

FREE!

LIVING ~ LOVING ~ LEARNING ~ LAUGHING

EMBRACING CHANGE

VOL. 8 ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2026



Feature Business of the Month

Guardian
COOK'S PHARMACY

ON THE COVER:
FOR 51 YEARS, WOOLWICH
COMMUNITY SERVICES (WCS) HAS
BEEN WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC
OF WOOLWICH AND NORTHERN
WELLESLEY TOWNSHIPS.

OUR TRUSTED
BUSINESS DIRECTORY
LISTING PAGE 27

COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE
EMPOWERING SENIORS TO EMBRACE THEIR LIMITLESS POTENTIAL



Keep feeling confident with better hearing.

Book a **free hearing test**** and find
the right hearing aid for you.



BOOK ONLINE
HearingLife.ca/TBYB

MENTION CODE: **MAG-TBYB-EMBRC**

New Hamburg **10 Waterloo St, Unit 5 1-888-485-6006**

Waterloo - Erb St W **128 Erb Street W 1-888-485-6003**

Waterloo **99 Northfield Drive E, Suite 304 1-888-485-6007**

*See clinic for details. Offer expires February 28, 2026. **A comprehensive hearing assessment is provided to adults ages 19 and older at no cost. The results of this assessment will be communicated verbally to you. Depending on the province you're located in, an administrative fee may apply if a copy of an Audiological Report is requested. Child hearing tests are conducted at select locations for a fee, please contact us for more information. Offers not valid in Quebec.

Tara Held

EDITOR/PUBLISHER

Rich Held

DISTRIBUTION

Victoria Zinger

DESIGNER

Dr. Nicole Didyk

Community Care Concepts

Woolwich Community Health Centre

Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

Elaine Birch

Fred Parry

Anne Milne

Scott Dunstall

Schlegel-UW Research Institute for

Aging (RIA)

CONTRIBUTORS

On The Cover

Woolwich Community Services:

51 years of serving with heart in a community that makes it possible.

See the full cover story on page 12

Cover Story & Photo By:

Woolwich Community Services

(WCS)



 **Embracing Change**



147 Arnold St
New Hamburg, ON N3A 2C6



519-574-6428



embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com



www.embracingchange.ca

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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

February has a way of reminding us to slow down just a little. The days are still short, winter is lingering, and we may find ourselves craving comfort — warm meals, good company, and moments that make us feel connected. It's also the month that encourages us to think about the heart, in more ways than one.

In Canada, February is recognized as Heart Month, a time to raise awareness about cardiovascular health. Heart disease continues to be one of the

leading causes of death in our country, but the encouraging news is that small, everyday choices really can make a difference. Heart Month isn't about drastic changes or perfection — it's about realistic, manageable steps toward better health.

That might mean adding a short walk to your daily routine, choosing foods that nourish your body, or simply taking a moment to check in with your healthcare provider. It can also mean paying attention to stress, getting enough rest, and making time for the people and activities that bring you joy. Our hearts benefit not only from physical care, but from emotional well-being too.

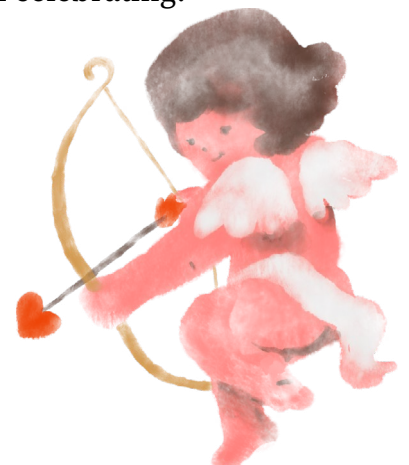
February is often associated with love, but love doesn't have to be grand gestures or fancy plans. Sometimes it's showing kindness to ourselves, listening to our bodies, or encouraging a friend or family member to make a healthy choice alongside us. Those small acts of care add up over time.

As we move through this month together, I hope you'll find inspiration within these pages — whether it's a helpful tip, a comforting story, or a reminder that it's never too late to embrace positive change. Your health journey is your own, and every step forward, no matter how small, is worth celebrating.

Thank you for being part of the Embracing Change community. Wishing you a February filled with warmth, balance, and heart-healthy moments.

Warmly,

Tara



Hartman Bridge 1903 P5085 WHS

Everyone who travels through New Hamburg, will recognize the bridge in this photograph. The Hartman Bridge (named after the family whose land bordered the bridge access) was first built in 1845 out of timber. But by 1882, the iron bridge, with the v-shaped brace design, joined the two sides. The Hartman bridge was an important part of the social and economic development of the town and the current steel Pratt truss bridge is the last of its kind in Waterloo Region. Check out the Region's commemorative plaque near the pedestrian entrance by the library for more of its history.



Courtesy of the Grace Schmidt Room, Kitchener Public Library



COFFEE HOUSE TALKS

LEARN, CREATE, SHARE

A group for adults 55+ to learn, make friends, and sip hot beverages.

Join us at our next event!

Visit our website or contact us for more information.



Wilmot & Wellesley
Resource Centre

REACH OUT TO REGISTER:

WWRC: 519-662-2731

info@wilmotwellesleyrc.ca
wilmotwellesleyrc.ca



The Wilmot-Tavistock Gazette



**Your Community.
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When you want news you can trust, you turn to the people who know your community best.

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Real stories. Real people. Real local journalism.

Contact us at: thewtgazette@gmail.com

www.granthaven.com/wilmot-tavistock-gazette

Expanding Care, One Community at a Time

A Legacy of Personalized Care

Since 1972, Cook's Pharmacy has been a trusted name in the Waterloo/Wilmot/Wellesley Region, delivering patient-focused healthcare with a personal touch. Purchased by Ashok Jobanputra in 1986 and now led by his son Poshin, the independent pharmacy remains committed to its guiding principle: relationships over revenue. This philosophy drives a wide range of services designed to meet individual health needs. With Poshin's daughter in pharmacy school this is TRULY A FAMILY BUSINESS.

Comprehensive Services for Every Stage of Health

Cook's Pharmacy offers more than prescription dispensing. Their clinical services include:

- **Custom Compounding** for unique medication needs.
- **Chronic Condition Support:** Diabetes counseling, respiratory care, and INR management.
- **Wellness Programs:** Weight loss coaching using the Ideal Protein method.
- **Travel Health Consultations** and immunizations.
- **Advanced Testing:** Pharmacogenetic and hormone testing.
- **Specialized Care:** Compression stocking fitting, cannabis management, and seasonal clinics.

These services are delivered by a team of certified professionals dedicated to improving patient outcomes through education and personalized care.

New Horizons: University Gates & Guelph

In **2024**, Cook's Pharmacy opened its University Gates location at 1065-250 Laurelwood Drive, Waterloo. This modern facility offers the full suite of pharmacy services in a convenient setting for students and residents alike.

Building on that success, **February 2025** marked the opening of a new store in Guelph at 649 Scottsdale Drive. Staffed by experienced professionals, this location features advanced compounding capabilities and a strong focus on holistic health management.

Looking Ahead: 2026 Expansion Plans

Cook's Pharmacy isn't stopping there. With two successful openings in consecutive years, the company projects **two additional locations in 2026**, further extending its reach across Southwestern Ontario. These new stores will replicate the proven model of personalized care, advanced clinical services, and community engagement.

What Makes Cook's Pharmacy Stand Out

In an era dominated by big-box chains, Cook's Pharmacy continues to thrive by prioritizing relationships, expertise, and innovation. Their expansion reflects a growing demand for independent pharmacies that offer more than prescriptions—they deliver care, trust, and a sense of community.

For more information, visit cooksrx.ca



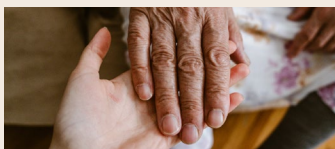


Creating Calm, Comfort, and Clarity at Home

Supporting Seniors Through Thoughtful Organizing

Serving Waterloo Region and surrounding areas | P. 519-521- LESS (5377)

www.lighthausliving.com | info@lighthausliving.com



Home is more than just a place — it is where memories are held, routines are formed, and a sense of comfort and security should always exist. As we move through various stages of life, our homes often need to change with us. For many seniors, those changes can feel overwhelming. That is where compassionate, respectful support can make a meaningful difference.

My name is Tammy Lee Hauser, and I am the founder of Light Haus Living, a professional organizing business built on the belief that a calm, well-organized home supports independence, confidence, and peace of mind. I created Light Haus Living after witnessing how many people, particularly seniors, quietly struggle with clutter, safety concerns, and the emotional weight of homes that no longer feel manageable during life transition.

Light Haus Living was designed to be gentle by nature. I work with seniors at a comfortable pace, always honouring their life experiences, personal stories, and treasured belongings. Organizing is never rushed, and nothing is done without consent. My role is to listen first, then guide with care.

Through my work, I help seniors simplify their living spaces in ways that feel supportive rather than disruptive. This may include organizing kitchens, bedrooms, closets, paperwork, or entire homes. I create easy-to-maintain systems that reduce physical strain, improve accessibility, and increase safety. Clear walkways, thoughtfully placed items, and simplified layouts can help reduce stress and lower the risk of falls, allowing clients to feel more confident moving through their homes.

For seniors considering downsizing or preparing for a move, I provide calm, steady guidance through what can be an emotional process. Letting go of belongings connected to memories can be difficult, and it deserves time and compassion. Together, we decide what to keep, donate, gift, or store, always respecting the meaning behind each item.

I also support families who want to help an aging parent but feel unsure how to begin. These moments can bring up strong emotions for everyone involved. I act as a supportive presence, helping ease tension, create clarity, and ensure the senior's voice remains central throughout the process.

What sets Light Haus Living apart is the nurturing, non-judgmental environment I bring into every home. This work is not about perfection or minimalism. It is about comfort, dignity, and creating a space that truly supports daily life. Many clients share that they feel lighter, calmer, and more at ease after our sessions, not just because their space looks better, but because it finally feels manageable again.

A well-organized home can support emotional well-being, mental clarity, and independence at any age. For seniors, it can restore a sense of control and peace, allowing them to fully enjoy the home they have built over a lifetime.

Every visit is approached with patience, warmth, and genuine care. I understand that inviting someone into your home is a personal decision, and trust is essential. My goal is always to create a space where seniors feel heard, respected, and supported. Whether the need is small or significant, each step forward is treated as an accomplishment. With thoughtful organization, a home can once again feel peaceful, familiar, and deeply comforting, offering reassurance not only to seniors themselves, but also to the loved ones who care about them. This sense of calm can gently ripple into daily life.

If you or a loved one are ready to take the first step toward a calmer, safer, and more supportive home, Light Haus Living would be honoured to help — gently guiding you out of clutter and into clarity.



Woolwich Community Health Centre

*Patient or not, all are welcome to attend our
community programs!*

Addiction 101 - For Family & Significant Others

This workshop is for adults 18+ who have a loved one affected by alcohol or drug use, whether they are in active use or recovery. Participants will gain insight into substance use, learn effective ways to support their loved one, and discover strategies to prioritize their own well-being.

Monday, February 23, 2026
6:00 - 7:00 PM
In person or Zoom

Older Adult Fitness Program

Fitness classes have started! We have a variety of fitness classes geared towards older adults. Classes are available in person at our St. Jacobs location, or online via Zoom – and range in difficulty from introductory classes like Better Bones to Strength Training and Yoga. Classes range from \$5 - \$8 / class. Please visit our website to see the class schedule and register for the January – June 2026 season.



WCHC
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE

SERVING WOOLWICH WELLESLEY & WILMOT



Managing Stress with a Rare or Chronic Disease (FREE)

This workshop supports people living with chronic or rare diseases by increasing understanding of stress and how it relates to long-term illness. Participants will learn what stress is, how it affects health, and practical strategies to cope, as part of an ABC Health Literacy Health Matters Workshop.

Thursday, February 19, 2026
1:00 - 2:30 PM
In person or Zoom

REGISTER



If you would like to register, please visit our website at www.WCHC.on.ca, or email Tariq at tabdulahadi@wchc.on.ca, or call at 519-664-3794 ext. 222

A Reputation for Helping Thousands of Unsatisfied Hearing Aid Users to Finally Achieve The Performance That They've Been Seeking

Arnold Hearing Centers is a highly rated, independent, family-owned hearing aid clinic with a 75-year reputation for helping thousands of people to achieve optimal performance from their hearing technology.



Advanced hearing evaluations:

Following industry best practices for accurate testing



Earwax removal:

Helping people in a 'sticky situation' through cerumen removal



Access to all levels of hearing technology from all manufacturers:

Proudly independent to find the right solution for patients



Same day appointments:

Our team is available to help you as soon as we can with same day services.



Hearing aid repairs and rejuvenation:

Specialists in helping unsatisfied hearing aid wearers to achieve better and maximize performance



Central Auditory Processing (CAP) testing:

For residents of Elmira, we offer CAP testing to understand your auditory processing abilities.

MEET OUR EXPERTS



Emily Giau, Audiologist

Emily has extensive experience working with older adults which has led her into the hearing care industry for the last 5 years. As an audiologist, Emily has mainly worked in private practice settings and has traveled to retirement, long-term care and personal residences to provide exceptional hearing health care.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Honours Health Studies/Aging Studies Option – Psychology Minor (University of Waterloo)

Master of Clinical Science in Audiology (University of Western Ontario)

Selina Mauro, H.I.S

Selina has 10 years of experience in the hearing industry as a Hearing Instrument Specialist and has also been certified in ear wax removal for 10 years as well. Selina also has experience working directly at a hearing aid manufacturer doing audiology support and training for all of Canada. Working as direct sales and training support for clinics traveling all over Ontario.

Education:

Bachelor of Science in Biology/Psychology Trent University

H.I.S. Diploma Conestoga College

CONTACT US

If you or a loved one requires support with their hearing health or hearing devices or want to start their journey to better hearing, we are here to help.

Elmira:

(519) 669-3131 | elmira@arnoldhearing.ca

315 Arthur Street South, Unit E3 Elmira, ON, N3B 3L5

New Hamburg:

519-662-3277 | newhamburg@arnoldhearing.ca

3 Waterloo St. New Hamburg, ON N3A 1S3 (Inside the Affinity Health Clinic)



Driving and Dementia: Understanding the Road Ahead



Driving is more than just a way to get around. For many, it represents freedom, independence, and a sense of control over their lives. For people living with dementia -including Alzheimer's - that freedom may still be possible, but also comes with growing responsibility as the disease progresses.

Why looking ahead matters

Operating a car safely requires a mix of mental and physical abilities: quick reactions, good judgment, the capacity to multitask (for example, tracking pedestrians, traffic signals and other vehicles at once), navigating to destinations, and adequate vision and hearing.

In the early stages of dementia, many people can still drive safely. But as dementia progresses, even skilled, experienced drivers may struggle. Dementia can impair concentration, judgment, orientation, perception and reflexes - all crucial for safe driving.

This can lead to risky driving behaviours, including slow response times, confusion over traffic lights or signs, difficulty merging or turning, inconsistent driving speed, or getting lost.

When is it time to stop driving?

Each person's abilities change differently and there isn't one clear moment when someone must stop driving. Because self-assessment can be unreliable, it's important to rely on feedback from trusted family members, friends, or health-care providers. If driving becomes unsafe, stopping is the responsible step to protect the driver, passengers, and others on the road. It's normal for this transition to bring feelings of frustration or loss.

How to extend safe driving - and prepare for change

If dementia is in its early stage, there are steps you can take to remain safe on the road for as long as possible, such as, driving predictable routes and sticking to a routine, driving with someone you trust, and using GPS devices.

At the same time, it's wise to begin exploring alternative transportation options early - such as public transit, taxis, community programs, or support from friends or family - to make the transition easier when the time comes.

It's also a good time to contact your car insurance provider. A diagnosis of dementia doesn't automatically mean insurance will be cancelled, but failing to disclose medical changes could impact your coverage should you be in an accident.

Support is available

Health-care providers can help to determine driving safety, arrange driving assessments that can provide an unbiased evaluation of driving abilities, and explain their medical reporting requirements.

At the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington, we're here to support people through this change. We offer guidance, resources, and emotional support to help navigate conversations around driving, plan for alternatives, and maintain independence in new ways.

If you have concerns about driving and dementia, please reach out - you don't have to navigate this transition alone.

aswww@alzheimerww.ca / (519) 742-1422



SMALL STEPS, BIG CHANGE

KW4
 ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Prevent Congestive Heart Failure (CHF) Today

CHF is a condition caused by the heart not functioning as it should. **Heart disease** is the second leading cause of death in Canada, but almost 80% of early heart disease and stroke can be prevented through healthy behaviours.

Common Symptoms

- ✓ Increased shortness of breath, especially when lying flat
- ✓ Sudden weight gain
- ✓ Bloating or feeling full all the time
- ✓ Cough or cold symptoms that last for longer than a week
- ✓ Loss of or change in appetite
- ✓ Increased swelling of lower limbs, base of spine, or stomach
- ✓ Increased urination at night
- ✓ New experience of confusion or tiredness

Prevention Tips

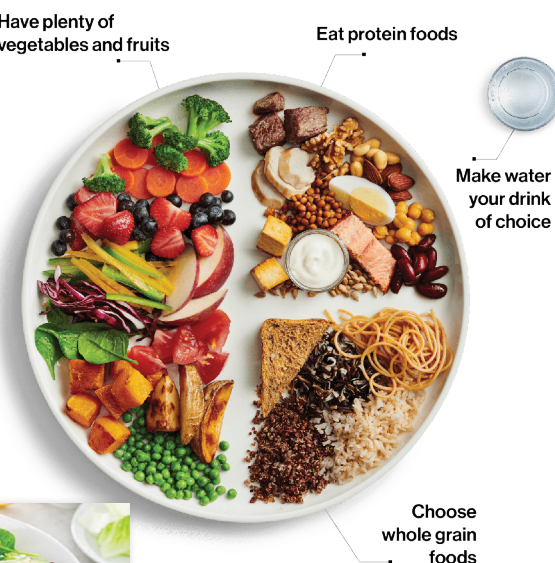
- ✓ Eat a variety of healthy foods
- ✓ Stay active – 150 minutes per week
 - **Dependent on current health**
- ✓ Maintain a healthy weight
- ✓ Limit alcohol and do not smoke
- ✓ Reduce stress

Risk Factors

- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ High blood cholesterol
- ✓ Recreational drug use
- ✓ Excessive use of alcohol
- ✓ Exposure to chemotherapy or radiation therapy
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Unhealthy diet
- ✓ Not enough exercise
- ✓ Unhealthy weight
- ✓ Sex and age – men are more likely than women to have heart failure, but the difference grows less with age

Have plenty of
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water
your drink
of choiceChoose
whole grain
foods

Local Resources – Waterloo Wellington:

Self-Management Program — bit.ly/waterloowellington:
866 337-3318

Craving Change Program — bit.ly/4oRCqxx

Take Charge Workshop — <http://bit.ly/45HHZgE>

Global Resources:

Heart and Stroke — bit.ly/heartandstrokeCHF

Government of Canada — bit.ly/hearthealthgov

The Canadian Heart Failure Network — <https://www.chfn.ca/links/>

Healthy Living Resources:

Canada Food Guide — food-guide.canada.ca/en/

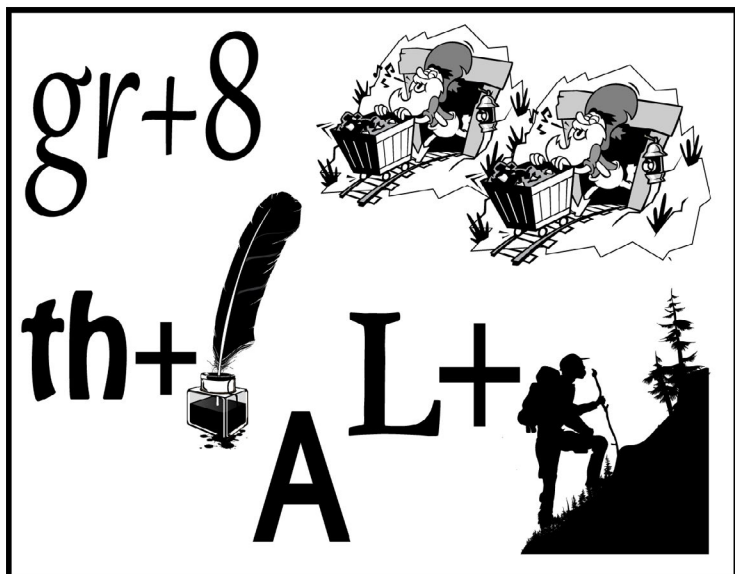
24 Hour Movement Guideline — csepguidelines.ca

Your heart beats over 100,000 times a day – make each one count!

**Talk to your healthcare professional
about how to prevent CHF.**

Concentration Puzzle

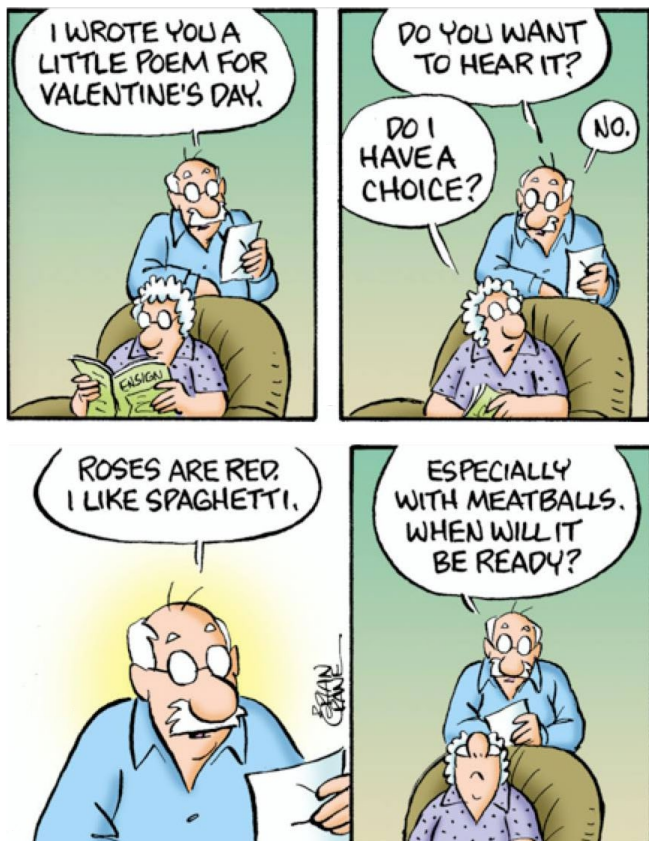
Use the visual clues in the puzzle to figure out what it says.



8	4					3		7
				5		8		
9			7	8	1			6
4				2	7		6	
	3	9	1		6	7	8	
	6		3	9				4
1			6	3	2			9
		6		7				
3		2					4	8

February Puzzles

Valentine's Day Cupid Spot the Difference



Can you spot the 9 differences?

Solutions on page 34

COVER STORY



Woolwich Community Services: 51 years of serving with heart in a community that makes it possible

WRITTEN BY WOOLWICH
COMMUNITY SERVICES (WCS)

For 51 years, Woolwich Community Services (WCS) has been woven into the fabric of Woolwich and northern Wellesley Townships. What began in 1974 as a grassroots response to local need has grown into a vital community organization offering support, dignity, and connection to thousands of residents each year. While our programs have grown and evolved, our heart remains the same; to care for people in real, practical, and compassionate ways.

At the centre of our work are eight core programs, each designed to meet essential needs while offering respect and hope.

Our Community Information Centre is often the first point of contact for residents. Here, trained staff and volunteers help people navigate complex systems, from completing government forms to applying for identification or simply learning what services are available. This welcoming space helps

people feel less overwhelmed and more equipped to move forward.

When life becomes uncertain, our Community Support Program steps in. Whether someone is facing a housing crisis, financial strain, or other personal hardships, they find someone at WCS who listens and walks alongside them. We keep our support personal and responsive, helping people find their footing again.

We also take seriously the ongoing issue of family violence in our community. Through our Family Violence Prevention Program, individuals and families experiencing unsafe or difficult situations are reminded they're not alone. With a focus on awareness, safety, and direct support, we offer encouragement supporting individuals and families as they work toward stability and hope.

Among our most visible and essential services is the WCS Food Bank. Individuals and families facing food insecurity can receive monthly hampers tailored to their household needs. Weekly access to fresh produce, bread, and staple items helps ensure no one goes hungry. Initiatives like Lunch Crunch, which supports school lunches, help ensure that children are nourished and ready to learn. By easing food insecurity, families can focus on work, education, and overall well-being.

Recognizing the unique needs of our diverse community, we offer the Low German Family Support Program, which bridges language and cultural barriers with understanding and respect. This program ensures Low German-speaking residents feel seen, supported, and connected to the services they need.

We're also passionate about nurturing the next generation. The Community Hub and Youth Centre offer safe, welcoming spaces where children, youth, and teens can build friendships, find mentorship, and grow. It's more than recreation; it's a place where young people are encouraged to belong and thrive. The HUB also offers programs for adults and is the center point for connection and growth.

When the holidays arrive, our Christmas Goodwill Program brings the community together in the spirit of giving. Volunteers, local businesses, churches, and neighbours join forces to collect and distribute festive hampers, ensuring that every family can experience the joy of the season. It's about more than gifts, it's about dignity, celebration, and human connection.

Another cornerstone of our organization is the WCS Thrift Shop, operated with the help of dedicated volunteers and community donations. The shop offers affordable clothing and household items while promoting reuse and sustainability. Every purchase supports WCS programs, making it a place where shopping truly gives back.

Beyond our core programs, we continue to adapt to emerging community needs. Our Care-Ring Transportation Service ensures residents can get to important medical appointments, and our Income Tax Clinic offers support during tax season. Through the Mobility Loan Cupboard, people can borrow walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, and other mobility aids when they need them. Programs like the Community Garden, Backpack Program, Birthday Cupboard, and Recreation Access Program help open doors to joy, health, and opportunity.

But none of this would be possible without you, our community. Volunteers are the heartbeat of WCS. They give rides, pack food hampers, sort clothing, support fundraisers, and offer kind words at just the right time. Some are students fulfilling hours; others are retirees giving back. Many are simply neighbours who care.

Our community partners, local businesses, schools, churches, and service clubs, also play an incredible role. They organize food drives, collect toys, donate funds, and help spread the word. In Woolwich and Wellesley, community isn't just an idea, it's an action!

Fundraising for a Stronger Tomorrow

Each year, WCS hosts fundraising events that are essential to sustaining our programs and strengthening community bonds.

In February, the Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) walk brings hundreds of participants together to raise funds and awareness for those experiencing homelessness, hunger, and hurt. It's a powerful day of solidarity and compassion.

The Elmira Maple Syrup Festival (EMSF) Craft Show, organized by WCS each Spring, showcases incredible local artisans while raising funds to support vital programming. It's a celebration of creativity and community.

In the summer, our Youth BBQ Fundraiser brings energy and enthusiasm to the forefront, with youth helping raise funds for youth programming showcasing leadership in action!

And in August, golfers gather for the Jeanne Renault Golf Tournament, named in honour of one of our founding leaders. It's a day of friendly competition and generous sponsorship, with proceeds supporting our Family Violence Prevention Program.

These events not only raise essential funds, but they also remind us of what makes this community strong. It's people coming together to make a difference.

Powered by People

Over the past five decades, WCS has weathered economic shifts, population growth, and changing social needs. Through it all, we've stayed grounded in our values of integrity, respect, empowerment, and innovation.

Often, our biggest impact is found in quiet, everyday moments: a child excitedly opening a new backpack, an individual relieved to get to a medical appointment, a parent breathing easier knowing there's food in the cupboard. These small moments don't make headlines, but they do change lives.

As we step into our 52nd year, we remain a steadfast presence, a trusted resource, and a reflection of what's possible when a community looks after its own. Every hour volunteered, every dollar donated, every item shared, adds up to a powerful message: In the Woolwich community, no one is alone.



Taking Control of the February Blahs

During the month of February, it is hard not to stay focused on the shortcomings of this time of year - shorter days, longer nights, lack of sunshine and cold - as we anxiously wait for spring. Rather than staying focused on the limitations that this time of year can bring, there are many things that we can do to take control and prepare for brighter and warmer times ahead.

While some level of anxiety is understandable and normal, there are many things that we can do to keep track of how stress and anxiety is negatively impacting us and develop ways to manage it. It's important to watch for signs including being more irritable, changes in appetite or sleeping, relying more than normal on medications, alcohol or recreational drugs or unusual physical signs such as pain, dizziness or indigestion. If you are witnessing these signs speak to your doctor as well as adopt strategies to help you manage including:

Adopt a healthy diet. Eat meals at regular times each day, including breakfast. Choose nutritional options including healthy snacks. Fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts and whole grains are a good source of essential vitamins and nutrients. Canada's Food Guide offers additional recommendations. Buying locally produced and in-season foods is also a great option. Finding it difficult to shop or to prepare meals? Consider having one of our staff help with grocery shopping or try our nutritious hot and frozen Meals on Wheels. Local food programs can also offer healthy options.

Keep up with regular exercise. Take advantage of the nice winter days to get out for a walk around the block, on one of our many trails or on one of our indoor tracks available in each township at our recreation complexes. Invite a friend, ask us about a volunteer to walk with you or ask us about joining a walking group. It's often more enjoyable to share the experience with others. There are also several exercise programs and activities, many which are free, available through our local active living centres and community centres. Feel free to reach out to our staff for ideas or assistance or to borrow equipment such as poles for pole walking.

Find ways to connect with others. Maintaining social connections is one of the most important factors in staying healthy. There are many opportunities to connect with others in person through our active living centre programs. We also have staff and volunteers who reach out

regularly by phone or through a visit to help you stay connected. Our group adult day programs also offer a great source of connection with others as well as a well-deserved break for caregivers. For those in a caregiving role, and finding it difficult to get a break, our caregiver support services can provide support to allow you the time to connect with others.

Pay attention to yourself. Many find meditation or mindfulness exercises helpful in relaxing the mind and body and in reducing stress. Others choose activities that they enjoy whether it be reading, colouring, crafts or hobbies. Find something that gives you joy and focus on taking care of yourself.

Reach out to others. While experiencing some level of the winter blahs is common, if you find yourself being negatively affected, reach out to your doctor or another professional for support. Here 24/7 (1-844-437-3247) is a free confidential line providing support, information and referral. Our local counselling centres also offer many great resources and support.

For more information on these and other ideas contact Community Care Concepts at 1-855-664-1900, 519-664-1900 or 519-662-9526. We are here to help!

COMMUNITY
CARE
CONCEPTS

of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

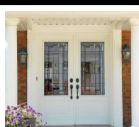




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COMMUNITY CARE CONCEPTS

of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

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- Maintenance • Friendly Visitors • Community Meals
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- FREE Community Exercise and Falls Prevention Classes
- FREE Short Term Home Support

**COMMUNITY
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of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot

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1-855-664-1900

**info@communitycareconcepts.ca
www.communitycareconcepts.ca**

**23 Church St.
New Hamburg
519-662-9526**

We Need Your Help! Volunteer With Us!

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This event is hosted in partnership with the Older Adult Centres' Association of Ontario (OCAO) and sponsored by the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.

Funding provided by:





How to Inject Kindness in Our Lives'

As one of his lifelong friends, Bob Smith stated, "I do not recall that Sandy ever made me mad in all these years. Actually, I do not recall that he ever made anyone mad... he's still one of the good ones!"

Growing up in small town Ontario, he learned to play drums in the local pipe band that included other family members. Sandy, enveloped by the love of music at home, became increasingly self-taught in the world around him.

My personal example of his kindness to help anyone in need is something I'll always remember.

We 'old guys' from the rocking 60's were trying to get the original band back together. Unfortunately, two of the original players had passed, but we were told that "our drummer was still alive", but we were unable to locate him.

However, Bob – an all-round nice guy himself – passed along our sad situation to Sandy. Bob says, "I did not ask Sandy to help your Tempos. I told of your predicament and gave him your contact info... no pressure. The rest was down to his inability to say no to someone in need.

For us, no drummer meant no gig... plus, we had family and friends coming! So, when I found out this wasn't an ordinary drummer – per his induction into the Forest City London Music Awards (Jazz drummer of the year) – we were so intimidated.

We needn't have been. With only one practice, we knew we were in good hands. I mean this guy, who we never met before, could "play anything!" Needless to say his presence made us all sound good!

'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

Over the years, I'm still learning to appreciate the various nuances of Jazz... the main thing being improvisation, as typified by **Nancy Wilson/Cannonball Adderley**. <https://youtu.be/H6ocrBiug2A?si=KNVyJKVlybhnDK3U>

Today, he continues to introduce so many wonderful performers to the public. For example, he's hosted a radio jazz program as aired by Fanshawe College, London.

Plus, along with the financial support of the local musicians union, he hosts, organizes and performs at the long running '**Jazz For the People**' concert series – with free public performances (usually monthly) for about four decades, now.

Of course, there are some people who will tell you that "nice" people (kind, reliable) never win vs. bad people (selfish, aggressive). Verifiable scientific studies actually show that both "bad" and "good" people end up about the same. As an Internist friend of mine said, just months before dying from cancer, "It comes down to dumb luck."

A few years ago, Bob asked Sandy if he had any regrets. He said, "Yes, I've got plenty, Smitty." Bob imagined in this case, that his regrets are for things that he didn't do, or perhaps "could have done better." I'm sure we can all relate to these feelings... as other psych-experts show that good guys are winners already.

So, thanks again Sandy, for 'all that jazz'... and in the process, injecting such a high level of kindness. Without this generosity of spirit in my life, I would be forever lost.

Fred Parry / Bob Smith



Advance & Comfort Care Planning for Seniors

Love, Loss, and Loyalty: When Pets Grieve With Us

Written by Sue Phillips, Serious Illness/End of Life Doula

"When we plan for our senior years & end-of-life journey, we reclaim choice, ease fear, and honour what matters most."

Dear Readers: February 2026

Anyone who has lived long enough beside an animal knows this truth: pets don't simply watch our lives unfold—they accompany us through them. They sense when storms are coming, they settle closer when illness enters the room, and when death touches a household, they often grieve right alongside us.

Research shows that when we live closely with animals—especially dogs and cats—our bodies release oxytocin, the same hormone that helps human infants attach to their caregivers. What's less talked about is that animals experience the same hormonal dance.

When a key member of their family dies—whether human or animal—pets often experience:

- decreased appetite
- withdrawn behaviour
- changes in vocalization
- increased clinginess or pacing
- altered sleep patterns

At the bedside, many doulas will quietly mention how a pet seems to know when a loved one is approaching death. Animals read micro-expressions, breathing patterns, hormones, and the emotional temperature of a room with astonishing accuracy.

This is why a pet may:

- lie closer to the dying person
- follow grieving family members from room to room
- become restless at night
- hold vigil at an empty doorway long after a death

End-of-life doulas often support entire systems, not just individuals. And in many homes, pets are very real members of the care circle.

A doula may:

- observe a pet's behaviour as part of the household's emotional landscape
- gently educate families about animal grief responses
- help create space for pets to say goodbye
- guide families in maintaining familiar routines to support the animal's sense of safety
- encourage rituals that honour the pet's role in the family bond

One of the most tender experiences doulas witness is the shared vigil—when a pet curls beside the feet of a dying person or rests its head on the edge of a bed, breathing in rhythm with someone whose breaths are growing softer.

There is no scientific term for this, but anyone who has seen it knows: it's grief, love, and loyalty expressed in the oldest language on earth.

Supporting a grieving pet often helps humans, too. When we care for their sorrow, we inevitably tend to our own.

Helpful approaches include:

- keeping routines steady
- increasing physical contact and reassurance
- offering gentle enrichment (sniff-walks, slow play, soft music)
- allowing the animal access to the deceased person's scent for a time
- not rushing to "replace" a companion animal
- honoring the pet's role in the bond, perhaps through a small ritual or keepsake

These acts serve as a bridge between worlds—past and present, body and memory, human and animal.

For families navigating illness, dying, or bereavement, understanding pet grief removes unnecessary guilt, confusion, or frustration. And it reminds us that grief is not strictly a human experience.

End-of-life work asks us to widen our gaze. When we do, we often see a pet quietly carrying its part of the story, offering companionship rooted not in words, but in presence.

And sometimes, that presence is the most ancient form of care we have.

To read my story on a pet's grief you can visit my website:

Tuna's Legacy of Love and Loyalty - my pet "client"

<https://www.suephillips.ca/post/tuna-s-legacy-of-love-and-loyalty-my-pet-client>

Next month: Living with Dementia: What Helps, What Harms and What Still Matters

Sue Phillips, www.suephillips.ca, sphillips5519@gmail.com

26 Research-Backed Tips for Aging Well in 2026

Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA)



The New Year often brings a renewed focus on health and wellness. We look for ways to eat better, move more, and support our mental health.

At the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging (RIA), our mission is to connect research to real-world challenges and find solutions that truly enhance the quality of life and care for older adults. To help you prioritize your health, vitality, and well-being this year and beyond, our researchers share these evidence-based tips.

Mind Matters: Cognitive and Emotional Health

1. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes, get out of bed.
2. Take a different route to the store, complete tasks in a different order, or shift your daily routine to see what you might discover.
3. Read, paint, or work on a crossword, sudoku, word search, or puzzle daily.
4. Let go of challenges and find joy in the simple pleasures life has to offer.
5. Have conversations with your healthcare team, family, friends, and care partners to ensure your end-of-life wishes are understood and honoured.
6. Watch a movie, visit an art gallery, journal, colour, or dance around the house.
7. Engage in self-care activities to help prevent burnout and reduce stress.
8. Explore what personal digital assistants, such as Alexa, Siri, and Google Home, can offer in making your daily routines easier, from setting medication reminders to playing your favourite song to adding items to your shopping list.
9. Take an updated list of all your medications, supplements, and vitamins to your doctor, nurse practitioner or pharmacist to review.

Body in Motion: Exercise and Mobility

10. Walk at least 30 minutes every day.
11. Include stair climbing, uphill, or faster walking at least 5 days per week.
12. Break up long periods of sitting or lying down with a short walk or stretch.
13. Participate in moderate-to-high-intensity strength training for major muscle groups at least twice a week.
14. Sit on the edge of your chair or bed and wait until you feel stable before standing.
15. Do daily activities and exercises to improve your reaction time, such as throwing a ball against a wall and catching it.

Plate Power: Nutrition and Hydration

16. Add high-quality protein to your meals to help maintain muscle strength as you age.
17. Increase the amount of whole foods in your meals and snacks.
18. Limit processed foods and beverages with added sugar, fat, and salt.
19. Make it a habit to drink water throughout the day, even if you don't feel thirsty.
20. Pre-plan your grocery list and meals for the week to ensure you get enough protein.
21. Eat and cook together with your kids, grandkids, or the youth in your life.

Connection and Care: Community and Systems

22. Stay socially, physically, and mentally engaged to improve your mind and body.
23. Use a pill organizer to keep track of your vitamins and medications.

24. Try painting, singing, reading, or dancing to reduce stress, improve brain function, strengthen your body, and feel more connected to the community.

25. Review your medications annually with your doctor and pharmacist to ensure they remain effective and safe.

26. Each week, make an effort to spend time with people and make new friends to keep your brain and social network active.

Thank you to the following researchers who contributed their expertise to help you age well in 2026 and beyond: Dr. Allen Power, Schlegel Chair in Aging and Dementia Innovation, Heather Keller, Schlegel Research Chair in Nutrition and Aging; Jane Kuepfer, Schlegel Specialist in Spirituality and Aging; Joanne Ho, Schlegel Chair in Geriatric Pharmacotherapy; Kate Dupuis, PhD, Schlegel Innovation Leader in Arts and Aging; Laura Middleton, PhD, Schlegel Research Chair in Dementia and Active Living; Dr. Linda Lee, Schlegel Research Chair in Primary Care for Elders; Lora Giangregorio, Research Scientist; Richard Hughson, Schlegel Research Chair in Vascular Aging and Brain Health; Dr. Sophiya Benjamin, Schlegel Chair in Mental Health and Aging; Tejal Patel, PharmD, Schlegel Specialist in Medication Management and Aging.

To learn more about each researcher, visit the-ria.ca/research/meet-our-researchers/.

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Ask the Doctor

with Dr. Nicole Didyk

DID YOU KNOW? How to check your Blood Pressure at home?

Most people have a medical thermometer and a bathroom scale, which can be handy tools in monitoring health status. But did you know that a home blood pressure monitor is an important device as well?

High blood pressure (aka Hypertension) affects almost 1 in every 4 Canadians 65 and over. It's a risk factor for stroke, heart attack, kidney disease and probably dementia. Most often, hypertension is silent – it doesn't cause any symptoms, so it needs to be measured to be detected. Also, treatment needs to be monitored to prevent end-organ damage from happening.

If you're shopping for a new blood pressure monitor for home, check out the Hypertension Canada website: <https://hypertension.ca/public/recommended-devices>

Here are some tips for BP measurement at home **Before:**

- Do not exercise, smoke, or drink coffee or alcohol for 30 minutes before the test.
- Empty your bladder if you need to.
- Sit quietly for 5 minutes.

During:

- Sit with your back supported on a chair with your feet on the floor
- Don't cross your legs
- Have your arm around the level of your heart (you may want to rest it on a chair or table)
- Don't talk.
- Measure your blood pressure according to the machine's instructions. Wait a minute, then take a second reading. If the readings are close, average them. If not, repeat and average the three readings.

After:

- Record your blood pressure readings and the time of day when they are taken. You might also note whether you've taken your daily medication before or after the measurement.

Remember, variation in blood pressure readings is typical. Blood pressure is often lowest in the morning and then steadily rises. It responds dynamically to what we eat and drink, our movements, and our moods. Measuring twice in the morning and twice in the evening for a few days can help to get a picture of your average blood pressure and may help you get a better idea of how your blood pressure medication is working. Once you see a pattern, you can measure less often, like once a week or according to how you're feeling.

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.



Message from Tim Louis

Member of Parliament for Kitchener-Conestoga

Every February, Heart Month gives us a gentle reminder to pause, breathe, and think about one of the most important things we carry with us every day: our heart. Almost all of us, whether through our own health journeys or those of the people we love, have felt the impact of heart disease. It touches families and communities in ways that are both profound and deeply personal.

Over the years, I've heard many stories from people across our community about small changes that made a big difference. A neighbour who started walking with friends every morning. A couple who began cooking more meals at home. Someone who decided it was finally time to quit smoking. These steps may seem simple, but together, they form a powerful foundation for better heart health.

Healthy living isn't about perfection. It's about listening to your body and finding routines that make you feel good; moving a little more, choosing fresh foods when you can, getting enough sleep, and giving yourself permission to slow down when life becomes overwhelming. Even modest changes, taken one day at a time, make a big difference.

There are also many tools and supports available to help Canadians stay healthy. Resources like Canada's Food Guide and the 24-Hour Movement Guidelines offer down to

earth advice on balanced eating, staying active, and getting restorative sleep. Through federal programs like New Horizons for Seniors, we're funding local initiatives that keep older Canadians active and connected. Community programs, fitness classes, walking groups, social clubs, and learning opportunities all play an important role in keeping people active, connected, and engaged. Staying involved with others isn't just good for the heart; it nourishes our sense of belonging.

It's also important to remember that heart disease doesn't look the same for everyone. Men and women can experience different symptoms, and sometimes the signs in women are more subtle. Age, family history, and medical conditions all play a role, but so do the environments we live in and the stresses we carry.

Heart Month is a chance for all of us to check in on our health in a gentle, compassionate way. Schedule that checkup you've been meaning to book. Ask your doctor about your blood pressure, cholesterol, or blood sugar levels. Look for small, realistic changes that fit your life.

Together, with awareness, early detection, and everyday habits that support our wellbeing, we can build stronger hearts and stronger communities.



TIM LOUIS

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Reconnecting the Generations

I recently heard a presentation addressing a sense of disconnection that seems to exist between generations that was identified through a research project. This presentation discussed how disconnection and even animosity seem to be present in our community between people of different ages.

I felt sad learning about this as I think intergenerational friendships can be incredibly valuable. These types of connections offer many different things. I have experienced how older adults often have wisdom that comes from being alive for longer and navigating the complexity that one encounters in life. Additionally, I have witnessed how younger people are often more connected to a sense of optimism and curiosity which can be depleted by the hardships one has encountered because of living a long life. I think we can learn a lot by understanding the changes that occur over generations. As generations progress, worldviews, beliefs, values etc. are shaped by the circumstances each generation encounters and perhaps as an attempt to remedy what they feel could be done better if done differently. Change is both a normal and inevitable part of our evolution as individuals and society as a whole.

My aim in this article is to encourage reflection around this topic and ideally reduce some of the disconnection and animosity present.

Reflection Questions for Older Adults:

Do you want to connect with younger people in your community? If not, why not?

Are you afraid of younger people within your community? If yes, what are you afraid of?

Do you assume that all young people are the same? How would you feel if others assumed that all older adults are identical in their beliefs, values, experiences, etc.?

How do you feel about change? Do you automatically assume that something different is bad or wrong or that there is only one right way to do something?

Difference and/or change often automatically and unconsciously elicits some level of discomfort in us. We have a tendency to be drawn to what feels familiar regardless of whether the familiar thing is benefitting us or not.

Have you ever had an experience where you learned about something changing and assumed the change to be a bad thing. However, once the change occurred you were pleasantly surprised when it led to something positive.

When you were younger, was there an older adult in your community who took the time to get to know you? If yes, did you like this? If there was not, would you have appreciated the older adults around you expressing interest in getting to know you and understanding your experience in the world?

Do you think others could learn something valuable from your lived experience? If yes, it's important to consider that if we want others to learn from us, we often must start by establishing relationships built on care and curiosity.

Would you like to be a part of a community that values learning and respect?

What is something you can do towards creating a community that values learning and respect?

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Information Centre, Individual Support, Food
Support and more | 519-669-5139

TRANSIT

Kiwanis Transit

Serving Wilmot, Wellesley & Woolwich
(519) 669-4533 or 1-800-461-1355

TRAVEL

Stonetown Travel Ltd.

210 Mill St. New Hamburg
226-333-9939 | www.stonetowntravel.com



- Carpet
- Tile
- Vinyl
- Hardwood
- Custom Window Blinds
- Kitchen Cabinets
- Bathroom Vanities



www.LetUsFloorYou.ca

1011 Industrial Cres. Unit #2 • 519-699-5411

If you would like to be added to our growing list of valued local businesses, please contact us at embracingchangeinfo@gmail.com so our readers can be reminded of your services and support local.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

**Emergency
(Fire/Medical/Police)**
911

**Waterloo Regional Police
Non Emergency**
519-570-9777

Crime Stoppers
1-800-222-8477

Ontario Poison Centre
1-800-268-9017

**Ontario Problem
Gambling Helpline**
1-888-230-3505

TeleHealth
1-866-797-0000
TTY: 1-866-797-0007

Waterloo Wellington LHIN
519-310-2222

Community Care Concepts
519-664-1900

**Retirement Homes Regulatory
Authority**
1-855-275-7472

Elder Abuse Response Team
519-579-4607

Interfaith Community Counselling
519-662-3092

Hospice of Waterloo Region
519-743-4114

**Alzheimer Society of Waterloo
Wellington**
519-742-1422

Senior Safety Line
1-866-299-1011

Township of Wilmot
519-634-8444

Township of Wellesley
519-699-4611

Township of Woolwich
519-699-1647

Region of Waterloo Public Health
519-575-4400

**Ontario Caregiver Organization
Helpline**
1-833-416-2273

This space is generously donated by:

TOWN SQUARE PHARMACY
PHARMASAVE 100 Mill St. Unit K, New Hamburg
P: 519-662-9995 F: 519-662-9984

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)
- Sobeys New Hamburg (outside magazine stand)
- HearingLife formerly 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



- 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
- 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

Valentine's Day cupid
Spot the Difference!



Concentration Puzzle: Great minds think alike

8	4	1	2	6	9	3	5	7
6	2	7	4	5	3	8	9	1
9	5	3	7	8	1	4	2	6
4	1	8	5	2	7	9	6	3
2	3	9	1	4	6	7	8	5
7	6	5	3	9	8	2	1	4
1	8	4	6	3	2	5	7	9
5	9	6	8	7	4	1	3	2
3	7	2	9	1	5	6	4	8

LOVE WHERE YOU LIVE

GUIDANCE FOR LIFE'S IMPORTANT TRANSITIONS



February is a season of reflection — a time to think about comfort, family, and peace of mind. For many, this stage of life brings important housing questions: Is this home still the right fit? Should we downsize now or later? How do we handle the sale of a family home with care? How can adult children best support aging parents through these decisions?

Whether you are planning ahead, navigating an estate sale, or helping a loved one make a move, these moments deserve patience, clarity, and trusted advice. I work closely with seniors and families across Perth & Oxford Counties & Waterloo Region to ensure every step feels informed, respectful, and never rushed. My approach is professional, calm, and centered on what matters most — your comfort, your timing, and your peace of mind.

SPECIALIZING IN:

- Downsizing & lifestyle transitions
- Estate sales handled with care and discretion
- Guiding adult children supporting parents
- Clear explanations, honest advice, and full support from start to finish



Some conversations don't need urgency — just the right guidance. Whether you're ready now or simply gathering information, I'm here when you need me.

A confidential conversation can make all the difference.

Complimentary consultations available.

ALISON WILLSEY

Real Estate Broker

REALTOR® since 2005



90C Peel St., New Hamburg, ON N3A 1E3
5-25 Bruce St., Kitchener, Canada N2B 1V4



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Office: 519-747-0231

Guiding and Advising Buyers & Sellers since 2005

www.peakrealtyltd.com

www.willseyrealestate.com

willseyalison@gmail.com

Did you know?

Your pharmacists can prescribe medications for these conditions*:



- Acne
- Allergic rhinitis
- Aphthous Ulcers (Canker Sores)
- Candidal stomatitis (Oral Thrush)
- Conjunctivitis (Bacterial, allergic and viral)
- Dermatitis (Atopic, eczema, allergic and contact)
- Diaper dermatitis
- Dysmenorrhea
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Hemorrhoids



75 Huron St,
New Hamburg
519-662-2640

Monday - Thursday:
9:00am - 8:00pm
Friday: 9:00am - 7:00pm
Saturday:
9:00am - 4:00pm

- Herpes labialis (Oral Herpes)
- Impetigo
- Insect bites and urticaria (Hives)
- Tick bites, post-exposure prophylaxis to prevent Lyme disease
- Musculoskeletal sprains and strains
- Nausea and vomiting of pregnancy
- Pinworms and threadworms
- Urinary tract infections (Uncomplicated)
- Vulvovaginal candidiasis (Yeast infection)



1201 Queens Bush Rd,
Wellesley
519-656-2240

Monday - Friday:
9:00am - 6:00pm
Saturday:
9:00am - 2:00pm
Sunday: Closed

Call to book an appointment!

*Conditions may apply. Ask us for details.

Guardian