



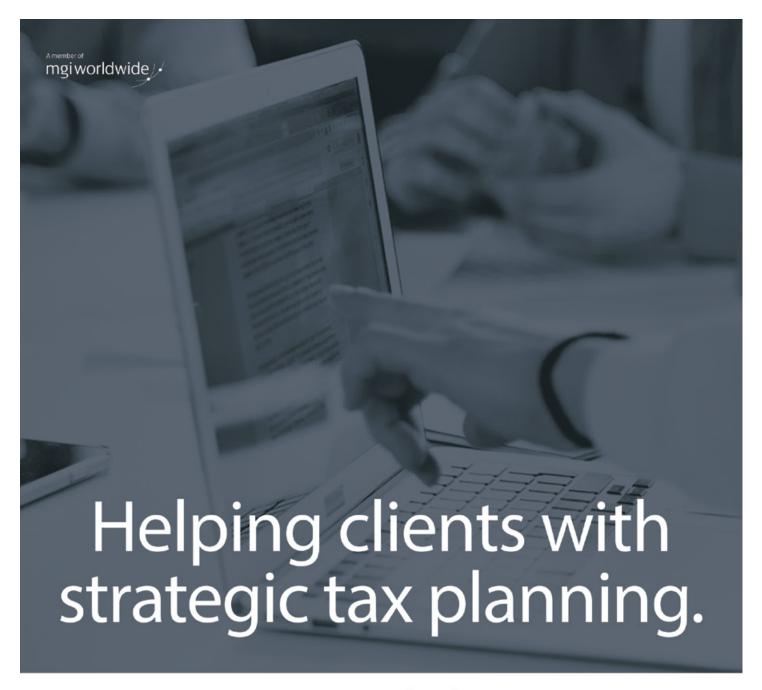
January / February 2025 Volume 6 - Issue 1



Fighting for the Next Generation,
Minister Stephen Lecce Delivers Results

Feature Story on page 16





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# Letter from the Editor



### 2025 is here!

A new year brings new possibilities, challenges, and hopes. It's a time to reflect on the past while looking forward to what lies ahead. What does one look for in a new year? Perhaps it's a sense of renewal, a chance to create meaningful goals, or simply finding joy in the small moments that make life so special.

This year, *The Voice in Action* celebrates its 5th Anniversary.

Launched during the unprecedented challenges of the 2020 lockdown, it has grown into a cherished part of our community. That difficult year is one none of us will ever forget, but it also reminds us of how much we can achieve when we work together with resilience and determination.

In this issue, I chose to feature a very humble and inspiring leader: Stephen Lecce, MPP for King-Vaughan. From the very first day of the election in 2018, I have followed his journey closely. He has brought a fresh perspective and unwavering dedication to his role. His deep commitment to education, family values, and building a better future for Ontario continues to make a lasting impact. His story serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of staying true to our roots and ensuring that family remains a priority in our lives. With Valentine's Day just weeks away, let us not forget to cherish

and celebrate our loved ones and neighbours. It's an opportunity to pause, reflect, and show gratitude for those who make our lives richer. And as we look forward to Family Day in February, let's embrace the time to gather with those close to us—whether near or far—and appreciate the connections that ground us.

As we navigate this new year, I encourage you to look for moments of joy, acts of kindness, and opportunities to strengthen your bonds with others. Let's make 2025 a year to remember, filled with purpose and positivity. Wishing you and your family all the best in 2025.

Cheers! Josie Alonzi





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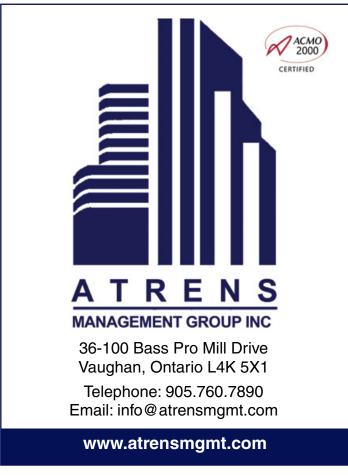
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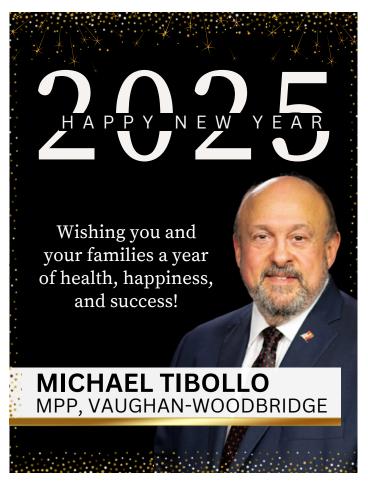
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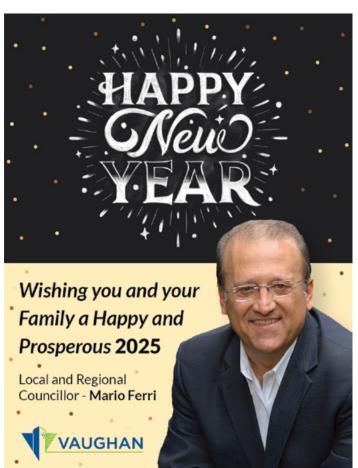


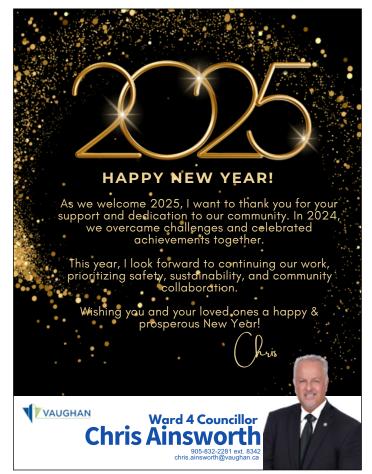
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# New Year, New YOU: A Fresh Start After the Holidays

By Dr. Sarah Capetola, ND

The holidays bring joy, connection, and indulgence—savouring festive meals, sweet treats, and celebratory drinks. But when January arrives, many of us feel sluggish, bloated, and out of sync. The new year is the perfect time to reset and refresh, letting go of the excess and embracing healthier habits.

The key to recovery isn't extreme detoxes or drastic diets—it's about giving your body gentle support to restore balance.

Holiday indulgences, especially rich foods and sugary treats, can leave digestion sluggish and energy depleted. Begin by hydrating. Start each day with a glass of water and a squeeze of lemon to kickstart digestion and rehydrate. Throughout the day, focus on nutrient-dense foods like vibrant vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains to fuel your body and stabilize energy.

Your liver, the body's natural detox powerhouse, can also use support. Incorporate liver-supporting foods like leafy greens, broccoli, and beets, while cutting back on alcohol and processed foods. Pair this with consistent hydration to flush out toxins and keep your body functioning optimally.

Movement is another important part of the reset. After a season of lounging and feasting, gentle activities like walking, yoga, or stretching can ease your body back into a routine. These activities also improve circulation, reduce stress, and promote overall wellness without the pressure of intense workouts.

Equally important is resetting your mind. The new year is about progress, not perfection. Set realistic goals, like prioritizing home-cooked meals or improving sleep quality, to create sustainable habits. Small changes can lead to big results when approached with consistency and care.

The holidays may have left their mark, but they're also a reminder of life's simple pleasures. Use this fresh start to embrace nourishing choices that leave you feeling vibrant, balanced, and ready to take on the year ahead. By focusing on restoration rather than restriction, you'll create a path to wellness that's as joyful as the season you've just celebrated.

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# The Modern Family: Navigating Communication, Intimacy, and Balance

# By Dr. Mary Marano

In today's fast-paced, always-connected world, modern couples and families face unique challenges that test their resilience, communication skills, and ability to balance competing priorities. As a psychotherapist and relationship expert, I often encounter recurring themes that disrupt harmony within families. Issues like miscommunication, strained intimacy, navigating extended family dynamics, and managing work-life balance are increasingly common. Here, we'll explore these challenges and offer actionable tips to strengthen relationships amidst modern stressors.

# 1. Communication Challenges: Speaking But Not Being Heard

One of the most common issues couples and families face is ineffective communication. Despite the rapid increase of messaging apps and constant digital connectivity, true connection often gets lost in translation. Misunderstandings arise from unclear messages, assumptions, and a lack of active listening. For families, this can lead to feelings of disconnection and frustration.

#### Common Issues:

- Assumptions: Partners often assume they know what the other is thinking or feeling, which can lead to misinterpretations.
- Conflict Avoidance: Families may avoid difficult conversations, fearing conflict, which allows resentment to build over time.
- Over-Reliance on Digital Communication: Texts and emails can lack the nuance and emotional depth of face-to-face conversations.

### Tips to Improve Communication:

- Practice Active Listening: Focus on truly understanding the other person's perspective without immediately formulating a response. Paraphrasing their words can help confirm understanding.
- Use "I" Statements: Instead of blaming, frame concerns with "I feel" statements to express emotions constructively.
- Schedule Regular Check-Ins: Set aside time each week to discuss issues or share feelings without distractions.

#### 2. Intimacy Struggles: Rekindling Connection

Intimacy often suffers under the weight of daily responsibilities and stress. This doesn't only mean physical intimacy but also emotional closeness. Busy schedules, work demands, and childcare responsibilities leave little room for couples to nurture their bond.

#### **Common Issues:**

- Routine Fatigue: Over time, couples may feel stuck in repetitive routines, leading to emotional distance.
- Stress and Exhaustion: When stress levels are high, intimacy is often the first casualty.
- Lack of Vulnerability: Emotional intimacy requires openness and vulner ability, which many couples struggle to maintain.

#### Tips to Strengthen Intimacy:

- Prioritize Quality Time: Schedule date nights or activities that foster connection, even if it's just 30 minutes at the end of the day.
- Express Appreciation: Small gestures of gratitude can go a long way in making partners feel valued.
- Be Physically Present: Even small moments of physical connection—like holding hands or a hug—can nurture intimacy.

#### 3. Navigating In-Law Dynamics

Managing relationships with extended family can be a significant source of stress. Expectations from in-laws, cultural differences, and differing parenting philosophies can lead to conflict.

## **Common Issues:**

• Unclear Boundaries: Couples often struggle to establish boundaries with in-laws, leading to over-involvement or intrusion.

- Loyalty Conflicts: One partner may feel torn between their family of origin and their spouse.
- Cultural Differences: Varying traditions and expectations can strain relationships.

## Tips for Navigating In-Law Relationships:

- Set Boundaries Together: Couples should agree on boundaries and present a united front to their families.
- Practice Empathy: Try to understand in-laws' perspectives while asserting your needs respectfully.
- Limit Engagement in Conflict: Avoid getting drawn into family conflicts; focus on maintaining harmony without compromising your values.

#### 4. Juggling Work-Life Balance

The modern world blurs the boundaries between work and home, leaving families struggling to find equilibrium. The rise of remote work has added another layer of complexity, as work often infiltrates personal time.

#### **Common Issues:**

- Overwork: Long hours or an inability to "switch off" leads to burnout and decreased family engagement.
- Role Overload: Parents often feel overwhelmed managing their professional responsibilities alongside household duties.
- Unequal Distribution of Labor: Disparities in how domestic responsibilities are shared can cause resentment.

## Tips for Balancing Work and Family:

- Set Clear Boundaries: Designate work hours and stick to them. Avoid checking emails during family time.
- Delegate Responsibilities: Share household tasks equitably, and don't hesitate to seek external help if possible.
- Focus on Quality Over Quantity: Even small, meaningful interactions can strengthen bonds if time is limited.

## 5. Managing Stress as a Family

Chronic stress affects not just individuals but entire families. When one family member is stressed, it often impacts the entire household dynamic.

#### ommon Issues

- Emotional Spillover: Stress from work or other areas of life can lead to irritability and conflict at home.
- Unhealthy Coping Mechanisms: Overeating, substance use, or avoidance behaviors can further strain relationships.
- Parental Stress: Parents often feel pressure to provide for their children while being emotionally present, leading to guilt and burnout.

## **Tips for Managing Family Stress:**

- Create a Stress-Relief Plan: Encourage each family member to identify and practice stress-relief techniques, such as exercise, journaling, or mindfulness.
- Model Healthy Coping: Children learn by observing their parents, so demonstrate constructive ways to handle stress.
- Build a Support System: Lean on friends, extended family, or professional resources for support when needed.

Modern life presents numerous challenges for couples and families, but with intentional effort and open communication, these challenges can be overcome. Prioritize connection, set boundaries, and practice empathy to foster a supportive and resilient family environment. By focusing on small, consistent actions, families can create a foundation of love and understanding that endures through life's inevitable stresses.



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# Attract, Accept, Integrate and Retain: Canada Needs to be Better at Keeping our Immigrants

by The Honourable Senator Tony Loffreda

#### 1-800-FIX-LEAK!

Canada needs to call a plumber because we have a leaky bucket, and we are losing immigrants at alarming rates.

New data published this month from the Institute of Canadian Citizenship, and conducted by the Conference Board of Canada, shows us that Canada is great at attracting newcomers but is struggling in making sure these individuals make Canada their permanent home.

According to Daniel Bernhard, CEO of the Institute, Canada must be equally concerned with how immigrants fare after arrival, and whether we can deliver a positive experience that persuades them to stay and contribute long-term. This is the message he conveyed to parliamentarians, policymakers, and stakeholders at a briefing session I hosted on Parliament Hill in honour of the release of a new report entitled "The Leaky Bucket 2024: A Closer Look at Immigrant Onward Migration in Canada."



We learn Canada is losing one in every five immigrants to onward migration in the long term. This is perhaps shocking for some considering the reputation we enjoy as a welcoming nation. But the reality on the ground is that immigrants are telling us: Thanks Canada, but no thanks!

We also discover that nearly half of onward migrants came to Canada under the economic immigration category which means we are losing many individuals that were chosen specifically to contribute to our economy, improve our productivity, earn a decent living and pay taxes.

"Historically, immigration has been a vehicle for Canada to advance GDP growth, ease labour shortages, improve the worker-to-retiree ration, and enrich multiculturalism, says the Institute. Onward migration, particularly in the early years, jeopardizes Canada's ability to meet these goals."

What is more, Canada's post-secondary institutions have a global reputation of attracting the best and the brightest students from around the world. Although this may be the case, the Institute's findings show us that immigrants

who arrived as international students have higher rates of onward migration than those who arrived as foreign workers or permanent residents. As a result, when these students return home or choose another international destination instead, investments in settlement and integration programs are lost. As the report stipulates,



depending on the age and stage at which an immigrant leaves, broader investments in education, skills, and training can also go unfulfilled.

As a bilingual nation, Canada has always been an attractive destination for French-speaking immigrants. Indeed, the federal government recently announced more ambitious immigration targets to support growth in francophone minority communities. The timing of this announcement could not have come at a better time because Canada is losing 35% of its French-speaking immigrants over the long term. This is a worrying trend, particularly because the demographic weight of francophones outside Québec is dropping. For this reason, the Institute recommends that we further develop integration services for French-speaking immigrants, with an emphasis on retention.

Equipped with all these new findings, the Institute is now calling on the government to integrate retention targets into its immigration policy blueprint to help develop tailored policies and practices. I think this is a brilliant idea. Clearly, we have an immigration retention challenge, and it would be to Canada's benefit to set specific targets, track our retention rates and adjust our planning priorities to achieve better overall outcomes.

As the report proposes, "to effectively address retention, policymakers need a deeper understanding of both the short- and long-term consequences of onward migration."

I remain convinced that Canada is one of the most attractive destinations for immigrants and Canadians are kind, generous and welcoming people. But this data on onward migration is telling us that we can and must do better at retaining and integrating the people we carefully select to make Canada their home. Governments at all levels, policymakers and community organizations have a big role to play in ensuring the successful integration and retention of immigrants. However, I also believe that Canadians have an equally important part to play in making these newcomers feel at home, welcomed, and supported.

Turns out, we might all have to be plumbers ourselves to fix the problem and seal this leaky bucket so we can ensure the talent we attracted stays in Canada. Our economy's growth and our nation's prosperity depend on it.

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Nadia Nascimben: Transforming Lives Through Careopoly Immigration Services

### By Blerina Ruka

Every year, thousands of immigrants dream of building a better future in Canada, but for many, the path is filled with uncertainty and obstacles. Families are separated, careers are put on hold, and the paperwork can feel insurmountable. At Careopoly Immigration Services, they believe no one should face these challenges alone. In the ever-evolving landscape of immigration, one name stands out for redefining the industry with integrity, compassion, and unparalleled expertise: Nadia Nascimben, founder and executive director of Careopoly Immigration Services. As a Regulated Canadian Immigration Consultant (RCIC), Nadia's mission is clear: to simplify immigration, create opportunities, and transform lives. Through her leadership, Careopoly has become a dependable resource for individuals, families, and businesses navigating Canada's complex immigration system.

"Immigration isn't just about policies and paperwork," Nadia explains. "It's about opening doors to new opportunities and brighter futures."

# **Careopoly: Your Trusted Partner in Immigration**

Careopoly Immigration Services, under Nadia's leadership, collaborates with a trusted network of RCICs across Canada, including locations in Vaughan, Cobourg, Mississauga, Fort Erie, and Brampton. With a multilingual team fluent in over 20 languages, the company combines compassionate guidance with strategic partnerships. By partnering with RCICs in these locations, Careopoly ensures clients benefit from localized expertise, streamlined processes, and culturally informed support, making the immigration journey seamless and effective. Whether you're pursuing permanent residency, reuniting with loved ones, or addressing labor shortages, Careopoly is dedicated to understanding your story, crafting customized solutions, and delivering meaningful results.

# **How Careopoly Can Help You**

Careopoly Immigration Services treats every client's story as unique, tailoring solutions to meet individual needs. Whether someone is seeking a fresh start, reuniting with loved ones, or exploring opportunities in Canada, they guide you every step of the way.

## **Building Families, Building Futures**

- Family Reunification: Helping families come together through spousal sponsorships, parent and grandparent super visas, and other sponsorship programs.
- Permanent Residency and Citizenship: Guiding you through Express Entry, Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs), and humanitarian applications to help you settle and thrive.

# **Opportunities for Your Career and Education**

- Work and Study Permits: Securing work permits, intra-company transfers, study permits, and post-graduation work permits.
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## **Expert Help When You Need It Most**

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# Why Choose Careopoly?

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## Changing Lives, One Story at a Time

At the heart of Careopoly is a belief that immigration is more than a process—it's a journey that shapes futures. Every client has a story, and every success fuels their mission.

#### **Real Stories from Our Clients**

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- The Mendez Family, reunited after years apart.

"Careopoly's direction in LMIA programs enabled us to successfully hire skilled professionals, addressing critical workforce needs."

– Carlo Rafat, CEO,Director, Rafat General Contractor Inc.

#### Take the Next Step

At Careopoly, every step of your immigration journey is met with expertise, empathy, and dedication. Let them help you turn the page to a brighter future—because your story deserves the best beginning.

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# Fighting for the Next Generation, **Minister Stephen Lecce Delivers Results**

By Angelo Filoso

Stephen Lecce is a dedicated and common-sense Minister committed to upholding the immigrant and core Canadian values on which he was raised. His mission is to represent the next generation—to fight for their future and for common sense. Born in Toronto and raised in Vaughan, Stephen discovered his passion for public service at a young age. Deeply grateful to his parents and grandparents for their hard work and sacrifices, he credits his upbringing, and the values instilled in him—respect, hard work, and service as the foundation of his commitment to serve the people of King-Vaughan and his senior role in Ontario's government.

Stephen's childhood in Vaughan was shaped by community involvement and strong family ties. He attended St. Margaret Mary Elementary School, played in the Vaughan Soccer League, and played hockey, while teaching Catechism at his local church. His mother, Theresa, supported him as a devoted hockey mom, while his father, Ray, volunteered as a general manager for the



was involved in the Vaughan Vipers OHA team. These formative experiences taught Stephen the importance of leadership, teamwork, and community service. Supported by mentors who encouraged him to stand up for his beliefs, Stephen discovered his passion for leadership

Vaughan Rangers and

Stephen and his parents, Ray and Theresa.

at an early age. He attended St. Michael's College School, where he received a Catholic education and was encouraged to relentlessly pursue his goals.

Stephen's grandparents Rosa and Vincenzo on his father's side, and Anna (Nina) and Francesco on his mother's side were instrumental in shaping his values. His grandmother Rose, who is turning 100 this year, and his grandmother Nina, who is turning 101, exemplified resilience and determination. Rose stood out as a trailblazer of her generation. Despite the challenges of being a new immigrant, she worked hard, saved diligently, and made wise stock investments that enabled her family to purchase their first home a rarity for women of her time. Her financial foresight helped her husband, Vincenzo, start a business, laying the foundation for the family's success in Canada. Stephen proudly honours the sacrifices and achievements of his grandparents, especially the women, who inspired him with their strength, intelligence, and work ethic.

Stephen's father Ray, was born in Frosinone, Italy and his mother Theresa, was born near Bari, Puglia. Theresa immigrated to Canada through Pier 21 and settled in Montreal, where she attended a convent school and learned French, despite the challenges of adapting to a new language and culture. Ray arrived in Canada through Ellis Island, New York, with his mother, Rose, and brother, Rico, carrying just one suitcase to begin their



Stephen meeting Pope Francis.

new life. Vincenzo had journeved ahead to Ontario to secure work and sent money to bring his family to Canada. The family's arrival in North America, marked by the sight of the Statue of Liberty, symbolized their "arrival to the new world" in the pursuit of freedom and opportunity. Stephen takes great pride in their story of sacrifice and the opportunities they created for future generations.

This is what motivates Stephen today—the ideals of building a better future for our children and grandchildren.

At just 12 years old, Stephen launched his first political initiative by writing an email to Al Paladini, who had recently won re-election in the Vaughan-King-Aurora electoral riding. To his amazement, Minister Paladini personally called Stephen's home to thank him. This simple but impactful gesture left a lasting impression on Stephen and inspired him to pursue a life in politics.

While studying at Western University, Stephen was elected President of the Student Association in 2009. That same week, he received a call from the Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Office, offering him an opportunity to work in Ottawa. Serving as the Director of Media Relations and Chief Spokesperson for the



Stephen with Canada's 22nd Prime Minister and former boss, Stephen Harper.

Prime Minister, Stephen traveled the world, meeting leaders such as Pope Francis, and promoting Canadian values and trade interests on the global stage. These experiences deepened his commitment to promoting freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. This further fueled his passion for public service.

Since being elected in 2018, Stephen has delivered significant projects for King-Vaughan, including opening the Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital ahead of schedule, the establishment of Canada's first medical school focused on graduating family doctors adjacent to the Vaughan Hospital, expansions at Hospice Vaughan beds, and a new CT-Scanner at Southlake Hospital. He has also announced two new long-term care facilities in Vaughan and King, providing over 400 new spaces for our aging loved ones. He also delivered infrastructure improvements, including a brand-new elementary school and an expanded school in Kleinburg, reduced childcare costs by 50%, and invested in a new youth mental health hub, soon-to-be-opened in Maple.

"My number one priority is to serve the families of our community. That is what I have done, and it is what I will continue to do, while advancing common sense values of safer streets, lower taxes, and opposition to the Liberal carbon tax."



Minister Stephen Lecce in Napanee getting shovels in the ground at one of the largest battery storage projects in eastern Ontario.

His leadership has focused on addressing local priorities while collaborating with other ministers, both Vaughan and King Mayors and Councils to achieve impactful results.

As Ontario's youngest and longest-serving Minister of Education since Premier Davis' government, Stephen spearheaded a return to core learning fundamentals such as reading, writing, arithmetic, and financial literacy. He also emphasized the importance of parental involvement in education. During his watch, Minister Lecce banned cellphones in classrooms, updated the curriculum to reflect Canadian citizenship values knowing sacrifices made to secure democracy. Now serving as Minister of Energy and Electrification, Stephen is leading the largest nuclear energy expansion in Ontario's history, positioning the province as a global leader in clean and affordable energy.

Stephen's leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that doing what is right often requires moral courage and the willingness to challenge the status quo. He is committed to bringing fresh energy. passion, and thoughtfulness to politics for the benefit of the next generation. His dedication to improving the quality of life for Canadians is unwavering, inspired by those time-tested immigrant values which live on in his heart and mind.

Reflecting on his journey, Stephen remarked, "Leadership is about standing up for what is right—not what is easy. I believe in our country, our values and in common sense—and these are the principles that are guiding me as MPP in Premier Ford's Progressive Conservative government"



MPP Stephen Lecce with Premier Doug Ford hosting a large group of seniors from Vaughan at Queen's Park



MPP Lecce with King Township's Mayor, Steve Pellegrini & Vaughan's Deputy Mayor Linda Jackson announcing a \$29 milllion dollar investment to connect more homes with



MPP Stephen Lecce at the King City Seniors' Centre announcing at \$14,500 grant to support seniors social programs.



MPP Stephen Lecce with Premier Doug Ford announcing the construction of the new York University Medical School located beside the Cortelluci Vaughan Hospital.



Vaughan Hospital.



MPP Stephen Lecce at Pope Francis Catholic Elementary School delivering a \$1.6 million dollar investment to build a 10-classroom portapack this is in addition to the state-of-the-art Tanya Khan Public School that opened in September 2024 with a child care centre.





MPP Stephen Lecce with local seniors celebrating Italian Heritage Month.

MPP Stephen Lecce at the annual Run for Vaughan in support of Mackenzie Health.



MPP Stephen Lecce delivering the Cortelluci Vaughan Hospital.



Minister Lecce & Mayor Pellegrini at the Zancor Community Centre - opening January 2025.





MPP Stephen Lecce announcing a new long-term care home beside the Cortellucci



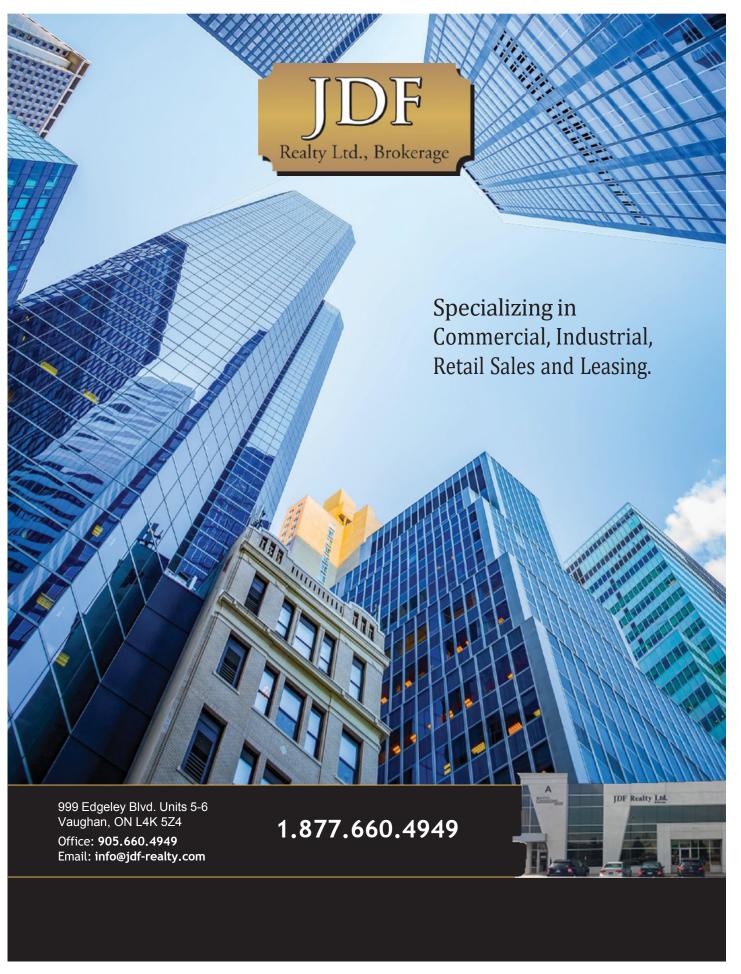
MPP Stephen Lecce at Southlake Regional Health Centre delivering the first PET-CT scanner in York Region.



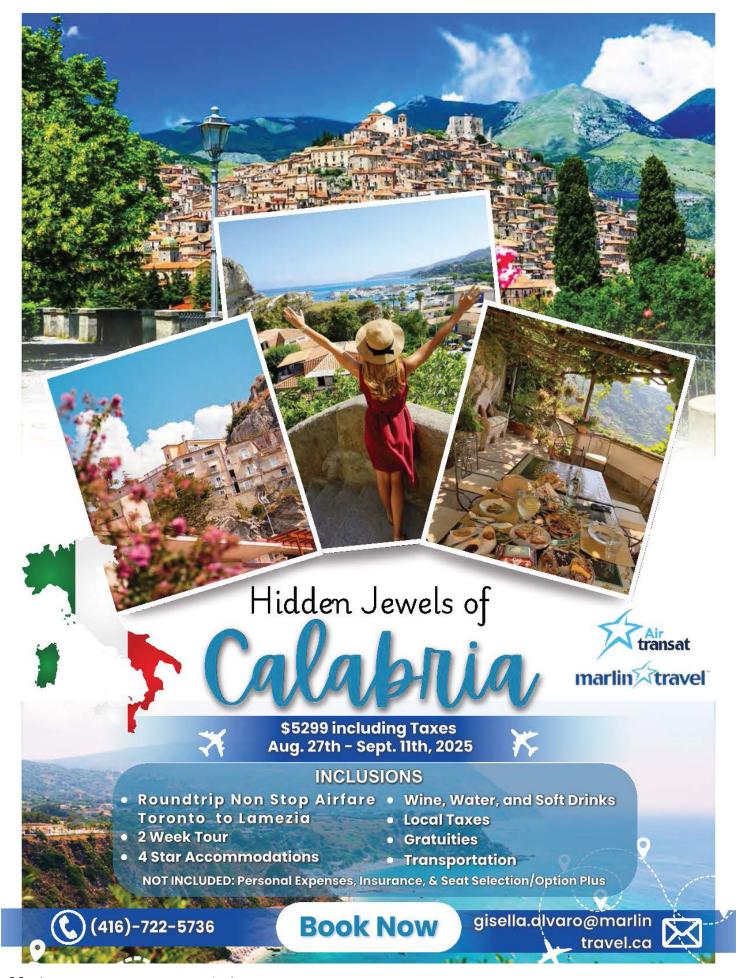
Stephen Lecce and his mother, Theresa.



MPP Stephen Lecce joined by Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation, Laura Smith, MPP for Thornhill, Chris Ainsworth, Vaughan's Ward 4 Councillor and dedicated GO train staff to unveil the new & improved Rutherford GO station.



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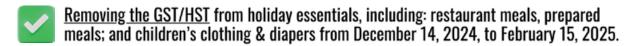
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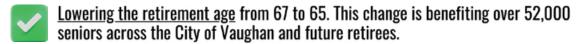


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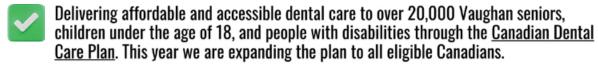
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Arbor Memorial Inc.

# Our Community In Action

Village Reunion 42nd Annual Dinner and Social Night, Ottawa





























# Our Community In Action







Minister Champagne visits Vaughan-Woodbridge with local MP Francesco Sorbara.



The sisters of Our Lady of Mount Carmel annual fundraiser.



Castagne Night with the Honourable Member Mike Tibollo and Premier Doug Ford with Guests.



Garibaldi seniors Association with Mayor Steven Del Duca and Councillor Chris Ainsworth.



The Honourable Francesco Sorbara recognizes community leaders at the Calabria Association of Ontario Remembrance Day with the Honourable Member Francesco Sorbara.





Senator Tony Loffreda recognized for five year service in the Canadian Senate.



The Esteriore Brothers Concert with organizers Joe Tersigni, Tony Rosa and Editor Josie Alonzi.







Angela Poletto - Associate director of community engagement at McMichael Canadian Art Collection visits Czechia with mom Jana to meet aunt Helena and cousin Marek to celebrate Uncle Evzens 100th Birthday.









Lazio Gala held on Friday November 2024 at Montecassino.

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