



**“So that I could have the privileged life I live today”
The Nando Iannicca story**

Feature Story on page 16

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Letter from the Editor



2026 is here!

A new year brings fresh possibilities, new challenges, and renewed hope. It's a time to reflect on what we've learned and look ahead to what's to come. In a world that moves so quickly, it's often the small moments—family, friendship, and gratitude—that make life feel most meaningful even though we may have lost loved ones throughout the year.

This year, The Voice in Action proudly celebrates its 6th Anniversary. Launched during the unprecedented challenges of the 2020 lockdown, it has grown into a cherished part of our community. That difficult time is one none of us will ever forget, but it also reminds us of what we can accomplish when we come together with resilience and determination.

In this issue, I chose to feature a very humble and inspiring leader: Nando Iannicca is the Regional Chair and Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Municipality of Peel. Since his first election in 1988, I have followed his journey closely. Nando is also known as the “native son” of ward 7 in Peel being the City and Regional Councilor since 1988. He continues to bring a fresh perspective and unwavering dedication to his role, with a strong commitment to education, family values, and building a better future for the Region. His story is a reminder of how important it is to stay true to our roots—and to keep family at the heart of our lives.

With Valentine's Day just weeks away, let's remember to cherish our loved ones and neighbours, and take time to show appreciation for those who make our lives richer. And as Family Day approaches in February, may we embrace the opportunity to reconnect—whether near or far—and celebrate the relationships that ground us.

As we navigate this new year, I encourage you to look for moments of joy, acts of kindness, and ways to strengthen the bonds that matter most. Wishing you and your family a wonderful 2026, filled with purpose, health, and positivity. *Cheers!*


Josie Alonzi



The Voice IN ACTION

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Memories of 2025



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Saturday, Feb 7, 11:30 am

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Discover financing opportunities for Black entrepreneurs, such as loans, start-ups, and innovation funds.

Presented by Vaughan Business and Entrepreneurship Centre (VBEC).

Dufferin Clark Library
Tuesday, Feb 10, 6 pm



2026—A Year of Hope, Unity and Opportunity

by Stephen Lecce MPP for King—Vaughan

Since the establishment of a dedicated Faculty of Health as 2025 comes to an end, I wanted to report on what we've accomplished together. We rolled up our sleeves and got to work, and stood united and strong as Canadians, focused on building a stronger community and more self-reliant Canada.

First out of the gate in 2026, the first phase of the North Maple Regional Park Family Recreation Area is set to open this fall, backed by a \$10 million investment from our government—a state-of-the-art park, in the heart of our community.

Construction on Vaughan's York University School of Medicine begins in 2026—Canada's first medical school for family doctors. Over the past year, we advanced progress on three long-term care new-builds across King and Vaughan—adding 672 new beds for seniors, with one new home starting construction in 2026 in Vaughan, and another opening in King City in 2026.

A few months ago, we also opened Vaughan's first Youth Wellness Hub beside Canada's Wonderland — serving youth in our community with free mental health supports.

Defending the symbols, values, and identity of Canada has ever been more important. Which is why I was proud to have delivered on my promise—with a historic provincial investment of \$50 million to expand and modernize the McMichael Canadian Art Collection. While Ontario has stepped up, we continue to urge the federal government to match this contribution early in 2026.



Stephen at the Mother of Carmel Childcare Centre Graduation and Year-End BBQ



With respect to affordability, we believe that your money belongs in your pocket. Premier Ford and our government have consistently cut taxes and user fees, and it's precisely why we have never raised a single tax, and we never will. We also stabilized energy costs, permanently cut the gas tax by 10 cents, and launched the largest Energy Savings Program in Canadian history (saveonenergy.ca).

The PRESTO One Fare Program is extended by two more years, saving you up to \$1,600 a year as you now pay once to use transit across boundaries. The Maple, Rutherford and King City GO Stations have all benefited from additional parking spaces, and are all being upgraded to enable two-way, all-day service—getting us where we need to go, every 15 minutes.

I unveiled Ontario's first Integrated Energy Plan to secure clean, reliable, and affordable power for the next 25 years, with a focus on clean energy by expanding hydro and nuclear power. We also passed a landmark law prioritizing Canadian-made in everything we do — from Canadian steel, lumber, and even our nuclear technology—we will support Ontario workers and protect our supply chain.

Our message is clear: we want to ensure what we buy is 'Made in Canada' built by Canadians.

Closer to home, after a tragedy struck at the heart of our community, I launched a petition with more than 13,000 residents joining me in calling on the federal government to immediately enact stronger bail laws and mandatory minimum sentences for violent crimes. This is in addition to the hundreds of additional York Region police officers, new helicopters and drones, that have been funded by the province to increase their presence in our neighbourhoods. Our community knows how to mobilize as we stand up for the rights of law-abiding families.

2025 brought real challenges. Yet amid global uncertainty and chaos imposed by President Trump, we stood together. I know in 2026 we will seize the opportunity before us and chart a new path forward for our country. I have never been more optimistic and energized to keep delivering for our community and fighting for our country. *Let's do this!*



Stephen Announcing Funding to Build the Family Recreation Area at the North Maple Regional Park with Ontario's Minister of Sport



Stephen with NBA Superfan Nav Bhatia at his Annual Community BBQ



Stephen Participating in a Community Tree Planting

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Empowering SMEs to Invest, Scale and Compete: The Next Step for Canada's Economy

by *The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda*

The end of the year is always a time for reflection — a moment to take stock of our successes, our setbacks, and the work ahead. This year, that reflection carries added weight as we assess Canada's position at the twenty-five-year mark of the 21st century, an era defined by technological acceleration, geopolitical realignment, and economic uncertainty. The stability we once assumed is no longer guaranteed, and the global economic order is shifting beneath our feet.

Earlier this month, when the Carney Government tabled its first budget, the finance minister laid out a plan to harness Canada's strengths and meet this moment head-on. And Canada is having a moment. As we look toward 2026, the question is whether we will seize the opportunities before us or watch them pass by.

As Minister Champagne noted, the systems that long underpinned our prosperity — stable global trade alliances, predictable supply chains, a cooperative international order, and reliable partnerships — are being redrawn and constantly challenged.

This generational shift is challenging our assumptions and demanding new approaches. What worked for the last 25 years may not carry us through the next 25. This is especially true for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which continue to face structural barriers in accessing capital.

Too many Canadian businesses confront complex application processes, slow approval timelines, high collateral requirements, uneven risk tolerance across lenders, and limited financing options for firms trying to scale. These obstacles have real consequences. Promising companies often stall not because of a lack of talent or ambition, but because they cannot secure the right capital at the right moment.

The challenge is even greater for first-generation entrepreneurs, immigrant founders, women-led firms, and SMEs in technology and innovation sectors — the sectors that will define Canada's future competitiveness.

This is more than a financing problem: it is an economic risk. SMEs are the heartbeat of our economy. They make up 99.7% of Canadian businesses and employed 6.3 million people in 2022. They generate nearly half of all private-sector GDP and account for more than 40% of Canada's goods exports. Yet our SMEs remain heavily reliant on one market — the United States — with small

Senator Tony Loffreda



and medium firms sending more than three-quarters of their exports south. That level of dependence is not sustainable in a world where supply chains are fragmenting, and trade relationships are changing.

Canada has one of the world's most extensive trade networks, with 16 free trade agreements covering 52 countries and reaching

1.6 billion consumers. But those agreements mean little if SMEs cannot access the financing they need to grow, innovate, and export. Capital is the fuel of expansion — and without it, Canada leaves enormous economic potential untapped.

Budget 2025 includes important steps forward, notably the \$1 billion BDC-led Venture and Growth Capital Catalyst Initiative and \$750 million to address early-stage funding gaps. These initiatives recognize that government has a role in accelerating private investment and supporting firms at critical growth stages.

But more is required. We need a financing ecosystem that rewards innovation, not just scale; a regulatory environment that encourages risk-taking; and support programs designed with the realities of entrepreneurs in mind. Other countries are modernizing their capital markets to ensure their SMEs can compete globally. Canada cannot afford to fall behind.

This is why the Senate Committee on Banking, Commerce and the Economy has been given a mandate to examine access to credit and capital markets for SMEs. Our study, which we began this week and hope to conclude before the summer, will gather expert testimony and propose practical, actionable recommendations. Senate committees exist not just to identify problems, but to find solutions — creative, scalable, and rooted in the realities facing Canadians across the country.

As we look ahead to the next quarter-century, one principle should guide us: Canada's prosperity depends on the success of its entrepreneurs. If we want SMEs to invest, scale, and compete on the world stage, we must ensure they have access to the capital needed to grow. Doing so is not simply an economic strategy — it is a nation-building project.

Canada has the talent, the resources, and the global connections to lead in the decades ahead. What we need now is the resolve to put the right conditions in place. Our SMEs are ready. It is time for us to meet them with ambition of our own.

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Shooting Stars: Analyzing the Toronto Maple Leafs' Start to the 2025-26 Season

by Anthony Macchia

"WE BE-LEAF!" has long been the rallying cry of Toronto Maple Leafs fans near and far. Every season begins with optimism, yet too often ends in familiar disappointment as April or May arrives without Lord Stanley's Cup. Cynicism has even turned the team's name into a tongue-in-cheek acronym — "Losers Even After Fifty-Eight Seasons" — a reflection of how heartbreak has become part of the franchise's modern identity.

The opening months of the 2025–26 campaign only seemed to reinforce that narrative. By mid-November, the Maple Leafs had slipped near the bottom of the league standings, prompting calls for trades and speculation about potential coaching or management changes. Before pointing fingers, however, it is worth examining how the team arrived at this point and what has changed since its gritty 2024–25 playoff run.

One of the most significant transitions has been the dismantling of both the so-called "Shanaplan" and the "Core Four." With Brendan Shanahan no longer serving as president, the long-term vision that defined the organization for nearly a decade departed with him. That shift was underscored by Mitch Marner's departure to the Vegas Golden Knights, signaling the end of an era built around elite offensive talent.

As a result, the early portion of the 2025–26 season felt uncertain and disjointed. The Maple Leafs were forced to redefine their identity after years of relying on star power. While the previous model produced eye-catching offensive numbers, it also exposed persistent shortcomings in defensive play, goaltending consistency, and overall grit.

Toronto still boasts elite offensive weapons in John Tavares, William Nylander, and captain Auston Matthews. What the team lost, however, was Mitch Marner, a 102-point contributor — a void that could not be filled by a single player. General manager Brad Treliving responded by emphasizing depth and competitiveness over pure scoring, adding Matias Maccelli, Dakota Joshua, and Nicolas Roy. None of those players match Marner's offensive ceiling — their career-high point totals are 57, 32, and 41, respectively — but together they represent a philosophical shift toward balance, forechecking pressure, and defensive responsibility.

That shift, however, was complicated by injuries and instability on the back end. Goaltender Joseph Woll missed time due to a personal matter, while key defensemen such as Chris Tanev and Brandon Carlo dealt with injuries of their own. Despite capable replacements — including Anthony Stolarz in goal and veteran blueliners Morgan Rielly and Oliver Ekman-Larsson — the Maple Leafs struggled to ice a consistent, healthy lineup during the season's opening stretch.

The result was a perfect storm of adversity that defined Toronto's early struggles. Beneath the surface, however, the



underlying numbers suggested the team's issues went beyond bad luck.

Through November, Toronto ranked in the bottom third of the league in expected goals against (xGA), indicating that opponents were consistently generating higher-quality scoring chances — a reflection of breakdowns in defensive structure rather than simple variance. Yet as December arrived, the tone began to change. Over a five-game stretch, the Maple Leafs won four contests while outscoring opponents 19–5, injecting renewed confidence into both the locker room and the fan base. Perhaps more importantly, the Atlantic Division standings tightened considerably, with first through seventh place separated by just five points.

Toronto's recent success has been driven by a more complete team effort. That improvement has also been reflected analytically, as the Maple Leafs' expected goals share (xGF%) has climbed closer to league average in early December, suggesting that their improved results are being supported by stronger five-on-five play rather than unsustainable shooting or goaltending luck. Contributions have come not only from established stars, but also from off-season additions and rookie Easton Cowan. Defensive play has stabilized, and — injuries aside — goaltending has shown improved consistency.

While questions remain about whether the roster is fully complete, the Maple Leafs appear to be moving away from an overreliance on star scoring and toward a more sustainable, team-oriented approach. For a fan base accustomed to impatience, that evolution may be difficult to embrace. Still, history offers a reminder: the last time head coach Craig Berube found himself near the bottom of the standings in December, his team went on to win the Stanley Cup.

For now, patience may be Toronto's most valuable asset. If current trends continue, the Maple Leafs could finally be charting a new and more promising course. Until then, Leafs Nation will continue to believe — and be-LEAF.



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Success or Simply - Excess

by Gianna Patriarca

It is a new world, not a brave new world, but one conceived in the creative minds of great writers whose prophetic books clearly took and continue taking us to the dark side of humanity. George Orwell's '1984' was the first to initiate the fear in me as a child who read. We are now at the threshold of all man can do that is destructive, it is visible on every screen and yet packaged and sold in the seduction of lies, entertainment, illusions of progress. It feels much like having entered into the open gate of Dante's idea of hell. All of it has us foaming at the mouth for the taste of success and power through very unsavory methods. How do we measure success? In today's world it appears that it is all about control achieved through power and money. Nothing new, right?

As immigrants we have had to prove our worth and presence with strength, work, talents shared in building not only a country but also an identity and a life on foreign lands. It has not come without struggle. We built strong vibrant communities and good neighbourhoods while sharing the simplest things, food a glass of wine, friendship.

We have just celebrated another Christmas and all the reports on news programs is how financially successful or unsuccessful it was. All on spread sheets of profit and loss. As a catholic girl born in the 50's, I remember well the meaning of Christmas post world war 2. It wasn't about profit and loss, consumerism, possessions, wealth or social position. It was about family, community, charity, humility and a celebration of the human spirit in an act of sharing. Over my seven decades on this planet I have seen the rapid changes in our world, some good, some not so good.

In the decades past we measured success by taking care of ourselves and others and by living within our means. How did this success lead to such unsavory excess among many of us? What happened to the ethics we once relied on? When did we decide that it was necessary to have a driveway where a half a dozen expensive, designer cars are parked on land that should be growing the crops to feed us. Why is it essential to have every toy and distraction possible at our fingertips? Who convinced us that we needed to walk red



That is me and my sister in law sitting having an espresso.

carpets gathering awards collecting dust on shelves where books should reside. Why are we living in fraudulent castles with a half dozen bathrooms and all the ridiculous indulgence that has no meaning? We have bought into a lifestyle that is as fake and fragile as our sense of reality and insecurity. Excess is not success. It is a sad need to feel that we are worthy, that we are on a stage, that we are visible and present and we are special, and money is, sadly, the passport that opens the doors to this fantasy.

We can fool ourselves in thinking that it is all for our children. Yes we do for our children, it is without discussion, but what our children need more than the toys and the castles the car is the tools to become good and responsible adults, good neighbours, and to know who they truly are as human beings. To embrace their culture, traditions and the stories, that are quickly dying. We have been much too busy being seduced by the glamour and excess of success and forgotten to pass on our true essence and history for our future understanding of ourselves and our worth.



Gianna Patriarca
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York Regional Council approves \$25M to support York University's new School of Medicine

York University has welcomed York Region's decision to make a significant contribution of \$25 million to support the new School of Medicine set to open to students in 2028.

The financial commitment was approved by Council on November 27, 2025, and will help fund the physical infrastructure and development of the School of Medicine, which will be built in the Vaughan Healthcare Centre Precinct, alongside the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital.

"York University deeply appreciates the extraordinary support from York Regional Council and Chairman Jolliffe in advancing health care," said Lisa Philipps, Interim President and Vice-Chancellor, York University. "This commitment will mean improved health outcomes, increased community well-being, and stronger regional economic growth. Our partnership is creating an integrated approach to education and care that will serve York Region and Ontario for generations to come. We are very proud to partner with York Region."

This significant milestone represents ongoing positive momentum as the University ramps up work to engage local physicians, collaborate with health care and tech sector partners in the medical school's future service area such as Mackenzie Health, Oak Valley Health, Southlake Health, and the Ontario Centre of Innovation (OCI).

"York Region is proud to support this important investment in training future physicians right here in our own community. By contributing \$25 million to York University's new School of Medicine, we are helping ensure that families across our communities have better access to the care they need, closer to home. This partnership reflects our shared commitment to strengthening the health and well-being of residents and building a future where everyone in York Region can thrive," said Eric Jolliffe, York Region Chairman and CEO.

York Region's contribution builds on existing commitments from the Government of Ontario to fund the startup costs associated with establishing the medical school. The land for the new building has been generously donated by the City of Vaughan.

Together, these commitments strengthen momentum for the medical school, which is a much-needed part of the Ontario government's expansion of medical education designed to address local physician shortages, enhance access to primary care, and support a long-term, sustainable health-care system.

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Support the development of York University's new School of Medicine to be established in the City of Vaughan.

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So That I Could Have the Privileged Life I Live Today

by Angelo Filoso

The Nando Iannicca Story

The Voice in Action, is honoured to share the story of Nando Iannicca—a son of Italian immigrants whose life has been shaped by faith in family, gratitude, and a deep commitment to serving others. From the shelves of a neighbourhood grocery store to the leadership of one of Canada’s fastest-growing regions, his journey is a reminder that hard work, humility, and community can carry a person a very long way.

As a young man, Nando Iannicca worked part-time at a local grocery store and at The Globe and Mail, taking evening, weekend, and summer shifts while continuing his studies. Those early mornings and long days weren’t glamorous, but they taught him discipline, steadiness, and the kind of time-management that would later define a lifetime of public service.

Nando’s first job was at Food City in Cooksville, where he stocked shelves, organized products, assisted customers, managed



inventory, and helped keep the store clean and welcoming. More than anything, it taught him the quiet dignity of showing up for people—doing the work well, and doing it with care.

Those lessons never left him.

Today, as Chair and CEO of the Regional Municipality of Peel, Nando continues to “stock the shelves,” carrying the same values of dedication, service, and responsibility into the boardrooms and council chambers that shape daily life for more than 1.6 million residents across Mississauga, Brampton, and the Town of Caledon. For Nando, public service has never felt like a job—it has been a calling, and a privilege entrusted to him by the people who have elected and re-elected him 11 times.

As Regional Chair, Nando is elected by the 24 members of Regional Council to preside over meetings and help ensure that Council decisions are carried forward. In plain terms, he helps keep Peel moving—coordinating, listening, and leading with an eye on what residents need today and what the Region will need tomorrow.

Before becoming Regional Chair, Nando served for 30 years as a City Councillor in Mississauga and at the Region of Peel, representing Ward 7—the community where he was born and raised. Over the years, he also served on numerous boards, including the Police Services Board, the Enersource/Hydro Board, and the Credit Valley Conservation Board. He holds bachelor’s degrees in journalism, political science, and economics; speaks 3 languages, completed the Canadian Securities Course, and began his professional career as an Investment Executive with a Bay Street firm.

Nando is also the proud recipient of the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Medal, recognizing 25 years of volunteer service with organizations such as the Trillium Hospital Foundation, the Canadian Red Cross, the Salvation Army Red Shield Appeal, and the Mississauga Food Bank.

“Nando has a passion for public service, community safety, and Peel Region.”

- Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton

Since 2023, Nando has also served as Chair of the Peel Police Service Board. In expressing appreciation for his re-election, Chair Iannicca said, “It is a tremendous privilege to continue serving as Chair of the Peel Police Service Board. I am deeply committed to working closely with the Chief and the leadership team at Peel Regional Police to ensure community safety remains our top priority. Together, we will strive to build trust, strengthen partnerships, and enhance the well-being of all residents in Peel.”



Rooted in Family, Guided by Sacrifice

When Nando speaks about success, he returns again and again to his upbringing—and to the sacrifices his parents made when they immigrated to Canada. Born to Mario Iannicca and Maria Continenza, he was raised in a humble, traditional immigrant household rooted in strong family values.

Both of Nando’s parents came from the village of Cerchio, in the Marsica area of the Province of LAquila, Abruzzo—a tight knit agrarian community of nearly 1,500 residents where everyone knew one another and life revolved around family, faith, and the land.

Mario and Maria first met as children while attending the same local elementary school. In 1952, Mario left Italy and journeyed to Canada by ship, departing from Genoa and arriving at Pier 21 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Six years later, in 1958, Maria followed the same route.

After years of hard work and establishing himself in Ontario, Mario wrote to his mother in Cerchio asking which eligible young women in the village were still unmarried. Maria came highly recommended. Mario then asked one of his brothers to approach her with the question. Maria insisted she would only accept if Mario returned to the village in person, to ask for her hand in marriage. He did—and the rest is history.

In Italy, Nando’s parents were farmers who worked the land for property owners, facing a future limited by circumstance. Leaving was not just a change of country; it was a leap into the unknown, made in the hope that their children might have choices and opportunities they never did.

Mario arrived through an immigration work program and initially settled in Caledon, Ontario. After completing the mandatory two-year term, he moved to Cooksville in Mississauga, where he worked at a local brickyard for more than 35 years before retiring.

Through perseverance and hard work, Mario and Maria provided Nando and his siblings—Sandro, Fabio, and Rosella—with opportunities to build a new future in a country that became a second mother to their family. With a full heart, Nando reflected recently, “My parents sacrificed and endured a great deal so that I could have the privileged life I live today.”

Cooksville Beginnings

Nando was born at what was then known as South Peel Hospital (now Trillium) in the Cooksville community of Mississauga. He attended St. Catherine of Siena and St. Timothy’s Elementary Schools, followed by St. Paul’s for middle school, and Cawthra Park for high school. There, he excelled academically and developed a deep love for sport.

His greatest strengths were speed and agility. A classic “low center of gravity” build, as his coaches described him, that naturally translated into athletic success. As a member of the track and field team, Nando won 47 consecutive events, including the 100-, 200-, and 400-metre races, and ran the anchor leg on the school’s relay team. He also competed in long jump, high jump, and shot put.

In team sports, he played striker in soccer, and he was a running back as well as a cornerback and linebacker in football. He also excelled in tennis, basketball, and badminton; at one point, he and his partner were local school champions and went on to represent their school at the provincial championships. Nando credits sport—along with perseverance, teamwork, and training—for helping shape who he has become.



He proudly states that his greatest athletic achievement during his academic years was when the Phys Ed faculty at his high school chose him as their representative for Ontario Athletic Leadership Camp. According to their website, OALC was established in 1948 by the province of Ontario to provide “training to male secondary school students to develop and improve their organizational ability, athletic skills, leadership skills, sense of responsibility, cooperation, confidence and personal integrity.” While at the camp, Nando was further honoured by the camp Directors when he was chosen as one of the 6 “camp leaders for the day” from the 700 participants selected from every high school in Ontario.” Looking back, his gym teachers made a very wise choice. Nando credits organized sports, as the venue that created his tenacity, perseverance, and teamwork helping to shape his career.

After school, Nando returned home to a modest household where the kitchen table was faithfully set for 6, with dinner promptly served at 5pm. This was at the insistence of his parents so that their father Mario, who was a shift worker, was certain to see his entire family together at least once every day. Mother’s cooking reflected la

cucina povera; the traditional Southern Italian “cuisine of the poor”. It was a resourceful Italian style that was simple, seasonal, inexpensive, and included backyard garden ingredients and homemade charcuterie that produced deeply flavourful, satisfying, and nourishing dishes.

All four of Mario and Maria’s children embraced the path of





academics. Education was strongly encouraged by their mother, Maria, whom Nando describes as a true beacon of learning. Her devotion to education helped ensure that each of her children completed university studies and went on to build successful careers in Canada. All told, Mario and Maria's children would go on to earn a total of 11 university degrees and professional designations.

This is a story that deserves to be shared, honoured, and celebrated: the sacrifices Nando's parents made to create a better future for their children stand as a powerful testament to perseverance.

A Life of Service

After completing his studies, Nando met his wife, Anna Maria, and they have been married for 39 years. In two remarkable ironies, they met at the annual festival for the patron saint of their hometown village, and both share the same Iannicca last name, even though Anna Maria's side of the family settled in Montreal, and Nando's in Peel Region. Together, they are the proud parents of two sons. It was Anna Maria who encouraged Nando to run for public office after the local councillor stepped down in 1988.

In a bold and decisive move, Nando resigned from his position as an Investment Executive on Bay Street on February 8, 1988, and spent the next ten months knocking on 17,900 doors across Cooksville, while his wife worked to support the household. His first visit to City Hall was to register as a candidate; his second was as the elected representative for Ward 7.

Over the years, his work has helped shape Mississauga and Peel in lasting ways. Among his many achievements are the following:

- Elected at age 26 as the youngest Councillor in the city's history and remains the only member of Council to represent the ward in which he was born and raised.
- Eleven consecutive campaign victories; securing an absolute majority in every election—never winning with less than a majority of all votes cast.
- Contributed to the planning and establishment of Celebration Square, which has become Mississauga's central Piazza and outdoor public gathering space.
- Served on Councils that delivered a zero-per cent tax increase for 12 consecutive years.
- Approved more than 60,000 housing units within his ward, with only two challenges to the Ontario Municipal Board over more than 30 years in office.
- At the request of Premier Ford, securing and donating a 52 acre parcel of land on behalf of Peel Region to the Province to establish a Post Traumatic Stress Centre of Excellence for all first responders in Ontario.

After all his accomplishments, Nando proudly states, "What I do is serve as an elected official. Who I really am is a husband to Anna Maria and father to Damian (Raluca) and our new grand daughter Baby Julia) and Francis (Brienne)."

"I have known Nando for 56 years, and there are very few people I can truly call both a dear friend and a confidant. I helped manage all his campaigns, and having watched him serve as a politician for virtually his entire adult life, I cannot express enough how proud I am to know him. He has always conducted himself with the highest level of professionalism and honesty. Throughout many years in public life, he has remained an inspiration—steadfastly committed to the community while never compromising his values or ethics."

- Carlo Racioppo, lifelong friend and campaign manager

Nando is still an early riser, up by 5:20 a.m. Before heading to the office, his daily routine includes reading three newspapers while cycling through CP24, CBC News, the BBC, CNN, RAI Italy, and TV5 Paris every morning. Staying informed helps him lead with perspective and preparedness.

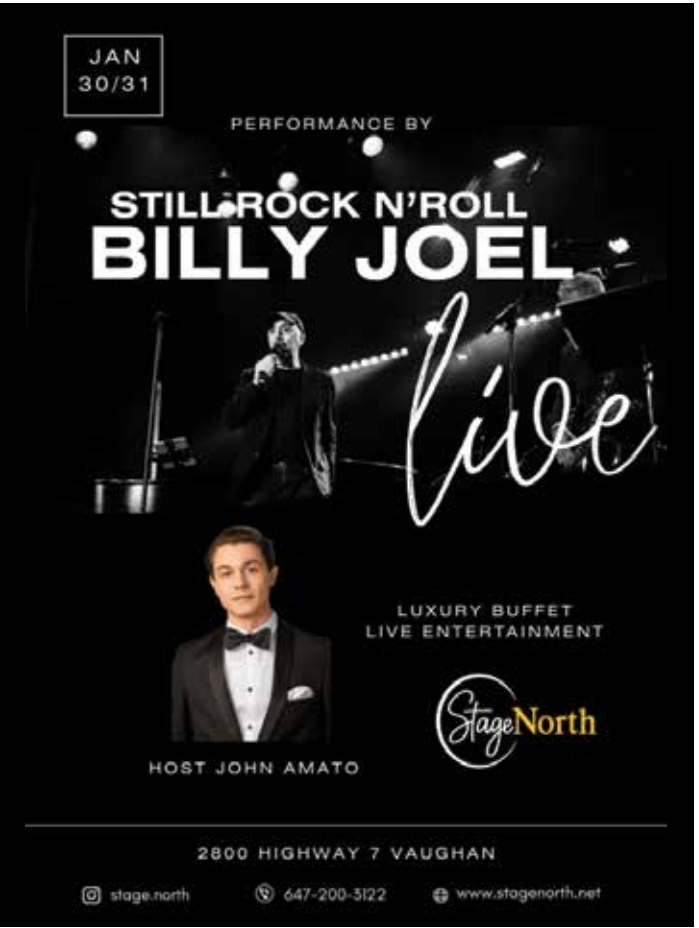
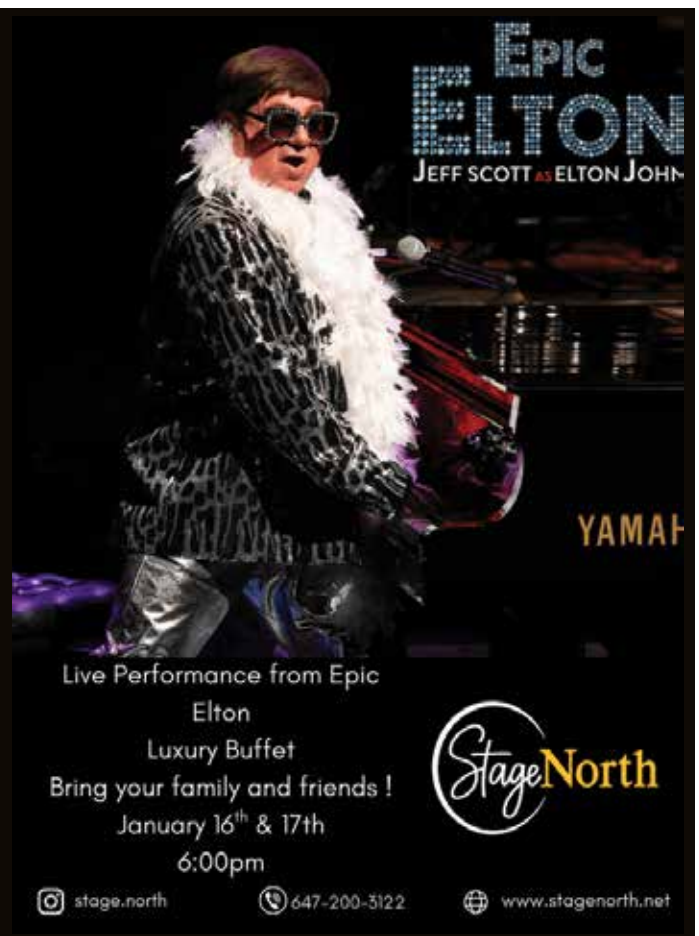
Nando continues to champion a culture of environmental



stewardship while supporting the local economies of communities across Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon. He remains committed to Peel's motto—"Working with You"—and to a spirit of collaboration that aims to build a healthy, safe, and connected place to live.

The year 2026 marks Nando Iannicca's 38th year in public office—an extraordinary accomplishment. Yet Nando measures success not by titles held, but by the life he has been fortunate to live: parents who chose Canada to build a new future while preserving traditional values; the close and meaningful bond he shares with his three siblings; a marriage to the wife who continues to be his rock; and the privilege of fatherhood, with two sons who are both graduates of the University of Toronto remain his greatest blessings.

In the relay race of life, Nando draws a thoughtful distinction between an honour earned and a privilege bestowed. In a recent interview, he explained, "If you obtained your post-secondary degree or professional designation, earned your certification as a plumber or an electrician, or won the 100-metre race, that is an honour you alone have earned. At the opposite end of the spectrum is being elected to public office. It is the ultimate privilege bestowed by the members of your community and should be cherished as such. It will remain one of my greatest blessing. To this day, Nando Iannicca remains committed to the responsibility that comes with opportunity—and to the gratitude we owe to the sacrifices made by those who came before us.



Endings, New Beginnings, and the Quiet Art of Keeping Promises to Yourself

by Dr. Mary Marano | Psychotherapist | Relationship & Wellness Strategist

January has a way of seducing us. A fresh calendar, a symbolic reset, a cultural permission slip to begin again. We enter the new year with zest and gusto, brimming with the belief that “this year will be different.” We dream up new habits, healthier choices, better boundaries, improved relationships, and a rekindled sense of purpose.

But somewhere between the bright intentions of January 1st and the complexity of real life, something shifts. That spark begins to dim. Momentum fades. Our commitments, so passionately declared, begin to unravel. Before long, many people quietly abandon the very resolutions they were most excited about.

As a psychotherapist who has walked alongside thousands of people navigating change, I can tell you this: It’s not because you’re lazy. *It’s not because you lack discipline. And it’s not because you “can’t stick to things.”*

It’s because the story you were told about change is incomplete. Here’s why We Lose Momentum (and Why It’s Not Your Fault)

Every January we are inundated with messages about motivation. Motivation boards. Motivation playlists. Motivation quotes. Motivation workshops. We’ve been conditioned to believe that motivation is the spark we must wait for before we take action.

But here’s the truth-one that surprises most people, motivation doesn’t come first. Action does.

You don’t feel motivated and then move.

You move, and then motivation begins to grow.

This is the psychology of momentum:

1. Action (however small)
2. Effort behind that action
3. A result or shift you can see or feel
4. The emotional reward that fuels more action

Most of us fail not because we can’t change, but because we expect to feel differently before we begin. We wait for inspiration to strike. We wait for clarity, confidence, or enthusiasm. But the nervous system doesn’t work that way. *It responds to what you do, not what you intend.*

Why We Don’t Keep Resolutions: The Real Reasons!

Beyond the motivational myth, several deeper forces are at play... *We overestimate willpower and underestimate environment.* Most people try to change in the same environment that created the old pattern. That’s like trying to swim upstream in a river with no bridge. Environment always wins. *We make resolutions from emotion, not identity.* A burst of energy on December 31st is emotional, not sustainable. True change requires asking: *Who am I becoming? What identity am I strengthening? We focus on outcomes instead of systems.* “I will lose weight.” “I will save money.” “I will stop overthinking.” But outcomes don’t create change-systems do. Our nervous systems are overstimulated. We live in an era of overwhelm, micro-stressors, and constant digital noise. When the mind is overloaded, it defaults to old habits simply because they are familiar and efficient. And finally, *we expect perfection.* The moment we slip, we assume we’ve failed. But setbacks are data, not failure.

Resolutions unravel because we don’t know how to repair, reset, or restart without judgment.

Is Society to Blame? In Some Ways, Yes.

We live in a culture obsessed with optimization.

The pressure to “glow up,” “level up,” and “start fresh” creates an unrealistic expectation that change must be immediate and dramatic.

Society teaches us:

- Hustle harder
- Transform quickly
- Never slow down
- Productivity is worth more than well-being
- If you can’t do it perfectly, don’t do it at all

No wonder people burn out by February. Human beings were not built for constant reinvention.

We were built for gradual evolution-small shifts, layered over time, supported by compassion, community, and clarity.

How to Keep Promises to Yourself in 2026

Here are practical, therapist-tested strategies that actually work:

1. **Start with identity, not goals.** Ask: *What kind of person keeps this promise? How would they act today?*
2. **Make your environment match your future, not your past.** Place cues where your eyes naturally go. Remove temptations. Build friction between you and old habits.
3. **Shrink the action, not the vision.** A 60-second action done daily outperforms a 60-minute plan done twice.
4. **Track effort, not perfection.** Your nervous system builds momentum through consistency, not intensity.
5. **Expect resistance-and plan for it.** Change feels uncomfortable because your brain prefers familiarity. Use the discomfort as evidence that you are stretching, expanding, and growing.
6. **Use AI intentionally.** Use it as a tool for structure, support, and reflection-not as a replacement for your emotional wisdom.

The Gentle Truth About New Beginnings

Every ending in your life-every old habit, old relationship dynamic, old belief-hands you a doorway to begin again. You don’t need a new year. You don’t need January’s sparkle. You don’t need the perfect moment. You just need one small action. Then another. Then the belief that you are worthy of the promises you make to yourself. Because you are. And 2026 can be the year not of grand declarations- but of steady, meaningful, soul-aligned change.



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Anna Maria Pellegrini, Canada's Opera Butterfly 1939-2025

by Angelo Filoso

Maria (Anna) Pellegrini's story begins in Pretoro, Italy, a hill town in Abruzzo where music, language, and tradition are woven into everyday life. Born there in 1939, she grew up with the sound of Italy in her ear—songs in the home, voices in the street, and a culture where emotion is never far from the surface. That early environment mattered. Opera would later demand not only technique, but truth—and she learned “truth in the voice” long before she stepped on a stage.

In 1958, as a teenager, she immigrated to Canada, bringing with her the roots of her hometown and the determination of a newcomer building a life from scratch. In Toronto, she pursued



formal training at the Royal Conservatory of Music, shaping raw talent into disciplined craft. Those years were about foundations: breath, resonance, languages, and the difficult work of learning how to carry a character's entire world in a single phrase.

Her breakthrough came as her career gathered momentum with the Canadian Opera Company in the 1960s. She became known as a lyric soprano with the kind of voice that could move from tenderness to strength without losing its warmth. Among the roles that defined her artistry, Cio-Cio-San in Madama Butterfly stood out—partly because it demands so much stamina, but mostly because it demands a heart. Pellegrini's Butterfly wasn't just sung; it was lived. In 1977, she brought the role to an even wider audience through a CBC Television broadcast, turning a theatre experience into something Canadians could witness in their living rooms.

As her reputation grew, so did her reach—performing across Canada and internationally, and continuing to build a career marked by musical intelligence and a deep respect for the audience. Ottawa became one of the important chapters of that journey. She performed with Opera Lyra Ottawa—including Mimi in La bohème (1980)—and her presence helped connect the city's opera community to a bigger Canadian tradition.

But her legacy is not only the roles she sang. It is also what she built. In 2004, she founded the Pellegrini Opera Company in Ottawa, creating a platform for opera to be produced, shared, and kept alive locally. Founding a company is an act of belief: belief in singers, in audiences, and in the idea that opera doesn't belong only to major capitals—it belongs wherever people are willing to listen.

From Pretoro to Ottawa, Maria Pellegrini's career reads like a bridge between worlds: Italian roots and Canadian stages, personal history and public performance, the old repertoire and the ongoing work of passing it forward. And in that bridge, her voice became more than a sound—it became a story other people could step into.





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VICA's inaugural gala, La Notte d'Oro, welcomed Vaughan into an enchanted Italian Renaissance piazza — a night where history, artistry, and community came alive.

From towering Renaissance-inspired trees to tables adorned with real fruit woven through candlelight, guests were immersed in a living still-life that invited them to experience culture, not just observe it. Italian serenades by saxophonist Sandra filled the room as guests were greeted with prosecco, followed by a culinary showcase by The Jewel Event Centre's Exclusive Executive Chef, Thierry Rea, where food became art. A captivating operatic performance by Angelica DiCastro, and an energetic set by NGR, carried the celebration late into the night.

More than an elegant gala, La Notte d'Oro marked the beginning of a cultural movement.

Founded to honour Italian heritage while creating opportunities for the future, VICA is committed to celebrating culture through cuisine, art, music, fashion, and education. Funds raised support community initiatives, including scholarships for young people in the arts and fashion, and partnerships with organizations such as Centro Scuola e Cultura Italiana.

La Notte d'Oro was not simply a night to remember — it was the start of a tradition rooted in pride, belonging, and the enduring spirit of Italian culture in Vaughan. Know more about VICA on their website: VicaVaughan.com

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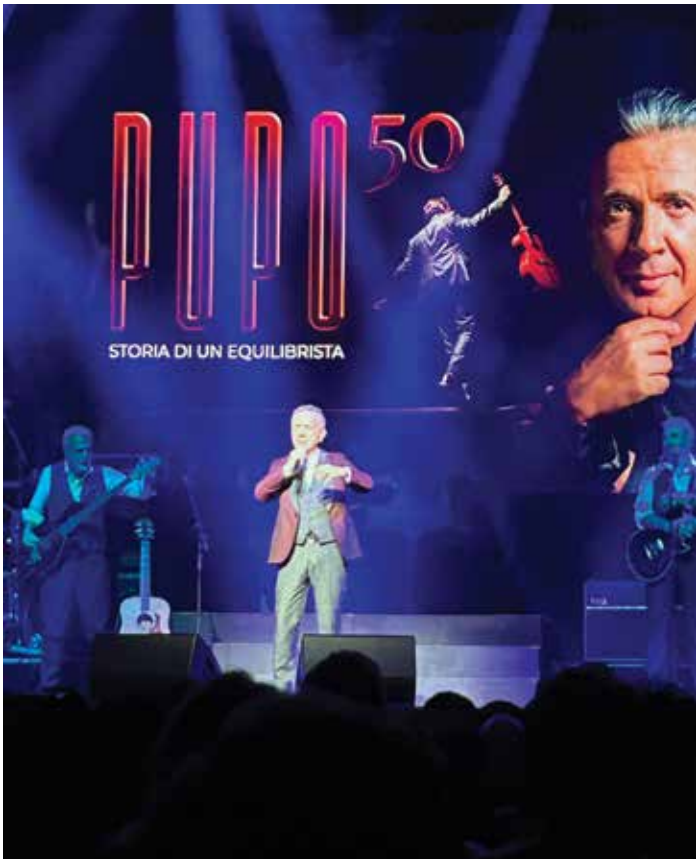
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2025 marks the 50 Anniversary in the music industry for Singer/Songwriter PUPPO - Enzo Ghinazzi. The Italian icon, also celebrated his 70 birthday on September 11th now known as 70 years of ENZO and 50 years of PUPPO day! To commemorate this milestone, PUPPO recently released a new single "Insieme" and launched a spectacular World Tour celebrating 50 successful years in the entertainment business. Here are some highlights of his live performance at the Avalon Theatre, Niagara Falls on Saturday November 8, 2025.



Celebrating Pupo's 50th anniversary in the music industry and his 70th birthday at Two Sisters Vineyards, Niagara on the Lake



Pupo touring Stone Eagle Winery in Niagara on the Lake with Italian Celebrity Chef Gino D'Acampo.



Olympia Bevilacqua, President of the Abruzzo Federation of Canada having Pupo sign a postcard



Pupo with Josie Alonzi, Editor of the magazine The Voice in Action



Pupo with members of the Federation Abruzzese of Canada from Ottawa.

The Lazio Federation of Ontario Celebrated its 40th Anniversary



Our Community In Action



Villa Marconi long term care centre hosts meet and greet event for the Italian Ambassador- in Canada.



VICA's inaugural gala, "La Notte d'oro"
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