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ON THE COVER:
WOOLWICH COMMUNITY
SERVICES VOLUNTEERS



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LISTING: PAGE 27



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Keep being you **Love your ears**

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On The Cover

Volunteers at WCS are motivated by the opportunity to make a positive impact on their community, creating an environment where they and their families want to live.. Read the full cover story on page 12.

Cover Story and Photo by: Woolwich Community Services staff

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

As we recognize National Volunteer Week from April 27 - May 3, it's the perfect time to honor the incredible impact of volunteers in our communities. Volunteers selflessly dedicate their time and energy to help others, often without seeking recognition. Their efforts are the heart of many initiatives that support those in need, and their contributions make a lasting difference. This month, let's all take a moment to thank the volunteers around us for their kindness and commitment to making our communities stronger.

April is also Oral Health Month, a reminder of the importance of maintaining good oral hygiene. A healthy mouth not only contributes to a beautiful smile but also plays a critical role in overall health. Poor oral health can lead to serious conditions, yet it is often overlooked. In this issue, we've included helpful tips on page 8 and expert advice on maintaining healthy teeth and gums, empowering you to make informed decisions that benefit your health.

On a personal note, I want to extend a special thank you to my father volunteering his time and for his unwavering support in helping with the distribution of Embracing Change each month. Your countless hours of hard work make this possible, and I truly couldn't do it without you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

As we embrace this season of growth and renewal, let's celebrate the volunteers who make a difference in our Communities. Thank you for being part of our Embracing Change community!

Tara



Ruggle's Store, Floradale c. 1940

Johan Anton Ruggle came to Canada in 1878 with his wife and children. He purchased the property (which included a building) at the corner of lot 116 and A.J. Ruggle's General Store was established. The store carried a large stock of diversified items including clothing, wallpaper and dry goods, as well as a full-time tailor and eventually the Floradale Post Office. By the 1940's those items were discontinued and they focused on farm-related items : men and boy's work clothes, seeds, twines, sprays and fencing products. Eventually seed cleaning equipment became a significant part of the operation.



This photo is Courtesy of the Grace Schmidt Room, Kitchener Public Library

The Ruggle's family remained the proprietor of the store for several generations. Over the years there have been major changes to the building and most recently it was renovated to become a cafe. The interior of the store has maintained much of its early 1900's appearance and seeing the old mailboxes may be of particular interest to customers.



Ramadan Mubarak

Happy Easter

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Spring is a fantastic time for seniors to enjoy some fun activities. The weather gets warmer, the flowers start to bloom, and there are plenty of exciting things to do. Here are some fun ideas for seniors to enjoy during the spring:

1. Go for a Nature Walk

Spring is the perfect time to get outside and enjoy the fresh air. Seniors can go for a walk in the park, a garden, or along a nature trail. It's a great way to enjoy the beauty of the changing seasons. Walking helps keep the body active and is a fun way to get some gentle exercise.

2. Plant a Garden

Spring is all about flowers, plants, and fresh growth! Seniors can start a garden, whether it's a small flower bed or a vegetable garden. It's relaxing to dig in the dirt, plant seeds, and watch them grow. Gardening also helps keep the mind sharp and gives seniors something to look forward to as they care for their plants.

3. Host a Picnic

What's better than eating outside on a sunny day? Seniors can pack a lunch, grab a blanket, and enjoy a picnic in the park or even in their backyard. They can invite friends and family to join in, making it a fun social event. Eating outside in the fresh air makes everything taste better!

4. Birdwatching

Spring brings many birds back from their winter homes. Seniors can grab a pair of binoculars and try to spot different types of birds in their yard or at a nearby park. Birdwatching is peaceful and can be done at any time of the day. It's also a wonderful way to relax and enjoy nature.

5. Take a Scenic Drive

Sometimes, the best way to enjoy spring is by taking a leisurely drive. Seniors can explore nearby areas, drive through blooming flower fields, or visit a nearby town. A scenic drive can be a fun adventure, and it's a great way to see the beauty of spring without too much effort.

6. Do Spring Crafts

Springtime is a great opportunity to get creative! Seniors can make fun crafts like painting flower pots, decorating birdhouses, or creating spring-themed cards for loved ones. Crafting is a fun way to keep busy, and the best part is that the results can be used to brighten up the home or given as gifts.

7. Attend Local Events

Spring often brings lots of festivals, farmers' markets, and outdoor events. Seniors can check out local event calendars for things like art shows, music festivals, or community picnics. These activities are a great way to get out of the house, meet new people, and enjoy the excitement of spring.

8. Take Up a New Hobby

Spring is a great time to start something new! Seniors can try a new hobby, like learning how to paint, starting a book club, or even taking up photography to capture the beauty of spring. Picking up a new hobby keeps the brain engaged and provides a sense of accomplishment. Spring is full of fun opportunities for seniors to enjoy, whether it's spending time outdoors, getting creative, or enjoying new experiences. So, grab your sunglasses and sunscreen, and make the most of this lovely season!

9. Places to go in Wilmot

Mike Schout Wetlands Preserve, located at 28 Smiths Creek Drive in New Hamburg, is a wonderful place to enjoy walking and bird watching. Wilmot Recreation Complex located at 1291 Nafziger Rd, Baden, offers many programs and activities, as well as an indoor track for leisure walks. William Scott Park, located at 84 Blea ms Rd Win New Hamburg, is a great place to enjoy a picnic, and take your furry friend along to the dog park.





Personal Training for Older Adults 101

Lynne Rutledge, Personal Trainer

F.I.T. with Lynne (Functional In-Home Training)

What is a Personal Trainer?

Simply put, a Personal Trainer is someone with specialized training to help you improve your fitness. Trainers work with clients one-on-one or in small groups. Training may happen in a gym or within the client's home. A Personal Trainer designs exercise routines that are tailored to your specific needs, goals and fitness levels. Trainers will teach you proper exercise technique to prevent injury and ensure you are getting the most benefit from your workouts. They will monitor your progress and offer accountability and motivation.

What is the difference between a Personal Trainer and a Physiotherapist?

Personal Trainers are not medical professionals and cannot diagnose injuries or medical conditions whereas a Physiotherapist is licensed and able to. A Personal Trainer focuses on general fitness. A Physiotherapist focuses on rehabilitation, treatment of medical conditions, and recovery from injury.

When might you hire a Personal Trainer vs. a Physiotherapist?

A Personal Trainer is best suited if your primary objective is to improve overall fitness. Your goal may be as simple as getting up from a chair with more ease or more involved like improving your performance in a sport such as pickle ball. A Physiotherapist is the right choice if you have a specific injury, chronic pain or certain medical conditions that requires treatment. Physiotherapists in Canada are equipped to diagnose certain conditions, particularly those related to the musculoskeletal system.

A person may work with a Personal Trainer and a Physiotherapist at the same time. For example, the Physiotherapist may be treating a specific hip issue but clears the patient to work with a Personal Trainer concurrently to provide exercises to strengthen and improve the person's overall fitness.

When choosing a Personal Trainer, what are some are some key qualities to look for?

1. Certifications and Experience - Confirm the Trainer has certifications from reputable organizations and experience to ensure they have the foundational knowledge to create safe and effective programs.
2. Communication Skills - They should be both excellent listeners able to explain exercises in a way you understand.
3. Motivational Ability - a Trainer should encourage you, celebrate your successes, and push you to achieve your goals.

4. Personalized Approach - They will take the time to understand your unique personality, goals, and any limitations to design a custom workout plan and training approach perfectly fit for you.

5. Adaptability and Creativity - A good Trainer is adaptable and can modify the workouts as needed based on your progress or if something isn't working. They should also be creative to keep your workouts engaging so you don't get bored.

6. Good Track Record - Ask for testimonials or reviews from other clients. Positive feedback and results from others can help you gauge whether the Trainer is the right fit for you.

What is the advantage of working with a Personal Trainer specialized in older adults?

1. They have advanced knowledge of age-related conditions, such as arthritis, osteoporosis, balance issues, and cognitive decline and holds certifications or additional training in older adult fitness. They are trained to modify exercises based on physical limitations or medical conditions.
2. They understand how aging impacts the body, focusing on safe and effective exercises that help improve mobility, flexibility, strength, falls prevention and overall functional fitness without causing injury.
3. They carefully track progress in terms of functionality and daily life improvements (e.g., increased mobility, better posture, reduced pain). They may frequently adjust workouts based on the client's physical changes, ensuring that exercises continue to be safe and effective.

What are some of my clients saying about their experience working with a personal trainer specialized with older adults?

"My experience with personal training has been rewarding in that, it has helped me to gain confidence in myself and feel stronger since I started with exercise 5 months ago. Going up the stairs goes easier and getting up from a chair is much easier as well. Having a pleasant and humorous trainer is easy to follow and fun to be with." - 78-year-old client

"Fitness training has given me a new lease on life. I have a new confidence to tackle everyday tasks. I feel stronger and seem to have more energy. It has continuously encouraged me to take on new challenges." - 78-year-old client

If you have further questions about In-home Personal Training, please reach out.
Lynne Rutledge, 226-751-2994,
fitwithlynnne@gmail.com



By Will Brubacher, Certified Grief Mentor

Life, Death, and Grief Part Two

Thanks for returning to this sensitive subject with me. Last month I was talking about death and grief, and how uncomfortable so many people feel around them. You're not alone.

My aim is to make you feel less so, for your own sake, as well as for others, and we'll be taking just one small step at a time.

How many grief 'disguises' can you recognize?

I don't think many people realize how frequently 'grief' shows up in their lives, because they don't know what to look for. It has many disguises that I believe will surprise you.

But first, let's look at the difference between loss and grief?

Think of it this way, when we cut ourselves (cause), we bleed (effect). And likewise, when we experience loss (cause), we experience grief (effect). One logically follows the other.

The more serious or deeper the 'cut', the more extensive and painful the consequences. Likewise, the greater the loss, such as, death – the deeper the grief. Make sense?

A second, and even more interesting thing to know about grief is that its effects or symptoms are identical for all kinds of losses, large or small.

Think of the last time you lost something, anything, and do you remember feeling any one, or more of the following effects or symptoms: sad; anger; guilt; fear, confusion; foggy thinking; crying; loss of appetite; lack of energy; difficulty sleeping; overwhelmed? It's very likely you did.

And what that means is that those same feelings from losing whatever you lost, are also some of the same feelings or symptoms of major grief, resulting, for example, from the loss of a loved one.

The thing is that we don't generally connect our feelings of grief to losses in general, no matter how small or large.

The only difference is the difference or depth of our feelings. Think of it this way: we love our wife/husband, children, grandchildren, and, we also love our friends and pet(s). But, which more, than the other? We love them all. It's all a matter of different degrees, isn't it?

And what I'm getting at here, is that the inevitability of loss plays a huge part in our lives on a daily basis; moreover, that the spectrum of common feelings, namely the effects, which is called grief, are what make all of us human.

So having a better understanding of that relationship between loss and its effects/grief, puts everything in a little different perspective if we stop and think about it.

And when our perspective changes – we change.

Meanwhile, see how often you can recognize the actual feelings of grief whenever you experience a loss of any kind over the next month. I'm betting you'll be surprised, with its many feelings and disguises.

Should any of you wish to write to me (at the magazine) to share what you learned from this, I'd welcome your comments, and if space available, share some of your responses with our readers next month.)

Will Brubacher

Family Conflict Coach
and Elder Mediator
Certified by:
Ontario Association
of Inter-generational
Family Mediation
and Family Mediation
Canada (Emeritus)



Do You Know... April is National Oral Health Month

Oral Health and Aging: Why It Matters More Than Ever

As we age, maintaining good oral health becomes increasingly important. April is Oral Health Month, a perfect time for seniors to focus on proper oral hygiene, regular dental checkups, and preventive care to help identify and address oral health issues before they become serious.

Aging brings an increased risk of dental concerns, including tooth decay, gum disease, dry mouth (often caused by medications), ill-fitting dentures, and oral fungal infections. Additionally, systemic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and stroke can be further complicated by infections in the mouth.

When oral hygiene is neglected, harmful bacteria can accumulate in the mouth. In seniors, especially those with swallowing difficulties, these bacteria can potentially be inhaled into the lungs, leading to infections such as pneumonia. Regular brushing, flossing, and proper denture care can significantly reduce the risk of oral bacteria-related illnesses.

Poor oral health can also lead to pain, tooth loss, and discomfort, affecting nutrition, self-confidence, and social interactions. Access to proper dental care not only improves overall health and well-being but also enhances quality of life by boosting self-esteem and fostering positive social connections.

At Woolwich Community Health Centre, we are committed to supporting seniors' oral health. Through the **Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)**, we provide access to essential dental services, including preventive services (cleanings), fillings, root canals, and extractions for eligible seniors.

How to Apply for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program:

Seniors 65 years of age or older can receive assistance with completing the application form by booking an appointment at Woolwich Community Health Centre.

Required Documents:

- A piece of identification (ID)
- Social Insurance Number (SIN) or Temporary Taxation Number

- If married or in a common-law relationship, the spouse's information, including SIN or Temporary Taxation Number, and signature for consent (regardless of their age)

Good oral health is key to a healthier, more confident life. If you or a loved one qualify for the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, don't wait—reach out today!

If you have any questions, please contact Zari Amiri – Oral Health Peer Worker - via email: zamiri@wchc.on.ca Or call 519 656 9025 Ext. 442.



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Tips for Communicating with a Loved One Living with Dementia

Effective communication with people living with dementia can be challenging, but with patience and understanding, it is possible to foster meaningful connections. Here are some tips from the Alzheimer Society of Canada that can help you communicate more effectively:

- 1. Use what you know about the person:** Each person with dementia has unique preferences and abilities. By focusing on their interests and strengths, you can create a more engaging environment. Recognizing what they can still do and nurturing those abilities and interests can help them feel valued and understood.
- 2. Reduce distractions:** Try to minimize visual and auditory distractions when possible to help the person focus. Turn off the TV, lower background noise, or move to a quieter space. Making eye contact can help establish connection and ensure they are focused on the conversation.
- 3. Talk face to face:** Face the person when speaking and ensure they can clearly see your face. Speaking clearly and slowly can improve understanding, as well as using gestures.
- 4. Be flexible:** Remember that abilities and mood can fluctuate from day to day. Pay attention to non-verbal cues, as they can offer valuable insights into how the person is feeling that day.
- 5. Stay positive:** Positive body language reinforces warmth and empathy. Try to connect with the person rather than correct them. If you feel overwhelmed or frustrated, it's okay to take a step back and regroup.

Keeping these tips in mind when communicating with your loved one with dementia can help improve interactions and provide greater support for them, helping them feel more secure and understood. For more information on communication and dementia, go to Alzheimer.ca/communication, or reach out to us at the Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington at asww@alzheimerww.ca.

Most Common Questions for the Eye Doctor

I've had perfect distance vision my entire life and have only needed glasses for small detail up close. Why is my distance vision starting to become blurry?

Many individuals have the blessing of clear natural vision for the first 45+ years of their life and reluctantly accept the need for reading glasses as they approach their 50th birthday. This condition of near vision blur in middle age is called Presbyopia ('old eyes' in Latin) and it affects nearly everyone!

Some individuals over the age of 50 who wear distance vision correction for driving and watching TV will resort to taking their glasses off to see near detail, due to the onset of presbyopia. Yes, it's true! Most people put glasses on to read and some people take their glasses off!

The crystalline lens in the eye that is responsible for the onset of Presbyopia continues to change and this can lead to distance vision blur. Like presbyopia, the onset of distance blur is slow and gradual until one day it becomes too difficult to read the subtitles on the television or the score of the game. Fortunately, there are many options that can help provide clear vision.

If I need different glasses for distance vision and near vision, do I have to get Multifocal glasses? And does that mean that I must wear the glasses all the time?

The good news is that there are more options than ever to address your vision requirements, depending on what you need to see through the day and how many hours you spend on digital devices. You could have one pair of glasses for TV and driving, one set for the computer screen, and a third set for reading and your tablet / phone. Ideally, it's nice to combine at least two uses of your glasses in one frame. For example, a pair that allows you to read road signs and see the car dashboard? Or a pair that allows you to work on a laptop or tablet and read a label.

I'm 65+, healthy, and see well. Why do I need to have an eye exam?

A routine eye health and vision assessment is just as much about preserving your future vision as it is about how well you see today. The risk of vision loss increases greatly after our 60th birthday and many eye diseases have no symptoms until your vision is permanently lost.

Compared to the cost of dental care, a small regular investment in an eye exam can go a long way to confirm that your eyes are healthy or will uncover the start of eye disease that would benefit greatly from early intervention. Your eyesight is a precious gift. Eat the right fruits and vegetables, take small but regular breaks from digital devices, and choose a trusted eye care professional. Your future self will thank you!

Howard Dolman BSc OD
Dolman Eyecare Centre
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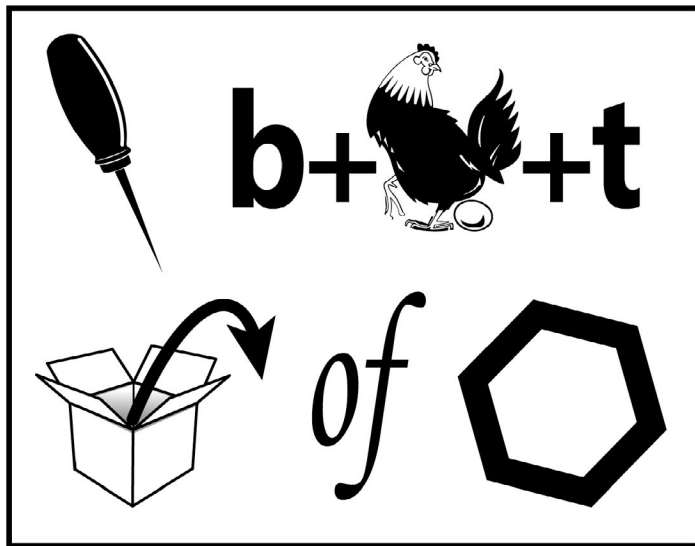
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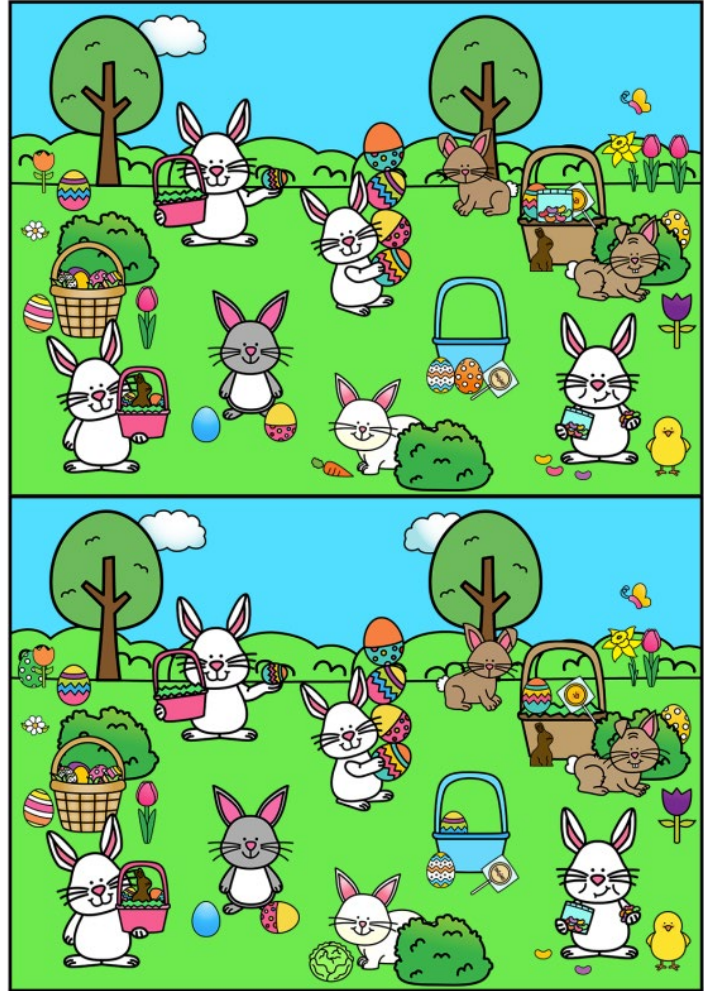
April Puzzles

Concentration Puzzle

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



Find 10 differences between the pictures.



Laughing Matters!



Solutions on page 30

COVER STORY



Woolwich Community Services Volunteers are nothing short of FABULOUS!

WRITTEN BY WOOLWICH COMMUNITY SERVICES STAFF, MARCH 2025

National Volunteer Week is an annual celebration that recognizes and honors the contributions of volunteers across the country. Established in 1974, it coincides with the founding of Woolwich Community Services (WCS), which began when caring community members offered support to their neighbors in need. For 50 years, WCS has relied on the dedication, expertise, and compassion of community volunteers to provide essential services to residents of Woolwich and Northern communities of Wellesley Township.

Volunteers at WCS are motivated by the opportunity to make a positive impact on their community, creating an environment where they and their families want to live. Their collective efforts contribute significantly to the quality of life for all residents.

WCS offers eight Core Programs: Information Centre, Community Support Program, Food Bank, Low German Family Support, Family Violence Prevention Program, Community HUB/Youth Centre, Christmas Goodwill Program, and Thrift Shop.

These core programs have expanded to include over 25 community-focused initiatives with various partnerships, all shaped by community feedback.

Volunteering opportunities at WCS range from short-term commitments, such as assisting with fundraising events for as little as 2 hours once a year, to regular weekly engagements. Some options include: Ticket taking at the Crafts, Toys, and Collectibles Show and Sale during the Annual Maple Syrup Festival, route marshaling at the annual Coldest Night of the Year in February, sorting donations or offering customer service in the Thrift Shop, sorting food or filling food hamper requests in the Food Bank, driving participants to and from medical appointments, and mentoring youth at the HUB.

A few Volunteer accomplishments during the last 9 months of this year include:

- Sorting food and filling 1,411 food hampers, requiring 1,584 volunteer hours
- Completing 223 Christmas hampers for 609 residents
- Providing 118 children with warm winter wear
- Packing 11,365 nutritious lunches
- Contributing over 3,051 hours to sorting donations and customer service in the Thrift Shop

WCS currently has over 80 volunteers, many of whom have been actively involved for years, with some supporting the organization for over 30 years. Woolwich Community Services celebrates its volunteers annually with an evening of food, fun, and recognition of their years of service. Notably, WCS has multi-generational involvement, with three generations of one local family currently volunteering within the agency.

Volunteers bring fresh perspectives, new ideas, and enthusiasm to WCS, inspiring everyone they interact with. They serve as community ambassadors, encouraging people to seek support and reminding them that it's okay to ask for help.

Volunteering also fosters social connections and strengthens community bonds, creating a sense of belonging through shared purpose.

For those interested in volunteering with WCS or learning more about the agency, visit their website at www.woolwichcommunityservices.org, call 519-669-5139, sign up for our monthly E-blast, or visit our office at 5 Memorial Ave. Elmira to fill out a volunteer application.

For those community members who would like to offer their support, and volunteering does not suit their lifestyle, there are many other ways to provide your community support. Share the supports, programs, and services WCS offers with others. Donate your gently used items to the Thrift Shop. Shop at the Thrift Shop. Walk or sponsor a walker in the Coldest Night of the Year Walk. Organize or contribute to a food drive. Golf in the Family Violence Prevention annual golf tournament. Make a financial contribution to assist WCS in supporting those in need in our community through the variety of programs and services we offer.

For the next 50 years, let's continue 'To Make A Difference' in our community, building a healthy community, a place where, during these fast paced years, we take moments to help each other, support each other and create a community where we all share a sense of belonging.

WCS is successful because we have a dedicated group of individuals who selflessly give their time, energy, and expertise. For us, this group is made up of volunteers-amazing individuals who make all the difference in our ability to serve and grow. Without their support, we wouldn't be able to do what we do.

Our volunteers are nothing short of fabulous. We are humbled by their compassion to help fulfill our mission. As we continue our work, we are proud to stand side by side with our volunteers, who make our vision a reality every single day.

With appreciative thanks to all community Volunteers!



What is Healthy Skin?

When it comes to skin health, it is important to keep in mind the skin's initial purpose.

Our skin's main function is to protect us from external stressors, by providing a shield against pollution or the harmful effects of ultraviolet radiation emitted by the sun. Additionally, our skin is also able to lock in vital nutrients as well as moisture.

In order to function properly, the skin has to be in optimal condition, which depends on the function of the skin barrier, the PH value, the moisture level and the skin's microbiome.

A healthy skin has a balanced oil production which is not too dry or not too oily, is sufficiently hydrated and able to repair itself quickly.

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Celebrating Volunteers

Across Canada, the important role of volunteers is recognized through a designated volunteer appreciation week in April. This year National Volunteer Week is April 27 to May 3. The theme for this year's National Volunteer Week is Volunteers Make Waves. This theme focuses on the power, impact and importance of individual and group volunteer efforts across Canada. The power, impact and importance of volunteers is also visible in our local communities. Many of our local community events and festivals that we all appreciate would not be possible without the important contributions of volunteers. The important contribution of volunteers is especially evident across our local community services.

As a non-profit charitable organization, Community Care Concepts is in its 40th year of providing a range of services that support older adults and adults with unique needs to live independently in the community. Services range from social and recreational activities, community exercise programs, community dining, Meals on Wheels, transportation to medical and other appointments, homemaking and home maintenance, friendly visiting, grocery shopping, practical in-home support, adult day programs, support in transitioning from hospital to home and information and referrals services. The roots of our organization are based on the important role and vision of local volunteers. More than 40 years ago, volunteers from local churches prepared and distributed meals to their members. As the demand grew and the work evolved beyond the capacity of local churches and volunteers, our organization was formed. 40 years later, volunteers continue to play an integral role in our work and are woven into the fabric of our organization. Each year approximately 120 volunteers contribute more than 8,000 hours to our service, reflecting the equivalent of 4.4 full-time staff! We simply could not do that work that we do and have the impact that we do without volunteers.

Volunteers support our work in so many ways including, but not limited to:

- **Delivering Meals on Wheels** – Volunteers help us to distribute over 30,000 meals annually. Beyond the distribution of nutritious food to older adults in the community, volunteers provide an important connection for isolated older adults, and a quick safety check.
- **Driving Individuals to Appointments** – Across our communities, access to transportation to get to where you need to go can be difficult. Volunteers play an important role in driving older adults to medical and other appointments within and beyond our community.
- **Supporting our Adult Day Programs** – Our Adult Day Programs offer a day of activities, crafts, music and connection for older adults living in the community. Volunteers play a key role in helping us offer programs and activities and in engaging our individual members.
- **Supporting our Social, Recreational and Community-based Programs** – Volunteers contribute their time, skills, knowledge and talents to helping us to lead or co-lead activities in our community-based programs and support the preparation and serving of food in our community dining programs.
- **Friendly Visiting** – Volunteers are an important source of connection for isolated older adults, visiting them in their homes, running errands, assisting with grocery shopping, helping with basic tasks, sharing common interests or taking them out for a coffee.
- **Board of Directors** – Community Care Concepts is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors who contribute their skills, expertise and knowledge to leading the organization.

Community Care Concepts is built and reliant upon the strength of its volunteers. As we pause to celebrate National Volunteer Week, we are so thankful for the many volunteers who open their hearts and their hands to supporting our work. We could not do our work without you!

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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
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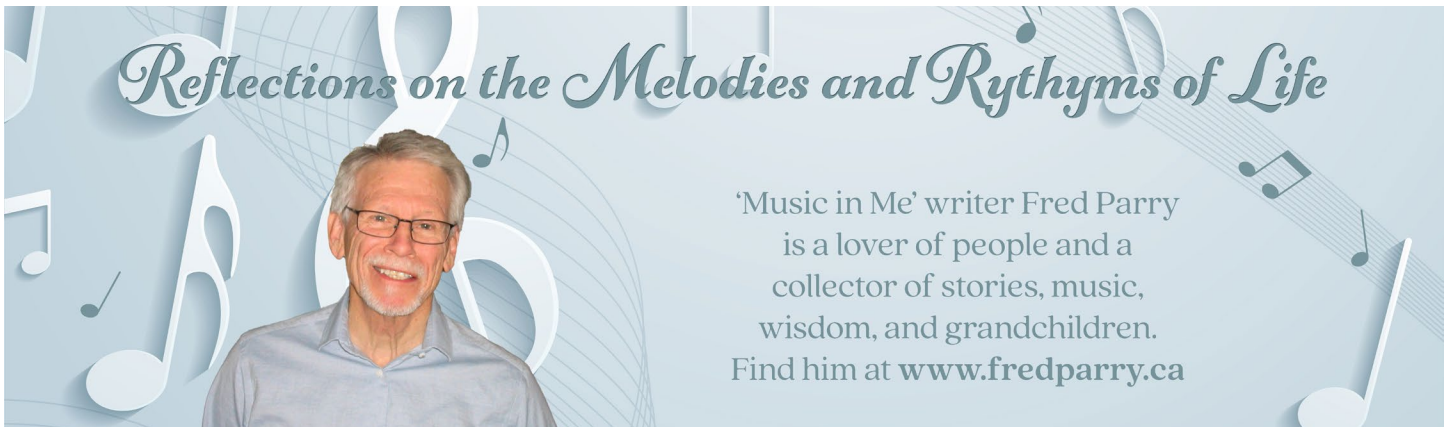


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The Gift of Love – and How I Nearly Lost It

*"I didn't know what day it was
When you walked into the room.
I said hello unnoticed*

*You said goodbye too soon." – You're In My Heart by
Rod Stewart*

Recently, my mother-in-law gave me a beautiful photo of my wife – smiling sweetly as ever. And, judging by her looks and attire, it was from a few decades ago when we had first fallen madly in love. Being older (and wiser?), I thought I knew a good thing when I saw it. Yet, holding that photo now, it seems she's seeing straight through the camera and into my heart.

You may have noticed people with a dominant eye – one either of happiness; or, the other more serious: each eye telling a different story. The ancient mystics talked about the eyes as being the pathway to the soul... and what darkness if that light is gone! But rarely do you see both eyes full of light, as with hers, positively dancing with life and love.

So, it may come as a surprise to learn that I almost threw it all away.

Kenny Rogers said once that there was a fine line between being selfish and being driven. And, earlier in my life, I crossed that line by taking her love for granted.

We'd been spending an evening with friends celebrating our engagement. But, I became sarcastic towards her – just because I could. I thought I was being funny... even as our friends tried to stop me. She'd given me a warning look to shut up, but I recklessly disregarded her feelings.

As I continued, those same eyes normally filled with love, now turned on me like a cornered tigress: revealing shock, betrayal and sadness on her face, they flashed with anger and hurt... something I hope to never see again. He eyes were saying, "It's over!"

"I'm so hard to handle, I'm selfish and I'm sad,
Now I've gone and lost the best baby that I ever had... I made my baby say goodbye." – River by
Joni Mitchell

I had to grow up fast... from being a "cowboy" to a man... figuratively, throwing myself at her feet; literally, begging for forgiveness. I learned two things from that experience: without mutual respect there is no relationship... and I needed her more than she needed me.

"And she believes in me

"I'll never know just what she sees in me... God her love is true" – She Believes In Me by Kenny Rogers

That photo, given to me by her mom (now deceased) sits on a bedside table... where I give thanks every day I see. But, the thought occurred to me: when was the last time I really looked into my wife's eyes? I'm sad to say, not lately.

"I would be happy just to hold the hands I love

On this winter night with you" – Song for a Winter's Night by Gordon Lightfoot

Fortunately, I don't have to live in a Kodachrome past, but even if I did... the greatest gift I have – or will ever have – would still beat within me.

That's the way I figure it. – Fred Parry

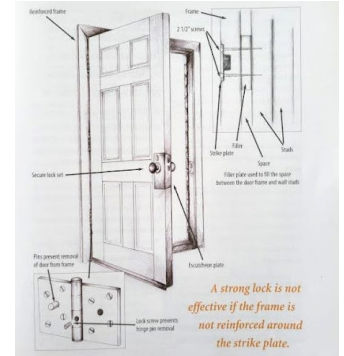


Many people choose to move from urban centers to rural communities seeking a quieter, more peaceful lifestyle, often believing that smaller communities offer a greater sense of security. The slower pace, open spaces, and close-knit feel of rural living are appealing, but gone are the days when doors could be left unlocked without concern. While rural communities may experience lower crime rates than urban areas, they are not immune to break-ins and thefts. Criminals often target areas where they believe security may be more relaxed. Whether you live in a busy neighborhood or a quiet country setting, taking proactive security measures is an important step in protecting your home and belongings.

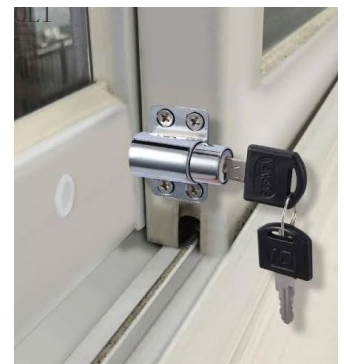
A secure home is the foundation of peace of mind. Feeling safe in your residence is essential, and the good news is that effective security does not require complex systems or significant modifications. Simple, practical measures, known as **target hardening**, can enhance security while maintaining a comfortable and inviting living space.

Target hardening refers to strategies that make a home less appealing to potential intruders by reinforcing doors and windows, improving lighting, and implementing security measures. The goal is to make it harder for the intruder to gain entry, ultimately deterring criminal activity. Most of these steps are straightforward, cost-effective, and easy to integrate into your home.

Doors and windows are the most common access points for intruders. A sturdy, solid-core door made of wood or metal provides a strong barrier against forced entry. Installing a deadbolt lock with a one-inch throw and reinforcing the strike plate with



three-inch screws enhances security. If you are replacing an entry door, consider reinforcing the frame as well, as a strong door is only as effective as the frame supporting it. For those who find traditional locks cumbersome, keyless entry systems using a code or fob can offer a secure and convenient alternative. Ground-level windows are particularly vulnerable, so installing pinning mechanisms or even a cut off hockey stick can prevent them from being opened too far. Security film added to windows and sidelights provide an extra layer of protection by making the glass more resistant to breakage. However, it is crucial to ensure that security measures do not hinder your ability to exit the home in case of an emergency. **Windows and doors should always allow for a safe and quick escape if needed. Be sure to comply with local fire and building code regulations.**



Enhancing Visibility with Proper Lighting

Intruders prefer to operate unnoticed, making proper lighting an important security feature. Motion-activated lights placed near entrances, garages, and pathways can deter potential intruders while also improving visibility for residents. Using timers or smart lighting systems to mimic occupancy when away can create the illusion that someone is always home. Well-lit walkways contribute to both security and personal safety by reducing the risk of trips and falls while also deterring intruders.

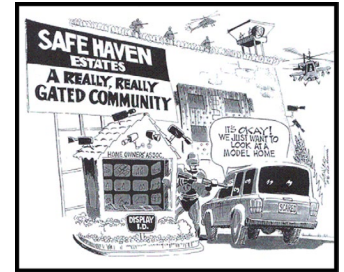
Incorporating Smart Security Measures

Technology offers additional layers of security that are easy to use and highly effective. Video doorbells allow residents to see and communicate with visitors without opening the door, and many models can connect to a smartphone or tablet for remote monitoring. Security cameras near entry points serve as both a deterrent and a means of monitoring activity around the home. These cameras do not require professional monitoring and can be easily viewed on a smartphone through various apps, providing instant access to live footage. However, if you prefer a monitored system, many modern alarm systems include features such as panic buttons for emergency assistance and professional surveillance options.

The Role of Community in Safety

While security measures are valuable, the strongest form of protection comes from a connected and vigilant community. Neighbours who look out for one another create an environment where suspicious activity is more likely to be noticed and reported. Simply acknowledging strangers with a friendly hello can deter potential intruders, as it signals that people in the area are observant and aware. Knowing and interacting with neighbours fosters trust and makes it easier to recognize unfamiliar or suspicious activity. Informal or formal community watch programs provide an added layer of vigilance and communication. A WhatsApp chat group can be a quick and effective way to share information, alerting neighbours to potential security concerns and keeping everyone informed. Keeping each other updated about security concerns, recent incidents, or general safety tips can help ensure that the community remains aware.

Security should never come at the cost of feeling at home. It is not about turning your home into a fortress, but about making thoughtful and practical improvements that enhance safety while maintaining a welcoming environment. A holistic approach to security incorporates not only target hardening techniques but also broader crime prevention strategies, such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED). This method focuses on designing spaces that naturally deter crime through visibility, access control, and community engagement.



At its core, safety is about fostering a sense of security without compromising the warmth and comfort of home. It's about neighbors looking out for one another, creating an environment where people feel safe and connected. By combining practical security measures with crime prevention strategies individuals can make their homes more resilient while preserving the inviting atmosphere that makes a house feel like home.

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Inter-generational Family Conflict

Written by: Will Brubacher

Part Three: The Price of Peace

Last month, mom was told by her family that she was 'moving' from the hospital (post hip surgery) directly into a retirement residence, "Where she'd be better off." rather than returning home where she'd lived for the past 40 years.

The unexpected news was shocking, confusing, and terribly upsetting to her because this surprising new arrangement was made without mom's consent or any personal participation in the decision - "Due to your condition." And the family explained that they, "Were just looking after her best interests."

Now what?

Well, a 'flash' event like this is a common example of the way a sudden conflict can arise, and throw our lives into instant turmoil. This sort of thing happens all the time, in one way or another, and I'm sure that most of you can relate to such unexpected events, that have left you feeling bewildered and anxious.

Now, what's happened has happened, and I'm sure you'll agree that mom has every right to feel surprised and deeply hurt, and to say so under the circumstances. After all, at the very least, the consequences of this will be forever life-changing.

And typically, everyone involved suffers, because unleashed emotional reaction, as we all know, generally comes at a cost.

Isn't it interesting to note that family conflict has been a familiar theme going back to the earliest of times? And, how often have the best books and movies been based on the complexities of family conflict?

You'd think by now, that we might have learned something from them.



And have we? It seems to me very little, and we continue to pay for peace, at a very high price. Still, the themes and players haven't changed very much. For example, one is the presence of the stereotypical characters that holds what's called, the 'balance of power'. This individual usually has a dominant personality and/or position such as being there are some common stereotypes that play a part in every scenario, that appear to have the advantage, at least at first.

This character generally holds the 'balance of power', often by dominant personality or high 'position' of various kinds for example : being the 'eldest', sometimes (though not necessarily) male, attractive, the one most successful, or the one holding the most responsibility or greatest influence, for example, living closest. If you look for it you can usually spot the one in most families, not that that is a bad thing, just typical.

Now in this case, who has the 'power'?

It could be mom or the 'family' (collective or individual).

And if mom holds the 'power' in the family, then she can honestly and openly express herself, and can expect some kind of appeasement. And if one or more of the family has, then mom will simply have no choice but to swallow hard and make the best of what happened. End of story.

Fortunately, in this case, the family realized the mistake they had made by not respecting and involving mom in their 'surprise' plan, and wanted to rectify the matter as best they could beginning with an apology followed by a family meeting to discuss options for going forward.

Two solutions were suggested, one was for mom to move in with one of the family, having her own independent space for as long as she wanted.

The other proposal was for them to look at other retirement homes and give her the opportunity to decide where she would want to live.

Sometimes simply being open to admitting the mistake and looking at other alternatives are enough to resolve the most sensitive issues, and giving mom the respect she deserved, was enough to diffuse the otherwise bad outcome in this circumstance.

A good ending; however, not all end this way. One of the lessons here is:

Part of the problem with wanting to “look after” mom, is seeing past one’s own perspective and remembering that regardless of age, she still deserves the right to have a voice in her own future. Something to consider.

Lets look at another scenario next month to see what lessons can be learned.



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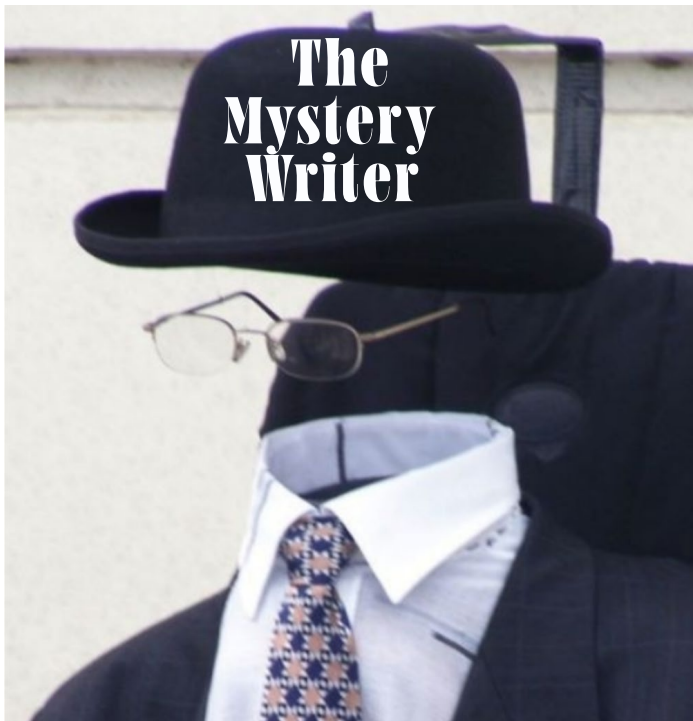
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Am I really ALIVE – or simply breathing?

Ever wonder about that, or are many of us just too busy?

I don't know about you, but when I stop and think about that question, it kinda scares me. I wonder if I could be missing something, maybe something important, if you know what I mean?

It's so easy to accept that whatever comes along is 'it', rather than to think that we might actually have some choice.

And where does the time go as it would be nice to be able to go there, to take some time back whenever we need it, wouldn't it?

When I was younger, time was more regulated by a job, marriage, responsibilities etc. It was easy to believe that those things were what being 'alive' meant, and I didn't have to give it much thought.

And now that I have so much more time to spend, I'm booking my doctors appointments, 'nap time', television time, bed time, among other necessary 'bookings', that need to be 'booked', and by the end of the day, well.....

Has anything really changed?

Is this what it means to be alive, to be watching life as it goes by, rather than feeling I'm really in the driver's seat?

Another way of looking at it, is to wonder, how 'connected' am I to my life? In other words, to my true desires, to what really makes me feel happy, to what having a good friend truly means in my life, to what I actually appreciate and am grateful for, that fills me with that special feeling of being alive.

I don't know about you, but it feels kinda good to be asking myself about this because it draws my attention to something I think is important to stop and think about from time to time, and why not now.

I just stopped to take a breath. Wow! As simple as that. Felt good. Now that's living! Think I'll take another one. Join me if you wish.... :)

So I guess that's what it means to be aware of my life, even in the smallest of things. I suddenly feel alive. Does that make sense? And if not, well, maybe we should take another breath – a little deeper. (That's better! :)

So being alive seems to have a lot to do with breathing...but more important than that..being aware of it. Amazing!

Maybe there's even more if I look for it a bit longer....Let's see what comes to mind.

Well, when I took a breath it was done with conscious choice; so if I were more aware of how good it can feel by making simple choices for myself, then I might feel a bit better and freer by making more. Would this be like living more?

Could it be that I've been too busy running on automatic pilot – without doing much thinking about the choices that are being made for me all the time. And could that be one of the reasons why time seems to go so fast. Could I have possibly replaced my job 'boss' with my time 'boss'.... without realizing it?? Hmmmm

Anyway, I've run over my word, limit; so I'd better go back to what I'm allowed. Besides, I don't want to steal your time especially when we both know how precious it is. So, why not try living more consciously and being more 'alive'? And, I wonder if this could lead me to living more 'lively' too...

Oh – oh, could be fun....

Until next time.... :)

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info@tcmhomes.com

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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
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Township of Wilmot
519-634-8444

Township of Wellesley
519-699-4611

Township of Woolwich
519-699-1647

**Region of Waterloo Public
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**Ontario Caregiver
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- HearingLife formerly Hemmerich Hearing
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- Community Care Concepts
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- Baden Village Pharmacy
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- Heart & Home Creations NH
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- Schmidtsville Restaurant (outside magazine stand)
- Wellesley Township Community Health Centre

- Linwood Nurse Practitioner Office
- Pond View Retirement Village
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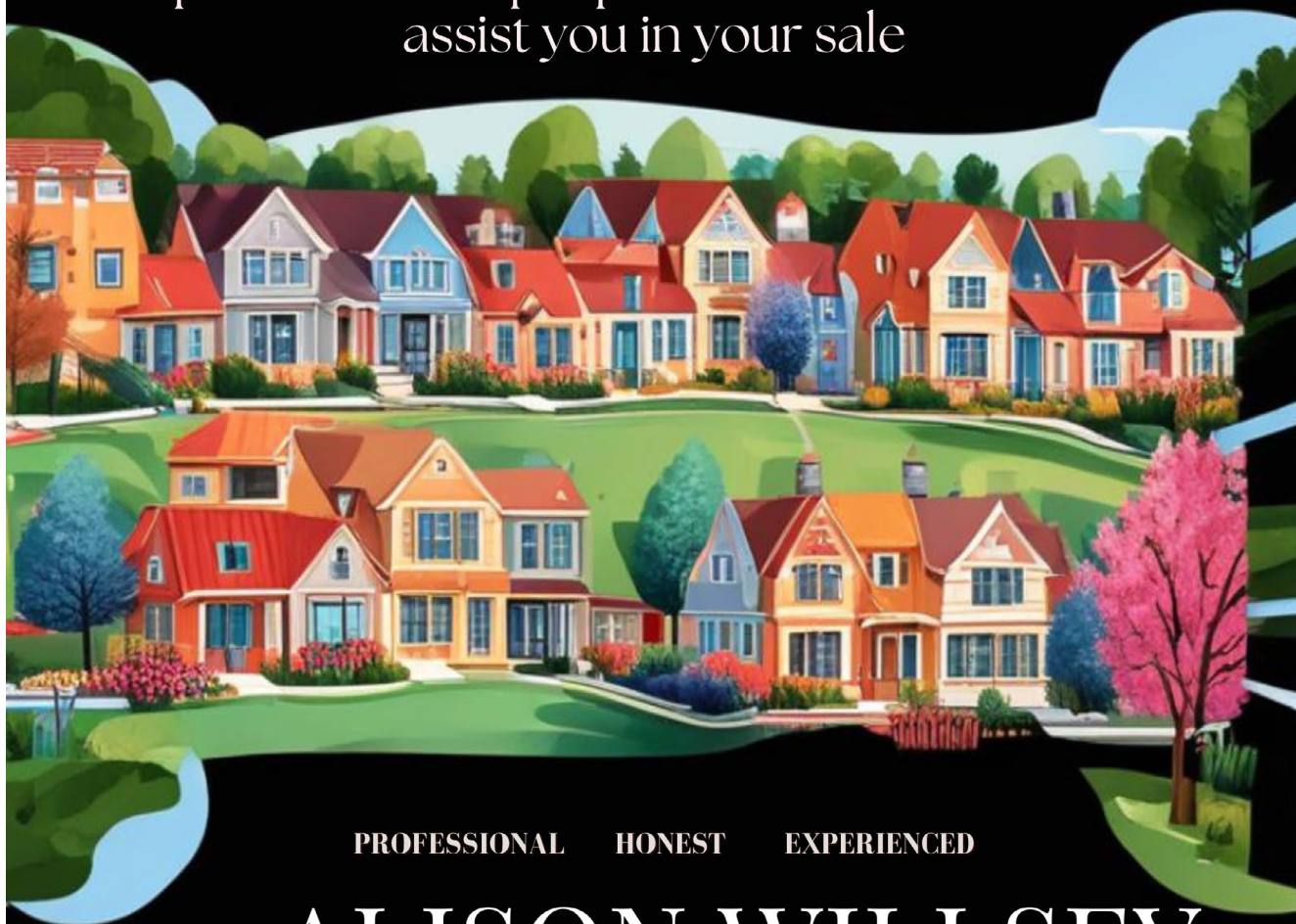
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