579834668?pwd=QUIFUis5YIBLOVhwYjRhZmh5M3F0QT09>

Or you can join by phone: 647-374-4685. Meeting password 803530

The meditation and mindfulness activities are offered by True Peace Toronto, which practices Zen Buddhism.

The meditation is followed by teachings and sharing that may involve references to Buddhism –

1. A reading on Buddhist teachings or watching a video (approx. 10-20 min)
2. Sharing our experience with the practice in our daily lives or asking questions, if anyone wishes to (approx. 20-25 min)

When sharing, participants follow guidelines such as "Practice taking three mindful breaths after someone has shared" and "refrain from speaking a second time until everyone has had a chance to speak".

Some guidelines from True Peace Toronto:

1. Upon joining the Zoom platform, you will be automatically muted with your video turned on. Be aware you are on camera and avoid doing other tasks (e.g. eating).

2. Give your full presence to the practices, as if we are practicing together in-person in the same room. We encourage you to have your video on during practices as this can assist you to focus and for our community to feel your presence. Feel free to turn off your camera temporarily at any point during the practice if you need to. Plan to have your camera on for dharma sharing practice, if possible.
3. We will be practicing noble silence - Unless you are speaking to the group, mute your mic to minimize feedback. Please refrain from using Zoom chat functions (e.g. chat box, 'clap', etc.) unless specifically asked by facilitators. If you cannot hear the facilitators or need instructions repeated, please feel free to message facilitators privately.

The Safer Use Peer Support Line

The Safer Use Peer Support Line is a support and spotting service so that you do not have to use drugs alone. SUPSL is a non-judgmental, confidential, toll-free phone service so that you can use more safely. Peer Supporters are people who have lived experience with drug use and are trained to support you. The peer supporter will ask for your initials and date of birth, as well as where you are, what you are going to use and how you are going to take it. This is in case emergency services need to be called to provide naloxone or oxygen. You will be asked to stay on the line until you confirm that you are safe. Normally, the call will end and no identifying information will be kept. If emergency services have to be called due to a bad reaction or poisoning, they will know exactly where to quickly find you. An overdose means you are not breathing properly. Time is critical. The Good Samaritan Law also protects you. This law prevents Police from pressing charges related to the purchase, selling or consumption of illegal drugs when responding to an overdose call.



DON'T USE ALONE

CALL THE SAFER USE
PEER SUPPORT LINE

1-888-233-5633

10PM - 3AM

CALL. USE. LIVE.

CONFIDENTAL | NON-JUDGEMENTAL | SAFER

BE ON THE PHONE WITH SOMEONE WHILE YOU USE

Be spotted on the phone by someone who has lived experience with drugs

Online Mental Health Drop-In

The Krasman Centre is providing an online drop-in for anyone touched by mental health or substance use challenges.

To register for the virtual drop-in, email groups@krasmancentre.com or

visit <https://linktr.ee/krasmancentre>

* Zoom link will be sent a few hours before session



After joining the meeting for the first time you will receive a \$5 gift card (while supplies last).

The Meeting Spot is a free, confidential and safe landing space that gives participants an opportunity to share their feelings and experiences. This is an informal group that allows participants to get empathy and understanding from our other peers as well as Krasman Centre's Peer Supporters who have

lived experiences with mental health, addictions challenges and homelessness. Peer Supporters aim to have respectful conversations, being mindful of everyone's journey and offer support along your healing journey with non-judgmental listening.

Food Banks and Take-Away meals

FOOD BANKS IN THE AREA:

- *Oasis Dufferin* - weekly (either on Tuesday or Wednesday)
Wednesday line-up, 9:30am to 12:30pm
Tuesday by appointment, 3pm to 5pm
1219 Dufferin St (a block south of Dupont) - line up on Dufferin
* For a Tuesday appointment, Call 416-536-4431 on Monday before noon *
* New clients can register at dailybread.link2feed.ca and bring their Client ID Number *
- *Salvation Army Bloor Central* - once per month
Wednesday and Thursday, 9:30am to 3pm * Call 416-532-4511, extension 100, to book an appointment *
789 Dovercourt Rd (a block north of Bloor)
- *The Stop* - twice per month
Monday and Friday, 12pm-3pm
1884 Davenport (near Symington) - at the back of the building

TAKE-AWAY MEALS IN THE AREA:

- *Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre*
Monday and Wednesday, 5:00pm
1900 Davenport Rd (west of Symington)
- *Oasis Dufferin*
Tuesday, 5:30pm to 6:00pm
1219 Dufferin St (a block south of Dupont)
- *Salvation Army Bloor Central*
Saturday, 4pm to 6pm
789 Dovercourt Rd (a block north of Bloor)
- *Sistering*
Every day, 12pm to 1pm * For women and trans-identified people *
962 Bloor St. W. (east of Dovercourt)
- *The Stop - Davenport*
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday - 9am to 10am and 12pm to 1pm
1884 Davenport (near Symington) - at the back of the building
- *The Stop - Wychwood's Open Door*
Wednesday, 9 to 10am, 12 to 1pm; and Thursday, 4 to 5pm
729 St. Clair W. (a block west of Christie)

An Important Note About Lockdown

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.

info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | (416) 598-2919

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



Your Health – Julie

Sex and diabetes

Managing diabetes can affect every part of a person's life. One thing that is not talked about a lot is how it can affect your sex life. Sometimes doctors and nurses forget to ask if you have sex problems, or sometimes people are too embarrassed to talk to their doctor or nurse! This means that people can suffer for a long time. Here are some common genital problems among people with diabetes and what to do about them.

Men can suffer from erectile dysfunction – either they have trouble “getting it up”, or the erection does not last long enough or hard enough. There are medications and treatments for this. When a man tells the doctor he has troubles with his erections, the doctor will examine his genitals and may also do a blood test. This is because it's not just diabetes that can cause erectile dysfunction, and the doctor will want to discover exactly what's causing the problem. Based on the examinations, the doctor may prescribe medications or other treatments, or may send the man to a specialist doctor who cares for the male genitals. This kind of doctor is called a urologist.

Women may experience frequent yeast infections or painful sex. Signs of a yeast infection include an itchy vaginal area and discharge that looks clumpy and white. This can be treated pretty easily with an over-the-counter medication. Ask your pharmacist to help you choose one. However, if you're not sure if you're having a yeast infection or if you have them a lot, it's best to talk to your doctor for an exam to find out what's going on. Some women with diabetes also find that sex is painful or that they do not produce a lot of natural lubricant (mucus that makes sex more slippery and comfortable). You can try buying a lubricant at the pharmacy to use at home, like KY Jelly, but if sex is painful you should see a doctor because there are lots of reasons for this and it's important to know exactly what's happening so that you get the right treatment. When you tell your doctor that sex is painful, he or she will ask you questions, examine your genitals and may also do a blood test. Many women find an exam of their genitals, called a “pelvic exam”, to be unpleasant or even scary. Some women find they feel better if they bring a friend or family member to the appointment, or if they ask the doctor questions about the exam before it happens. It's OK to ask the doctor for help to make the exam more comfortable.

Both men and women may have bladder infections frequently. Bladder infections are also called “urinary tract infections” or “UTI”. Signs of this include feeling the need to pee all the time, a feeling of pain or burning when you pee, feeling lots of pressure in the lower part of your tummy, or even a low fever. If you have any of these you should call your doctor as soon as possible to ask about treatment, because most people will need an antibiotic to treat the infection. You can help prevent bladder infections by drinking lots of water every day.

Sometimes, both men and women feel very sad or stressed out because they are busy managing their diabetes. They are so sad, stressed and tired that they are not in the mood for sex. This can make people feel even sadder, especially if they have a partner who might not understand how stressful diabetes is. But you and your partner don't have to suffer. The first person to speak with would be your doctor, and the next person would be a counsellor, social worker, psychiatrist or other mental health care professional to talk about how you're feeling and how you can make things better. Even talking to a close friend can be comforting!

The best way to prevent any of these problems is by keeping your blood sugar under control by being careful with your diet, getting as much exercise as you can and taking your diabetes medications the

way your doctor told you to. Many people have trouble with this for lots of different reasons. If you are having trouble with this, you can talk to your doctor or sign up with the West Toronto Diabetes Education Program for free meetings with a diabetes nurse and dietitian. Call 416-252-1928 for more information.

Be well,

Nurse Julie

P.S I will be leaving Toronto! I will miss all of the staff and clients at Our Place. I'm excited to introduce a new dietitian. Her name is Shiva and she will also be writing for the newsletter. Be sure to read her column next month!

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 or call 211.

From the Our Place Kitchen

Zoe's Zucchini Bread

Ingredients:

- 2 sprays of butter flavor cooking spray
- 2 cups of whole wheat flour
- 2/3 cups of all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. of table salt
- 1 tbsp. of baking soda
- ½ tbsp. of baking powder



- 1 tbsp. of ground cinnamon
- 3 large eggs whites
- 1 large whole egg
- 1 cup of sugar
- 2 tbsp. of vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup of canola oil
- 2/3 cup of unsweetened applesauce
- 2 cups of uncooked zucchini. Peeled, grated and drained.
- ½ tbsp. of chopped walnuts
- ½ cup of raisins finely chopped.

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Coat two 8x4 inches loaf pans with cooking pans with cooking spray; set aside.
2. In a large bowl, sift together whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, salt, baking soda, baking powder and cinnamon; set aside.
3. Using an electric mixer, in a large mixing bowl, beat egg whites until frothy. Add egg, sugar, vanilla extract, oil and applesauce, and beat until thoroughly combined; beat in zucchini.
4. Add sifted ingredients to egg mixture and mix well; fold in nuts and raisins. Pour batter into prepared pans and bake in middle of oven until a toothpick inserted in center of bread comes out clean, about 50 to 60 minutes. Slice each bread into 10 pieces and serve warm or at room temperature. Yields 1 slice per serving.

Kristel's Lumpiang Shanghai (Filipino Egg Rolls)

INGREDIENTS

- 50 pieces of lumpia wrapper
- 3 cups cooking oil

Filling Ingredients

- 1 ½ lbs ground pork
- 2 pieces of onion minced
- 2 pieces carrots minced
- 1 ½ teaspoons garlic powder
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ cup of parsley chopped
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 eggs



DIRECTIONS

1. Combine all filling ingredients in a bowl. Mix well.
 2. Scoop around 1 to 1 ½ tablespoons of filling and place over a piece of lumpia wrapper. Spread the filling and then fold both sides of the wrapper. Fold the bottom. Brush beaten egg mixture on the top end of the wrapper. Roll-up until completely wrapped. Pwerform the same step until all the mixture are consumed.
 3. Heat oil in a cooking pot. Deep fry lumpia in medium heat until it floats.
 4. Remove from the pot. Let excess oil drip. Serve and enjoy.
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Mental Health Tip of the Month

By Kathryn Dorrell

Most of us are feeling additional stress and anxiety during the continued COVID-19 pandemic. One tool for managing stress, anxiety, and improving a low mood is guided imagery, which is a type of mindful visualization. A study published in the medical journal, *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, shows that when practiced regularly, guided imagery can help to boost the “feel-good” and relaxation chemicals in our brains, and reduce the stress chemical, cortisol.

Guided imagery is meditation and mindfulness using all your senses. I recently participated in a workshop on how to practice visualization and guided imagery for mental health. Here is how I learned to use this tool:

1. Try to find a place where you are on your own and feel comfortable.
2. Close your eyes and focus on your breathing—in and out, inhale and exhale—for a few minutes; slow down your breathing and take deep breathes so you start to relax.
3. Now, in your mind, visualize a place where you feel safe, comforted, and content.
4. Suggestions include: sitting or walking in nature, in a church, or someplace that you have happy memories, such as in a friend’s kitchen.
5. The image in your mind could be from a real place, or an imaginary place that brings you happiness and comfort, such as being by an ocean, or in a best friend’s kitchen. I chose to visualize a favourite place in High Park that I like to visit.
6. Use your senses to help you visualize and experience yourself in the place.
7. What do you see? (Trees, water, etc. Focus on colours and really try to see the place that you want to be in.)
8. What do you hear? (No sound, birds singing, the sound of water against the shore, rain, music, singing, water boiling on the stove, the sound of chopping vegetables.)
9. What do you smell? (Salt water, flowers, rain, the fresh ground or an earthy smell, ingredients, etc.)
10. What could you touch if you were there and what would the sensations be like? (Rough bark, soft flower petals, gentle water, smooth fruits, etc.)

11. Spend some time in this place in your mind and enjoy it; it could be a few minutes or longer. Continue to breathe in and out deeply and slowly.
12. If you are doing this exercise and you do not feel content and relaxed, then you can choose another place and start the visualization and guided imagery again, or at another time, with a fresh image and senses in your mind.
13. It also helps if you smile gently while imaging this place or space.
14. Practice this exercise. You can do it when you are sad or anxious but also make time for it on days when you feel good. Practicing exercises like this one is like riding a bike: the more you do it, the easier it will be, even on days when you don't want to do anything, or feel overwhelmed with stress or sadness.

Guided imagery is about taking ourselves to a place that makes us feel safe and content. It can also help distract us from stressful situations, relationships, and unpleasant thoughts. One of the great things about guided imagery and visualization is that you can use it anywhere: in your home, on the TTC, sitting in a park, etc.

If you have access to a computer and internet, here are two guided imagery videos on YouTube that you can watch. Search for them on YouTube.

- Special Place Guided imagery
- Safe Space Visualization



The season of Lent

By Kathryn Dorrell

Lent is a period in the Christian faith that starts with Ash Wednesday and ends on the Saturday before Easter Sunday. This year, Lent started on February 17th and it ends on April 3rd. Lent lasts for 40 days and represents the 40 days in the Bible that Jesus spent fasting in the desert before he began his formal ministry. The Gospels describe how Jesus was tempted by the devil over the 40 days.

The word, Lent, means “to lengthen.” Lent is a season in which the days become longer we have more light in our lives. This year, the clocks spring forward on March 14th. When you wake up on Sunday, March 14th, you will need to set your clock and watch and phone to one hour ahead, and in the evening the sun will go down one hour later.

What do the clocks changing and Lent have to do with each other? We are entering a time of renewal, rebirth, and more light in both nature and in the Christian faith. Most people think of Lent as a time for giving something up that they enjoy—something that may be considered to be “tempting” them—such as coffee or chocolate. But you can lengthen yourself in other ways during Lent. For example, you can take something on instead of giving something up. Instead of not eating sweets, you could decide to give someone a compliment or do an act of kindness everyday.

In the 2021 Jewish calendar, Passover is March 27 to April 3. Passover celebrates the Hebrews' liberation from slavery. During Passover, many Jewish people stop eating bread and pasta. The start of Passover is marked with a celebration meal called the Passover seder.

Writing Group Submissions



Change of Focus By Kimi Acevedo

I have decided to change my focus this year. The reason for this decision is for my mental health. In the past few days, I've changed my routine in the mornings. I felt intrigued by reading a blog written by Peter that I read recently. Every morning I used to get up and go to the TV and put the news on.

After watching the news, I started to feel down and depressed. There was so much violence being reported and the things about COVID-19. Sometimes I would cry after causing my mind would wander. Negative thoughts would then appear in my mind. I wouldn't feel like I had any energy. I wasn't motivated to anything at all the whole day because my mind wasn't filled with positive things first thing in the morning.

So now in the morning, when I get up. I go get my coffee and feed my cats. Then I get my phone and lay on the couch with my curtains open. No matter the weather, whether snowing, or raining, or cloudy or sunny, my curtains are open. I open the BIBLE app and go to the devotional of the day. Starting my day with God is the best thing to do. I fill my mind with positive thoughts. I am thankful to God to see another day to live. I start to pray and thank God for another day. Like the saying goes "silence is a virtue" God said, "Be still and know that I am God." So, in the morning, I am still so I can hear from God.

It is awesome to give your attention and focus to something that can change your life and motivation. I feel like with this change I am going in the right direction to help me to be a better me. I also hope to help others with this change of focus. I hope I have influenced you.

The Four Seasons By Teresa Carducci

In the Wintertime it is very cold. The weather does affect us when we get old. In the Spring the weather starts to get more warmer and everyone likes to go out to do their activities to have fun.

Everyone does start to enjoy the sun. In the Summertime, the gets to be very hot. This is usually when people like to go swimming and are usually the little tots. In the Fall the weather starts to get very cool. This is when people in the fall cannot enjoy swimming in the pool.

Christmas - Part 2

By Patricia Reid

We children were sent out to play. I got tired of waiting for my chance to slide on the shovel. You know the square shovels they have, well Mary Lou and I, we'd sit one at a time, sitting on our rear ends on the shovels with our legs and feet wrapped around the handle while balancing halfway so the handle of the shovel would keep up, and we could then slide down the hill. But I got so tired of waiting that I went and got a spruce bough to slide upon. My brother got a small piece of precious cardboard from mother to slide upon.

When we came in at dinnertime there was a feast upon the table: roast lynx instead of the usual roast beaver. We ate the roast lynx with stewed barley, white bread, and all the stewed applesauce we wanted, with company cookies as well. After supper we children and father would go outside in the frosty night air to watch the northern lights flicking across the sky and to point out the various groups of stars.

Then we'd wind up the evening by calling to our pack of wolves and the wolves would answer us as always. Father would never ever shoot our pack even if there were a large bounty on them. And as I howled to the wolves I remember the time when a wolf came right to our cabin, put his nose against the window and stared into the cabin. It was so exciting. The next day I went out and measured my foot in his footprints. How big his feet were.

I started getting so cold that I raced into the cabin to seek some warmth. And not only that but later on at night after supper, we would hear the Christmas Story father had to tell. We waited for that story all day long. Father would tell of the first Christmas he spent with mother. Oh, he hadn't had much of a life at home what with his father dying so young.

His first Christmas was the most precious Christmas he'd ever spent. It happened that mother had bought him a present. It was a garage with two cars in it, and they wound up too. Every Christmas he would get the present out and he would unwrap the yellowing tissue paper, then he would wind the cars up and let us fetch the cars when they became unwound and actually bring them back to him. Then he would wind them up again and he would tell the story about how he found the present under the Christmas tree, that first Christmas Day that he had shared with mother.

After we would eat doughnuts sitting in the darkness by the small flickering light of the camp stove while father told other stories. All of father's stories were true. And oh, he told a lot of stories.

Christmas day had been warm and the roof had leaked a little as the snow melted on the tarpaper. The day after Christmas I woke up to find the temperature had dropped quickly. My beautiful satin ribbon was frozen to the floor. It was almost a week before another warm spell came and I managed to get my ribbon off the floor. I guess we all live the Christmases of our childhood.

The Chicago Bean

By Delannie Gallicano

The Chicago bean is giant. Its reflective surface captures both city and cloud in warped images like a moving painting it changes with the lights. It's like a giant funhouse mirror reflecting people, the sky and the city. I walk closer to it and see my funny face elongated and warped at one with the city and the sky. All day I stand here and watch Chicago change into dusk. The bean is drenched in orange, pink, and indigo as lights from the city begin to ignite. In moments the bright colours are washed away by the inky blackness of night as city lights shine like stars on this warped surface nothing could feel more real.



YouTube Videos

Members and staff have shared videos on YouTube that they've found helpful. You can type in the title in the YouTube search box or click the link in our online newsletter.

[Blossom Gazing: Mindfulness Practice](#) - From Lisa Anne

Mindfulness practice led by Catherine G Lucas, who encourages us to pay more attention to flower blossoms. She says that a spring day is ideal for this meditation.

[Dear Anxiety | | Spoken Word](#) - From Randy

Clayton Jennings shares his experience battling anxiety and finding a way out.

[3 HOURS Long Tibetan Singing Bowl Meditation Chakra Healing](#) - From Bill

Singing bowls and running water. You may want to listen to these while meditating or just to relax day-to-day.

[4K Spring Forest - Blackbird Song - Bird Singing/ Chirping](#) - From Toban

Birds singing in a forest. These outdoor sounds can be soothing reminders of warmer times.

Poetry Call-Out

The Friendly Spike Theatre Band
Project Announcement and Notice

COMING SOON

POEMDEMIC!

This notice is a request for submissions of poetry and musings about the lived experience of the COVID 19 pandemic of 2020/21. Selected works will be in a booklet published by The Secret Handshake Gallery.

Submissions should include author's name and the date the work was written at the top left of the page. One poem or musing per submission, not to exceed 36 lines. Work should be sent to friendlyspike@primus.ca no later than April 15th, 2021.

THANK YOU!



Friendly Spike Theatre Band is a grassroots theatre organization dedicated to encouraging creative expression from the marginalized. They have been involved in previous Mad Pride celebrations. The Secret Handshake Gallery is a clubhouse by and for people with schizophrenia. For more information visit <https://www.thesecrethandshake.ca>. The poem collection will be distributed there after COVID restrictions have been lifted.

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!