

FREE!

EMBRACING CHANGE

Serving Boomers, Seniors & Caregivers in Wilmot, Wellesley & Woolwich Township

VOL 6 ISSUE 4 DECEMBER 2023

www.embracingchange.ca

Feature Business of the Month



Community resource guide to help you and your loved ones age in place!

Community Care Concepts' Annual

Christmas Benefit Breakfast



Saturday, December 9

8:00 am to 11:00 am

New Hamburg Legion
65 Boullee Street, New Hamburg

**Full Breakfast Served
Please arrive early!**

Cost

Adults\$12.00
Children *10 and under*\$6.00
Family *maximum of 4*\$25.00

Tickets

Available at the door, or in advance:

Ross Eichler.....519-662-3113
New Hamburg Legion.....519-662-3770
Community Care Concepts....519-662-9526

All proceeds support Community Care Concepts

A joint project



Tara Held

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Rich Held

DISTRIBUTION

Jessica Uttley

DESIGNER

Alzheimer Society Waterloo

Community Care Concepts

Dr. Nicole Didyk

Fred Parry

Kelly Durst - Health First Dental Hygiene

Elaine Ballantyne

Scott Dunstall

Woolwich Community Health Centre

CONTRIBUTORS

On The Cover

Started in December 2019 and currently serving the areas of Stratford, St. Mary's, New Hamburg and Mitchell, Memorable Moments provide non-medical home care services by experienced and certified PSW's. See the full cover story on page 8

Cover story written by:

Erin Koot & Elaine Ballantyne

Cover photos by:

Memorable Moments

**Embracing Change**

147 Arnold St
New Hamburg, ON N3A 2C6



519-574-6428



embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com



www.embracingchange.ca

Editorial Policy & Disclaimer:

Embracing Change is proud to be a Community Voice. We hope to foster connections within the community in a positive way. The expressed or implied opinions of authors and advertisers are not necessarily those held by the publication, it's editor or publisher.



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we turn the page to December, a month that carries the scent of evergreen and the promise of joy, we find ourselves reflecting on the journey we've shared throughout the year. In this final edition of Embracing Change for 2023, we're thrilled to usher in the holiday season with you, our cherished readers.

December arrives like an old friend, wrapping our small towns in a blanket of snow and adorning it with twinkling lights. It's a time when the streets seem to whisper stories

of festive gatherings, laughter, and the timeless traditions that make our community uniquely ours.

In the coming days, let's relish the simple joys—a crackling fire, the taste of familiar recipes, and the joy of sharing stories with family and friends. December is a time to pause, to appreciate, and to connect with the things that truly matter.

We would like to express our deepest gratitude for your continued support. It's your stories that make this publication a treasure, and we look forward to sharing more moments of connection, inspiration, and community in the coming year.

Tip of the Month:**How to Turn a Pringles Can Into a Christmas Cookie Container**

1. Empty your Pringles can and wipe the inside clean with a damp cloth or paper towel.
2. Cut your wrapping paper or scrapbook paper to size.
3. Wrap the paper around the can and secure both ends with double-sided tape.
4. Fill it up with your choice of homemade or store-bought cookies. We won't tell anyone, we promise.



May the warmth of the season fill your homes with joy and your hearts with love. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a New Year filled with peace.

Tara





Flashback Photo

Elmira Christmas Parade

This is a photo from the Elmira Christmas Parade in 1996. This was the Elmira Day Care Centre float.

Pictured from Left to Right: Jony Ford; Kyle Patton; Samantha Fischer; Joshua Aberle; Sarah Brown

Photo Credit: Courtesy of the Grace Schmidt Room, Kitchener Public Library.

Photo Donated by the Elmira Independent Newspaper

Merry Christmas

Wishing you and your loved ones good health, peace, joy, and prosperity this holiday season!

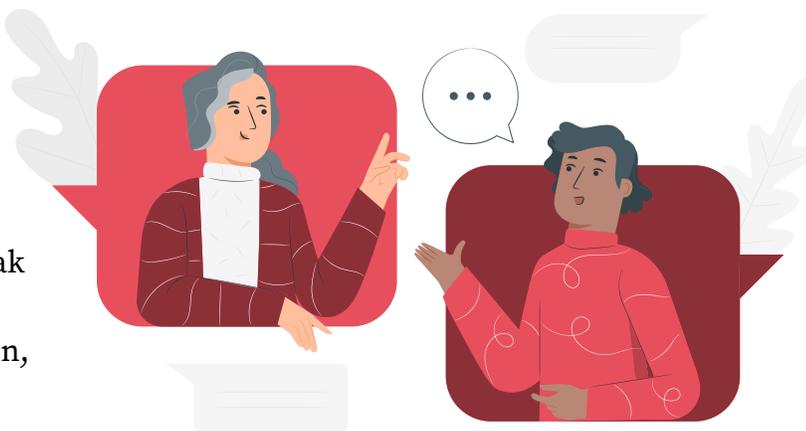
Rich & Ron



When Someone You Know Has a Hearing Loss

Good Communication Habits for Everyone:

1. Get the other person's attention before you start speaking. If they are ready to communicate, they are less likely to miss anything.
2. Don't shout, don't speak too loudly, and don't overemphasize your words. Just speak clearly and naturally.
3. Don't speak too quickly or too slowly. Again, just speak clearly and naturally.
4. Make sure your face can be seen clearly. Lighting should be adequate and there should be nothing covering your mouth or face (speech is picked up by the eyes as well as the ears).
5. Background noises can make understanding more difficult. Turn off sources of noise (e.g., running water) before having a conversation. Alternatively, move to a quieter area, if possible.
6. Don't talk to someone in another room. The further away you are, the harder it is to hear. Make sure you are in the same room and close enough to be easily heard and seen.
7. Rephrase rather than repeat. Sometimes different words will be easier to understand.
8. Be on the lookout for misunderstandings. Ask questions from time to time to make sure that the person has understood what you have said.
9. Relax and be patient. Sometimes it can be stressful and tiring trying to follow the conversation when you have a hearing loss. If you relax, it can help others relax and enjoy the conversation too.
10. Encourage the person you know to seek the advice of a hearing care professional and to have a hearing test. A hearing test is relatively quick, easy, and painless. Consider going with them to keep them company and to help collect information.



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Mon - Wed	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Thu - Fri [*]	9:00 am - 6:00 pm
Saturdays	10:00 am - 1:00 pm

NEW!

COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

WILL YOU BE ALONE OR LONELY THIS CHRISTMAS
DAY? COULD YOU USE SOME CHRISTMAS CHEER?



The Wilmot Family Resource Centre, along with local churches are providing a FREE, SIT-DOWN CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER for residents of Wilmot and Wellesley Townships.

Monday, December 25th at 12:00 noon
Steinmann Mennonite Church
1316 Snyder's Road W., Baden

Call 519-662-2713 to sign up

519-662-2731

WWW.WILMOTFAMILYRESOURCECENTRE.CA





Tips for Tax Season

provided by Kindred Credit Union

If you're like most Canadians, taxes take a big bite out of your wallet every year. Fortunately, there are ways to save on taxes and keep more of your hard-earned money.

Here are a few strategies to lighten your tax bill:

- ☑ **Contribute to RRSPs.** Then claim the deduction at tax time. For your personal RRSP deduction limit, check your latest Notice of Assessment sent to you by the Canada Revenue Agency. Also, as long as your spouse is under the age of 71, you may want to contribute to a spousal RRSP, which offers the same tax savings as a regular RRSP.
- ☑ **Optimize your pension tax credit.** The pension credit can save you up to \$350 each year, however it doesn't carry over – use it or lose it! If you are over 65 and not yet 71 years old, you will need to convert some or your RRSP investments to a RRIF in order to take advantage of this tax credit.
- ☑ **Give to charity.** Charitable donations made by December 31 are eligible for this tax year. Instead of cash, you can donate certain securities “in-kind”, to avoid paying capital gains tax. Your receipt will be based on the current market value on the donated securities.
- ☑ **Take advantage of a tax-free savings account.** TFSA's allow you to grow your investments tax-free. You can contribute up to \$6,500 in 2023 and up to \$81,500 in total. One of the bonuses of TFSA's is that if you withdraw some of your savings during the year, you are entitled to re-contribute those funds back to the TFSA the following year.
- ☑ **Consider tax-loss selling.** By selling non-registered assets that have dropped below their purchase value you can generate a capital loss and use it to offset any capitalized gains you've realized in either the three previous years, this year, or future.
- ☑ **Split your pension income.** Transfer up to 50% of qualifying pension earnings to a lower income earning spouse or common-law partner.
- ☑ **Pay your tax-deductible expenses.** To claim them for this tax year, pay tax deductible expenses like alimony, professional fees, union dues, eligible accounting/legal fees, and medical bills by December 31.
- ☑ **Consider the multigenerational home renovation tax credit.** A refundable tax credit of up to \$7,500 is available for families who construct a secondary suite for seniors in their home. Rather than benefitting the retiree directly, this would benefit the homeowner.
- ☑ **Every life stage comes with new questions.** Kindred's Wealth and Investment Team is here to answer your questions and offer personalized advice that helps make the most of your retirement. We're committed to sharing our expertise, simplifying options, and offering choices that align with your values. Honest conversations will help us understand your financial position and priorities, so we can build a plan using your money in a way that fits your values. For advice on how to take advantage of these tax savings strategies, drop by your local Kindred branch and talk with a member of our Wealth and Investment Team.

COVER STORY



Memorable Moments for the Holidays

WRITTEN BY: ERIN KOOT & ELAINE BALLANTYNE

With the holiday season nearly here, many of us look forward to spending time with family and friends while celebrating and reminiscing on the past year we have had. But for many, this time of year can also be very challenging. The colder weather brings more social barriers. In the summer we can easily go outside and talk to neighbours, or go for a walk, or bask in the sun.

When it's cold outside, it's so much more daunting to step out of the warmth of our homes and contend with the perils of ice and snow.

Without the motivation to go outside, social isolation starts to occur. A new study by John Hopkins researchers found that socially isolated older adults have a 27% higher chance of developing dementia (Radde, 2023). For individuals with dementia, social isolation may increase as they stop doing activities of interests,

lose connections with friends, or purposely isolate themselves because of their diagnosis. Knowing how important social connections are, and recognizing there is a need for more services to be offered to older adults, Memorable Moments was created.

**From Elaine

SERVICES PROVIDED

Started in December 2019 and currently serving the areas of Stratford, St. Mary's, New Hamburg and Mitchell, Memorable Moments provide non-medical home care services by experiences and certified PSW's. These services include:

- Recreational Activities / Companionship
- Personal Care
- Transportation
- Light Housekeeping
- Meal Preparation
- Medication Reminders
- Assistance with Exercises

Working closely with her carefully organized team, CEO and Founder Erin Koot tells Embracing Change: "What you can expect from us is dependable, caring, and knowledgeable caregivers striving to go above and beyond to provide the highest quality of care."

SOCIAL PROGRAM

Memorable Moments is also proud to provide social programs to individuals with dementia. In the New Year, Memorable Moments will be starting a new program in New Hamburg that is geared towards individuals with cognitive impairments such as Dementia, Parkinson's, and stroke survivors. Also welcome to attend are isolated seniors looking to form new connections. A social program will be run from 1pm – 3pm at St. George's Church on Byron Street, held every Friday.



What you can expect is a welcoming environment

that engages participants. Programs include themed discussion topics, chair exercises, a snack and tea or coffee. Free-of-charge trial days are given as trying something new can be challenging.

POSITIVE FEEDBACK



MEMORABLE MOMENTS
SENIOR CARE SERVICES
 New Hamburg Senior Program
 Every Friday
 1-3pm
 St. George's Church
 \$35+HST

MORE INFORMATION

519-275-4902
 memorableseniorcare@outlook.com
 www.memorableseniorcare.ca

The following are two examples of some positive reviews that Erin has received from caregivers of clients in her social program:

“Mom wanted to come back today! We told her next Tuesday! She had so much fun! It was a big relief for dad to see too. He was beyond happy to see and hear how much she enjoyed herself!”

“Everyone close to my Mom noticed a positive difference in her mood and engagement after attending Erin’s social program. IT was like someone turned the lights on for her!”

ABOUT OUR FOUNDER

Erin is a graduate of the University of Waterloo in Therapeutic Recreation and Sport Business, as well as a certified PSW from Conestoga College. Additionally, she has also completed the Geriatric Certificate Program at McMaster University. Erin has been working with seniors for the past ten + years in all sectors of senior care. These experiences have provided Erin’s continued education that include her becoming certified in:

- Certified Dementia Care Provider, 2023
- Cracking the Dementia Code, 2023

- PSW Certificate, 2021
- Gentle Persuasive Approaches, (GPA) 2021
- Fundamentals of Hospice Palliative Care, 2021
- CPR and First Aid, 2021
- CRADLE Course, 2021
- Geriatric Training Program, 2020
- Parkinson Education Program, 2020
- Alzheimers A Positive Approach, 2018
- Nursing Rehabilitation & Restorative Care Workshop, 2018
- The Dementia & Behaviour Training Series, 2018
- Principles of Healthy Aging, 2018
- Validation Communication, 2017
- The Montessori Way, 2017
- Therapeutic Recreation and Sport Business bachelor’s degree 2017



MEMORABLE MOMENTS
SENIOR CARE SERVICES
 Specializing in Dementia Care

Some of the most popular services include:

- Personal Care Assistance
- Recreational Programming
- Companion Care
- Community Group Program

MORE INFORMATION

519-275-4902
 memorableseniorcare@outlook.com
 www.memorableseniorcare.ca

CONTACT MEMORABLE MOMENTS TODAY

If you, or someone you know is looking for senior care support, or for any questions you may have, reach out to Memorable Moments today at:

Email: memorableseniorcare@outlook.com or by phone: 519-275-4902

Online: memorableseniorcare.ca

Facebook: [Memorable Moments Senior Care Services](https://www.facebook.com/MemorableMomentsSeniorCareServices)

References: Social isolation linked to an increased risk of dementia, new study finds., Kaitlyn Radde (January 19th, 2023).,NPR.

Six Tips To Help Prevent Falls

The risk of falling increases with age. Falls can be especially dangerous for older adults, often causing fractures, hospitalization, and disability. The good news is that many falls are avoidable.



Six Tips To Help Prevent Falls

More than one in four people age 65 years or older fall each year, yet many falls can be prevented.



Learn more about reducing your risk of falling at www.nia.nih.gov/falls-prevention.



13 Foundry Street, Baden
Wed-Fri 11am-6pm Sat 11am-5pm
548-333-3989 | <http://millersmercantile.com>

Millers Recycle, Repurpose Tip of the Month!

Make your own earth friendly citrus garland!
A gorgeous natural decoration! Just google
citrus garland for lots of help and instructions!



Welcome to our store!

We opened in January 2023 as a General Store with an ever-changing inventory of local food items, household goods, and gifts.

New, artisan, homemade, vintage, upcycled, repurposed and thrift!

Come check out The Closet:
A boutique thrift store inside Millers Mercantile

Items are gently used, brand name and/or vintage clothing and accessories (unless brand new tags are attached of course!) All clothing and accessories are laundered and/or steamed

December Events

at Woolwich Community Health Centre



COPING WITH LOSS/GRIEF DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Thursday Dec 7, from 12:00 - 1:00 PM

The focus of this workshop is on the loss of a partner and/or loss of a family member.

The holidays can be difficult when someone you loved has died and will not be at this year's holiday. Many of us have experienced a loss and we are going to talk about what grief is and how it affects us. Then we are going to generate ideas on how to honor our loss/es at the same time of trying to have some festivities (as best we can).

One significant aspect of the workshop will focus on managing the holidays in the face of loss, particularly the loss of a loved one. Recognizing that the absence of a cherished individual can cast a shadow over celebrations, the workshops will provide a safe space to discuss grief and its impact. Participants will gain insights into understanding grief and generate ideas on how to honour their loss while attempting to find enjoyment in the festivities.

These workshops welcome celebrators of all holidays, irrespective of cultural or religious backgrounds. The inclusive environment encourages a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, fostering a sense of community among participants.

Whether you are grappling with the loss of a loved one or simply looking to navigate the complexities of holiday stress, the Woolwich Community Health Centre's upcoming workshop promises valuable insights, practical tools, and a supportive community. Join us on this journey towards a more manageable and meaningful holiday season.

If you would like to join this free workshop, or be notified of future sessions, please feel free to contact Tariq at tabdulahadi@wchc.on.ca or leave a voicemail at 519-664-3794 ext. 222.

NAVIGATING HOLIDAY STRESS AND GRIEF: Woolwich Community Health Centre's FREE Compassionate Workshop

The holiday season is often hailed as a magical time filled with joy, laughter, and cherished moments with loved ones. However, the reality is that for many, this time of year can be challenging, especially when grappling with stress and grief. Recognizing this, the Woolwich Community Health Centre is hosting a series of free workshops on holiday stress and grief, both in person and on Zoom.

The workshops will provide support and tools for those facing difficulties during the festive season. These sessions will be facilitated by the WCHC Counsellors and health promotion teams.



COFFEE HOUSE TALKS

LEARN, CREATE, SHARE

Coffee House Talks is a group for adults over 55 years old. It provides an opportunity in our community for us to learn new things, share information and create new relationships. Individuals can come together in various ways and have some fun!

- Past events included healthy living, craft activities, gardening and financial safety
- Join us at our next event! Visit our website for upcoming events or contact us for more information

OUR CONTACT:

☎ WFR: 519-662-2731

🌐 <https://wilmotfamilyresourcecentre.wordpress.com/events/coffee-house-talks/>

✉ info@wilmotfamilyresourcecentre.ca

✉ coffeehousetalks2020@gmail.com



Wilmot Family Resource Centre



New Horizons for Seniors Program

This project is funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program

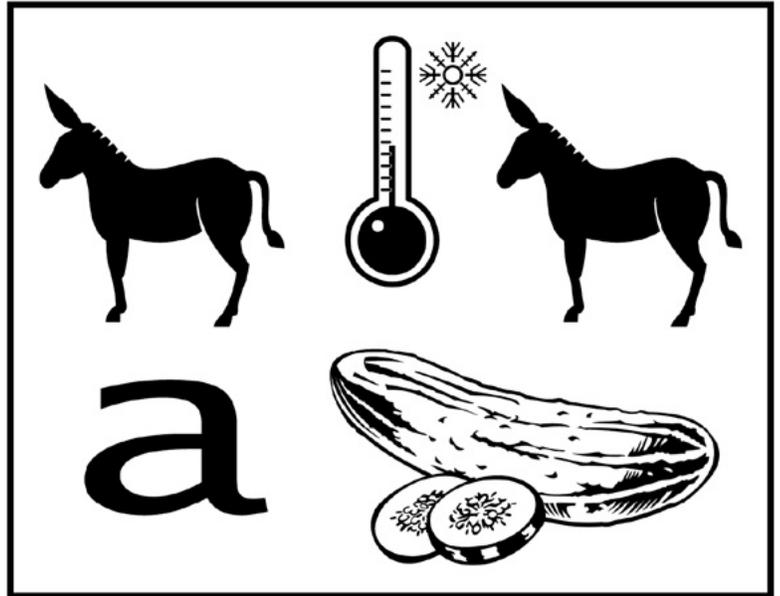



December Puzzles!



Concentration Puzzle

Use the visual clues in the puzzle to figure out what it says.



Wacky Wordies #14

Each puzzle is a visual representation of a common word or phrase. Can you decipher them?



1. _____



2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



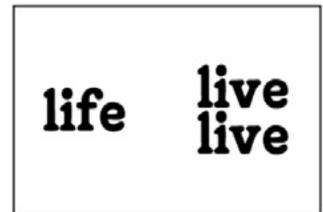
5. _____



6. _____



7. _____



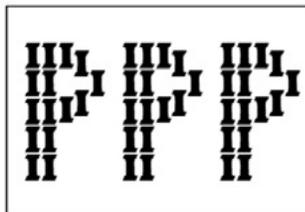
8. _____



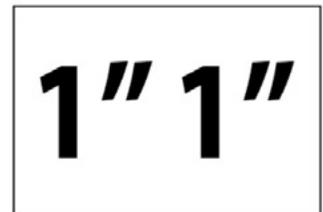
9. _____



10. _____



11. _____



12. _____

Laughing Matters!

DIFFERENCES

Find 10 differences.



more printables on www.myhomeschoolmath.com



WHERE TO GET YOUR FREE COPY

Copies will be available around the first Wednesday of every month at the following locations:

WILMOT TOWNSHIP:

- MeMe’s Café New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Sobey’s New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- Hemmerich Hearing
- Dolman Eyecare
- Morningside Retirement Community
- Stonecroft New Hamburg
- Nithview Community
- Foxboro Green
- Community Care Concepts
- Town Square Pharmacy
- Cooks Pharmacy
- New Hamburg Thrift Centre
- New Hamburg Legion
- New Hamburg Office Pro
- No Frills New Hamburg
- Baden Village Pharmacy
- Rudy Held Performance Centre
- Soles Journey New Hamburg
- Little Short Stop New Hamburg
- Heart & Home Creations NH



- McDonalds (outside magazine stand)

WELLESLEY TOWNSHIP:

- Schmidtsville Restaurant (outside magazine stand)
- Wellesley Township Community Health Centre

- Linwood Nurse Practitioner Office
- Pond View Retirement Village
- Cooks Pharmacy Wellesley
- Pym’s Village Market
- In Season Home & Garden St Clements
- Len’s Mill Store – Hawkesville
- Food Town IFT St Clements (Outside Magazine Stand)

WOOLWICH TOWNSHIP:

- Community Care Concepts
- Martin’s Guardian Pharmacy (outside magazine stand)
- Kiwanis Transit
- Woolwich Health Care Centre
- St Jacobs Place Retirement Place
- MCC Thrift & Gift Elmira
- Living Waters Books & Toys Elmira
- Bonnie Lou’s Cafe
- Hillcrest Home Baking
- Dollarama Elmira (outside magazine stand)
- Harvest Moon St. Jacob’s

Solutions

**Concentration Puzzle:
As cool as a cucumber**



Wacky Wordies #14

1. Back to the future
2. Offsides
3. Do without
4. Shot in the dark
5. Ski slope
6. Working overtime
7. Long Island
8. One life to live
9. The coast is clear
10. Back in five minutes
11. Black-eyed peas
12. Inch-by-inch



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Ask the Doctor

with Dr. Nicole Didyk

I find my moods can start to feel a bit low over the winter months. I have had people suggest 'light therapy' and/or vitamin D. Is this something you would recommend, or do you have any other suggestions to help me get through the dreary winter months?

Seasonal affective disorder (SAD for short) is a depression that comes on in the fall or winter and improves in the spring or summer. It affects about 5% of older adults. Not everyone has a full-blown depression, but may still experience sadness, loss of interest, and other symptoms that can affect quality of life.

Unfortunately, SAD can also be associated with:

- * Weight gain
- * Hypersomnia (sleeping too much)
- * Carb cravings
- * Somatic symptoms (aches, pains, stomach troubles and other physical manifestations of depression)

Treatment for SAD may include antidepressant medications, which need to be prescribed by a doctor.

Light therapy has been shown to help with SAD as well. It's recommended to use a lamp with 10 000 lux of light power for 30-60 minutes per day (morning seems to work better than afternoon). Make sure the lamp is safe for use (unsafe lights can cause eye damage). You don't need to stare directly at the light source, but you do need to be able to at least see it in your peripheral vision.

Lifestyle changes can make a difference:

- * Daily walks outside, even on cloudy days
- * Sleep hygiene (avoid screens, alcohol, exercise, worrying and fluids too close to bedtime; maintain a regular sleep schedule)
- * Aerobic exercise
- * Enhanced indoor lighting with regular lamps and fixtures.

- * Dawn simulation (this uses a lamp that comes on gradually over 30-120 minutes to wake you up in the morning. You can buy a dawn simulator online or at a speciality store)

I haven't come across any evidence for Vitamin D supplementation as a treatment for SAD, but we do recommend continuing with 1000-2000 units per day to prevent bone fractures.

The best way to stomp the winter blues is so keep moving and embrace the light!

For more information about aging and health, go to www.TheWrinkle.ca!

If you have questions for Dr. Didyk, please email them to embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com.
You don't need to give any identifying information.

Disclaimer:

Any comments Dr. Didyk may make regarding an individual's story should not be construed as establishing a physician-patient relationship between Dr. Didyk and a caregiver, or care recipient, and should not be considered a substitute for individualized medical assessment, diagnosis, or treatment.

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Creating a Dementia-Inclusive Space for Businesses

Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

Dementia-inclusive businesses empower people living with dementia to be independent customers and employees. They will give care partners greater peace of mind. Here are three reasons why companies should embark on this journey.

1. Growing Needs

With the increasing prevalence of dementia, we will see a rise in both customers and employees living with dementia. Creating a plan and ensuring that businesses are dementia-inclusive well-equip them for the growing need.

2. More Social Savvy Customers

Customers are increasingly demanding that businesses become more socially responsible. Creating a space for everyone will let more people access your business.

3. Enhanced Reputation and Equity

Studies show that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives have positive impacts on brand reputation and equity.

By reading this article, you are already on the first steps to creating a dementia-inclusive environment. Below is a framework to help transition your business into one that supports people living with dementia to live their best days. This list is a general framework. Please reach out to the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington if you are interested in creating a specific plan for your business or a general assessment of your space.

1. Plan

Discuss being dementia friendly with your staff. Planning will include staff education, training and support. There are resources available free of charge at the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington to help you during this phase.

2. Action

Identify weaknesses in your policy and environment, and create solutions! Achieve this through research or a partnership with a local dementia advocate such as Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington.

3. Raise Awareness

You're doing something fantastic! Make sure your organization and community know about it! Hopefully, another group sees your great work, and it spurs them to create a dementia-inclusive space too!

4. Monitor Your Progress

Dementia inclusivity is an ongoing progress. Regularly reassess and revamp your action plan. Reassessing is also a great way to tackle more significant changes – remember, it does not have to be all at once. Small changes go a long way, and every change closer to a dementia-friendly community is significant!

Dementia Enabling Environment Checklist

Below is a quick checklist to start you and your business on the path toward dementia inclusivity. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington with specific plans for your business.

Design safety measures to be as discreet as possible. Creating spaces with the dignity of the person in mind

1. Design the scale of the environment to maximize comfort and security. Create smaller spaces and segment sections.
2. Make it easy for people to see where they are going. Signs for essential sections such as washrooms and checkouts are crucial.
3. Minimize unhelpful stimuli. Reduce visual and audio noise that will not add to the experience.
4. Create an environment - indoor and outdoor - that is easy for engagement and safe to navigate.
5. Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible. Spaces like washrooms will benefit from familiarity with our homes
6. Offer people opportunities to choose to be alone or with different numbers of people
7. Design to support a way of life that is easy to understand, manageable and meaningful.



My Greatest Gift: 2023 Edition

It seems odd still getting a gift after New Year's day. But, as I unravel my thoughts – circling, there within my mind – I wonder what might be my future in 2023... understanding it's really a gift to myself.

Not long ago being retired meant “seeing the world” and if you had the money, why not? As my father-in-law advised us, “Go while you still have your health.” And of course he was right: life doesn't come with any guarantees.

But is traveling worth risking your health, or like millions of others, your life – during these COVID-19 times?

The other consideration is longevity: we tend to get used to waking up every day. Lord only knows, biblically speaking, if our lives will average out to be “threescore and ten” (70 years-old), or fourscore (80 years-old); or, if all we have remaining is only fourscore and ten minutes. As the old Yiddish proverb states, “We plan, God laughs.”

**“Yeah I bought my wife a little diamond ring
Her mom said, “Hun, can't even see that thing
It'll be paid off when I'm sixty-five
If I'm lucky enough to still be alive”**

**Travis Tritt – Livin' On Borrowed Time
(from Live & Kickin')**

Maybe, I'll use whatever time I have left to achieve something I've never done before. Yet,

that suggests excluding my wife from my daily plans. I see no future in that.

So let's say I do change my ways, but by how much?

To be fair, that would mean me going from 80/20 percent (whereby 80% of my otherwise free time is devoted to me... excluding her almost entirely); to 20/80 percent (whereby I devote the majority of my time freely to us as a couple.) So, I'm the one needing to give up my selfish allotment of time. But, that might not be realistic, on my part. A 50/50 relationship seems more doable.

We've got nothing to risk and everything to gain. Not that she would put any pressure to change... such is her love.

In the beginning, I could have afforded the luxury of not thinking about time running out for me: with a career and growing family I had too much on my mind to notice. But, all along, she's been my rock... even if I didn't realize it at the time. Yet, with maturity and experience, I can't pretend I don't see. Plus, I've been guilty sometimes of treating friends as family and family as friends. There's a difference, would you not agree?

I don't want to be left wondering, on my deathbed, how I managed to lose such a beautiful human being – while life passed me by. Like the book Rip Van Winkle... I'm awakening with renewed sight. Yes, even a blind man knows when he's walking in the sun.

So now, I'm returning my major attention to us – where everything started so long ago. Where this ends up, in our pandemic world, I don't know. What I do know is that I'm looking forward to fully rejoicing in our gift of love to each other: my greatest gift... ever!

That's the way I figure it. – FP



‘Music in Me’ writer Fred Parry is a lover of people and a collector of stories, music, wisdom and grandchildren.

Find him at www.fredparry.ca



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TIPS FOR GETTING THROUGH THE WINTER

While many of us will appreciate the beauty of the first snowfall, the long, cold days of winter can be difficult. Community Care Concepts, a non-profit that supports seniors to live independently, offers the following tips to help you get through the upcoming winter months:

Get the flu shot and COVID vaccination –

Unless you have a history of adverse reactions, getting a flu shot and COVID vaccination not only protects you but also protects the health of those around you. Getting a flu shot and COVID vaccination is one of the most preventative measures that you can take to staying healthy this winter. Both are available through physicians as well as through many local pharmacies.

Eat well – Eating nutritious meals is a key component of helping individuals to remain healthy. Many struggle with cooking for themselves or getting out to get groceries in the poor weather. Consider having Meals on Wheels' hot meals delivered at noon on weekdays or our nutritious frozen meals delivered to your door for evenings, weekends or during poor weather.

Stay physically active – Research shows that participating in three 45 minutes sessions of exercise each week minimizes the risk of falls, the leading cause of health decline. Consider participating in the many free gentle exercise classes offered throughout the community each week by Community Care Concepts. No registration or long-term commitment is required. Exercises are customized to the needs of older adults and can be done sitting or standing.

Stay mentally active – Keeping your mind active is equally as important as remaining

physically active. Enjoy a good book. Complete a crossword puzzle. Enjoy a game with a friend. Alternatively, join many of the free social and recreational activities, including cards, games, crafts, coffee hours, discussion groups and activities available through seniors active living programs offered at the Wilmot Recreation Complex and Hawkesville, Linwood, St. Clements and Wellesley Community Centres.

Leave the driving to us – Getting to where you need to go in the winter months can be difficult for many. Community Care Concepts has vans as well as volunteers to drive people to medical and other important appointments both within and beyond our community.

Avoid over exerting yourself – Cold weather combined with over exerting yourself through physical activities such as shovelling can create health difficulties. Contact Community Care Concepts to get help with snow removal, homemaking and other maintenance needs.

Stay connected – Maintaining contact with others can be one of the best ways to maintain your health. Community Care Concepts offers a variety of opportunities to connect with others including its community dining programs and a variety of social and recreational activities.

Contact us – Help is only a call away. Connect with our Senior Support Workers for free, practical in-home support or help with getting through the flu season, groceries, getting to activities, accessing the services you need, information and any need that impacts your ability to live independently.

For more information or to access services, contact Community Care Concepts at 519-664-1900, 519-662-9526 or 1-855-664-1900.

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HOW TO BE AN “Open Traveller”

ARTICLE PROVIDED BY STONETOE TRAVEL
WRITTEN BY PAUL KNOWLES

People travel for a lot of reasons. For Canadians, this time of year, the answer to “why do you travel” is often as simple as “to be somewhere warm!” We travel to have fun, to relax, to get away from the day to day.

These are all perfectly good reasons. But they are not the best reasons. Travel can do so much more than offer changes in climate, or in our mundane daily schedule. Travel can, in fact, change us. And change us in very good ways – as long as we are open to this experience.

And that is the best argument for travelling, when there are also environmental and political reasons not to travel. I do believe that we need to be responsible travellers, but that the positives continue to outweigh the challenges.

In my role as a travel writer, I get to travel, a lot. And each time I do, I become more aware of the meaningful ways travel affects me.

For example, I recently spent a week in Wales. The reason for the trip was to experience the food and beverage scene in that country – and that was a ton of fun. But something more important than rack of lamb or Welsh whisky happened during the trip. Our group included people from eight different countries – Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the United States, Wales, England... and Canada. In the course of the week, I gained insights into life in all of those countries. I caught glimpses of the ways my new friends think. And I discovered how quickly a band of strangers from eight different cultures can morph into a group of friends, eager to laugh together, ready to listen and learn. And yes, I learned a lot. I came home, enriched.

Travel stretches and strengthens us. For instance, I have visited Ireland several times. As I talked to newfound Irish friends, I quickly learned that my perspective on the troubled history of that country has been skewed simply because I attended Canadian, English-speaking schools, where the story of Ireland’s “troubles” is presented through a decidedly British point of view. I have since taken the time to read books written by Irish historians; I know my perspective has become much more balanced and well-informed because I travelled to Ireland, and talked to Irish people.

I have had a similar experience, right here in our country. Time spent with Indigenous people in Sault Ste. Marie, and more recently, in Wendake, north of Québec City, has allowed me to listen directly to Native Canadians. That is a much more useful experience than getting second-hand information from news sources or poorly-informed friends.

What about visiting places where we disagree with their political or social systems? Well, I really love to spend time in the Florida Keys. This, however, causes some internal turmoil, because there is a lot of political stuff happening there that I find repugnant. So – should I go? The thing is, when I get there, I find local people who are equally disgusted with what is going on, and often, those people are dependent on visitors like me for their livelihood. So I have to ask myself if refusing to visit certain areas impacts the leaders I distrust, or does it only punish folks with whom I share common values?

My most recent trip was to the Caribbean island of Grenada, where tourism is the number one economic driver. If we don’t travel, a significant number of Grenadians are out of work.

So, through travel, I have learned a lot; I have been inspired to seek a balanced view of history; and I have helped to support the lives of fine people working in the tourism industry.

But one thing is key to all of this – you have to be open to interaction with other people. You won’t grow a bit if you simply check into an all-inclusive resort, and only interact with other North American tourists. When you travel, you have to listen, to interact with others from different cultures and countries, to be open to opinions different from your own.

Have conversations – and perhaps, while you are learning and growing, your newfound friends may be having the same experience, listening and learning from you.

And your decision to be an “open traveller” will enrich everyone.

Paul Knowles is a travel writer, and President of the Travel Media Association of Canada. He writes a weekly travel feature for the publications of the Granthaven Newspaper Group, and contributes to several other publications and websites. He also leads an annual group tour (in 2024, in Wales and the Cotswolds) in partnership with Stonetown Travel.

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What is Homeshare?

Home Share is a living arrangement between two or more people, usually unrelated, who reside together in the same residence. The living arrangement is made with the ongoing support of community agencies like Community Justice Initiatives (CJI) to ensure safety and effective conflict resolution throughout the process. The goal of Home Share is to connect individuals who live independently, are vulnerable to loneliness and isolation, or require financial or chore support with individuals who are seeking affordable housing and may be willing to provide chore support and companionship. This is a mutually beneficial arrangement to all involved and is made based on supporting each other in community.

WHAT'S INVOLVED?

The Home Provider offers accommodation in exchange for a contribution to the household expenses, help around the house, or a combination of these. The support may include but is not limited to companionship, shopping, household tasks/cleaning, gardening, and taking care of pets. Typically, each person has their own private bedroom and will share public areas such as the kitchen and living room. After an application is received, WRHS will interview each applicant individually. WRHS then initiates a compatible match of a Home Provider and Home Seeker based on their described needs and preferences. Once a match is made, WRHS will arrange and facilitate an initial introductory meeting for the participants to determine if they can make a connection. WRHS will assist with contacting references and visiting the home to view the living space provided by the Home Provider. WRHS will facilitate a mediation for participants to discuss and agree on a Memorandum of Understanding Living Agreement which outlines their living arrangement. WRHS continues to provide ongoing support to ensure safety and effective conflict resolution throughout the Home Share process.

WHY HOME SHARE?

All people deserve access to safe housing. WRHS provides supported and independent living for individuals who choose to live in a WRHS arrangement. It provides permanent affordable housing options for individuals who are unable to afford market rent options. It increases the social participation and inclusion of individuals and provides volunteer and leadership opportunities for them in the community.

WRHS meets a current housing need by using existing housing stock. There is an increasing need for housing options in Waterloo Region and it is important that we consider innovative solutions to meet the current housing needs. Although Home Sharing may not be the right option for everyone, it may be the perfect solution for others.

If you have any questions about the Waterloo Region Home Share program or would like to learn more, please contact Alison Harris at alisonh@cjiwr.com or 226 201 3360

WATERLOO REGION HOME SHARE

WHAT DOES OUR HOME SHARE PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

- ① Referral and application
- ② In-depth interview with individuals
- ③ Home visit
- ④ Introductory meeting between Home Provider and Home Seeker
- ⑤ Reference checks, police checks, and legal advice
- ⑥ Home Share mediation and memorandum of understanding
- ⑦ Move-in
- ⑧ Ongoing support

For more info, contact Alison at (226) 201 3360 or alisonh@cjiwr.com



Chronic Inflammation: How This Can Impact Your Health

Dr. Laura Hoffmann, Naturopathic Doctor at
Affinity Health Clinic, New Hamburg

There are two types of inflammation: acute (short term), and chronic (long term).

Acute inflammation occurs when you injure a part of your body and you may have redness, heat, swelling, pain, and difficulty moving the area. Your body senses danger and responds by sending out cells to help attack any invading cells (bacteria, virus), and to start healing the tissues. This response lasts for a short period of time and then resolves.

Chronic inflammation occurs slowly and long term where your body continues sending out the cells to attack the danger (bacteria, virus), but there may not be any danger present. As a result, these cells can start attacking other tissues in your body that shouldn't necessarily be attacked. A common example is rheumatoid arthritis- the body starts attacking the joints and causes them to degrade.

Chronic inflammation is an underlying process, and often part of the root cause of disease. Some examples of conditions with chronic inflammation include cardiovascular disease, diabetes, arthritis, allergies, asthma, autoimmune disease, and Alzheimer's disease.

Assessing for chronic inflammation:

Risk factors for developing chronic inflammation include aging, being overweight/obese, smoking, chronic stress, sleep disorders, and a diet that is high in trans fat, saturated fat and sugars.

Symptoms of chronic inflammation can include

body pain, joint pain, chronic fatigue, mood disorders (depression, anxiety), weight changes, frequent infections, difficulty sleeping, and digestive issues (constipation, diarrhea).

Inflammation can be tested on blood work with c-reactive protein (CRP), and/or erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR). If you haven't had either of these tested before, you may want to consider asking your healthcare team to run one of them to check for inflammation. Naturopathic Doctors are able to requisition blood work for a fee. These tests are inexpensive and can indicate if there is inflammation; however, it cannot tell where in the body the inflammation is occurring.

Treating chronic inflammation is important, as it can often be one part of the root cause of disease. Treatment includes trying to remove the triggers for inflammation, and reducing the inflammatory response that the body is producing. A naturopathic approach includes assessing blood work and creating an individualized treatment which can include nutrition, exercise, lifestyle changes, and targeted supplements.

Treatment examples to reduce chronic inflammation:

Nutrition:

- ✦ Eat lots of fruits and vegetables, especially ones that are colorful
- ✦ Increase dietary omega 3's (olive oil, fish, nuts and seeds)
- ✦ Eat enough fiber each day
- ✦ Reduce sugar
- ✦ Reduce saturated and trans fat

Lifestyle:

- ✦ Exercise regularly
- ✦ Lose weight gradually
- ✦ Get deep restorative sleep each night
- ✦ Reduce stress and learn to cope with stress

Supplements:

- ✦ Fish oil: a source omega 3's which is one of the best ways to help lower inflammation
- ✦ Curcumin: the active form of turmeric which is anti-inflammatory
- ✦ Vitamin D: deficiency can worsen

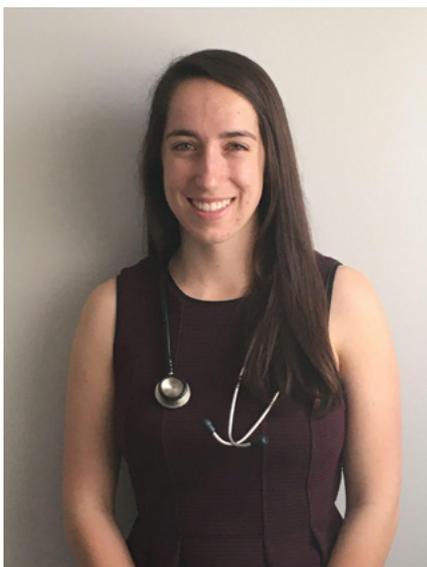
inflammation. Get your blood level tested first, and supplement based on what your level is

- ✦ Magnesium: deficiency can worsen inflammation. Many people do not get enough magnesium in through their diet (dark leafy green vegetables, whole grains)

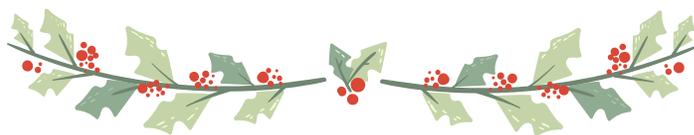
Do not start taking any supplements until you speak to your healthcare team, as there can be significant interactions between certain supplements and medications. There are many more supplements that help lower inflammation. The one that may be right for you may not be right for someone else.

Treatment depends on the individual and there is no one-size-fits-all treatment. Depending on what the condition is that you are treating, addressing underlying chronic inflammation is an important part of the plan. Everyone’s treatment plan will look different depending on your medical history, medications, goals of treatment, lifestyle, and ability to make changes to your health.

To receive more guidance on how to implement nutrition, supplements, and lifestyle changes speak to your healthcare team or consider seeing a Naturopathic Doctor. Have any questions about your health? Reach out at wecare@affinityhealthclinic.ca, 519-662-2123, or book online at www.affinityhealthclinic.ca.



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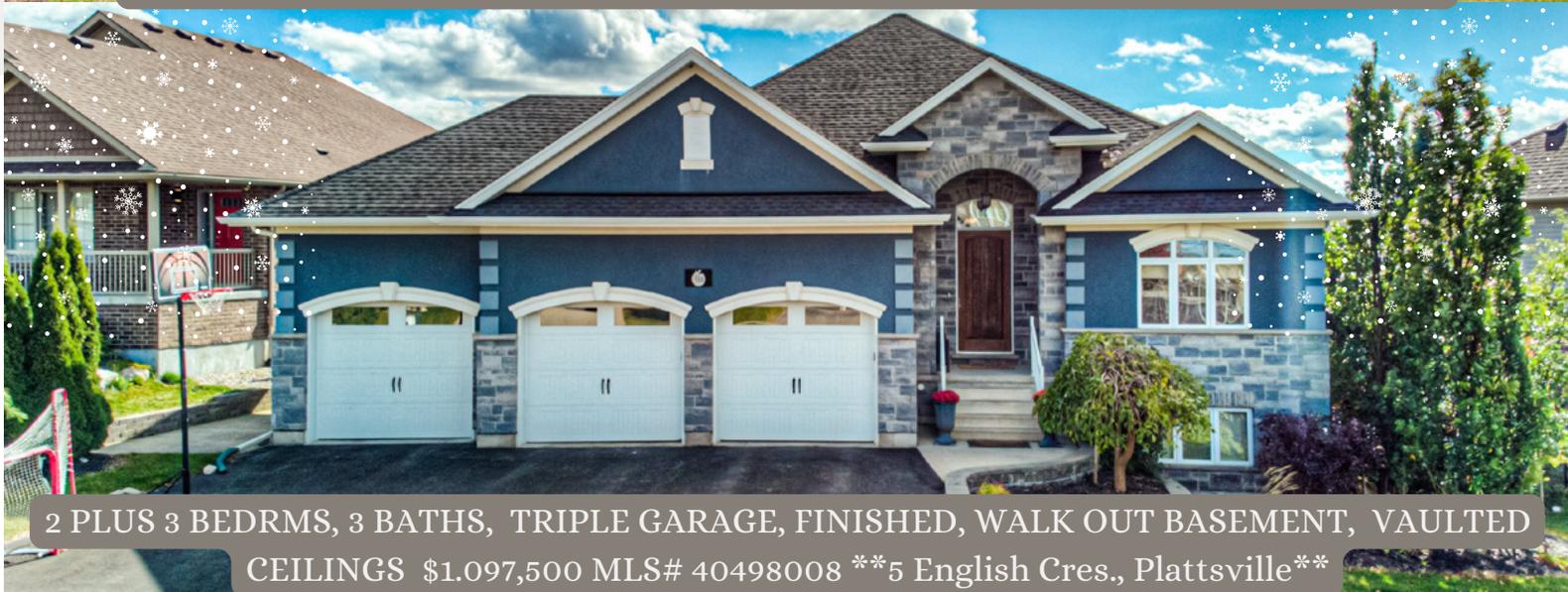
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I WOULD LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND CLIENTS WHO SUPPORTED MYSELF AND MY BUSINESS THIS PAST YEAR AND THROUGHOUT THE LAST 18 YEARS. I VALUE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE MY CLIENTS AND LOOK FORWARD TO THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK WITH YOU IN THE FUTURE TOO! I CHERISH THE FRIENDSHIPS MADE AND BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS FORMED ALONG THE WAY. MY SINCERE GRATITUDE TO YOU ALL. WISHING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MUCH HAPPINESS THROUGHOUT THE HOLIDAYS!

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

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