

ALL WE
NEED *is* LOVE

A Free Magazine for Parents and Caregivers

THE Mom & CAREGIVER™

FEBRUARY 2020
VOLUME 22 ISSUE 2

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- EDITORIAL 04**
Everyday is Love Day
- 05 EVENTS CALENDAR**
February
- NEW BEGINNINGS 06**
The Winter Blues
- 07 AS THEY GROW**
What is Family Love?
- DIGEST THIS 08**
Eating Disorders in Teens
- 09 ONE STEP AT A TIME**
One Love
- KID ZONE 11**
Staying Heart Healthy
- 12 FRANKLY FATHERHOOD**
Dad Shaming
- REVITALIZE YOU 13**
Winter Skin Care Tips
- 14 ARE WE THERE YET**
Cold War Intrigue at the Diefenbunker Museum
- BIZ SHOWCASE 16**
Lotus Health & Wellness
- 18 LET'S BE HONEST**
The Beautiful Art of Forgiveness
- PET FRIENDLY 19**
Cherish your Pet
- 20 FOOD FOR THOUGHT**
What are You Thankful for this Valentine's Day
- SPEAKING UP 21**
How to Raise a Reader
- 22 BEAUTY AND WELLNESS**
Sunsational Skin in Paradise

08



18



09



07



11



06



19



20



12



ON THE COVER

This trio was fabulous to work with! Twin brothers **Harry** and **Charlie** and girl-with-the-gorgeous-hair **Destyne** seemed to hit it off right away! All three were fun and kind and followed instructions so well. This Valentines photo shoot was simply full of love.

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EVERYDAY IS LOVE DAY

LOVE. That's what this month is famous for. Valentine's Day is typically a day we show romantic love to our special someone, but how about showing love the other 364 days of the year? And not just to someone we're romantically involved with, but to those children we're raising, to those friends who are family by choice, to those people we see daily, or rarely, who in some way make our life special?

First, let's define it. The dictionary explains love as "an intense feeling of deep affection". But maybe song lyrics do a better job of really describing it. The Beatles tell us "All you need is love". Queen asks "Can anybody find me somebody to love?" Elvis confesses he "Can't Help Falling in Love." And the O'Jays encourage "People all over the world, Join hands, Start a love train, a love train".

Well, here at The Mom & Caregiver magazine, we're ready to jump on that love train. We are always big proponents of loving yourself first. So we've included "Winter Skin Care Tips" (p. 13), ideas for "Staying Heart Healthy" (p. 11), and a reminder to practise gratitude in "What Are You Grateful for this Valentine's Day?" (p. 20) All of this is for you!

Next, we move on to loving those kiddos! "What is Family Learning?" (p. 6), "Eating Disorders in Teens" (p. 8), and "How to Raise a Reader" (p. 21) will make it easy for you to show the love to your children this month and always. Maybe share important family time together at Disney on Ice (like and share our Facebook page as we'll be showing the love this month – do you wonder how?) or Kidz Bop World Tour (you'll find details for these events on our Events page (p. 5) or www.themomandcaregiver.com/events).

Now, we know if you have that one special someone in your life, you may want to share some loving moments with them. Or grab a fun friend for a night out! You'll find ideas like Fondue for Two, a Blue Rodeo concert, a symphony orchestra or wine tasting on our Events page as well.

So let's raise a glass of wine or apple juice in celebration of two February holidays that should be celebrated year round! Happy Family Day and happy Valentine's Day to all! The Mom & Caregiver loves you and appreciates all the love you show us. 🍷

*The best medicine for humans is love.
“What if that doesn't work? Increase the dose.”*

- anonymous

FEB 02/2020 EVENTS

1ST

Gerry Dee: Alone. On Stage.,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

6TH

Breakfast for YOU
(Youth Opportunities Unlimited),
RBC Place London,
www.you.ca

12TH

Adult Monthly Cooking Class:
Date Night Fondue for Two,
Growing Chefs! Ontario,
www.growingchefsontario.ca

15TH

Discover Your Palette,
Dark Horse Estate Winery,
www.darkhorseestatewinery.com

21ST

Kidz Bop World Tour,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

23RD

Snow Much Fun Winter
Carnival hosted by
Montessori Academy of London,
Stronach Community Centre,
www.montessori.on.ca

29TH

Salsa Night,
London Music Hall,
www.londonmusicall.com

2ND

STEAM: Hot Chocolate Science,
London Children's Museum,
www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca

8TH

Blue Rodeo,
Budweiser Gardens,
www.budweisergardens.com

13TH

Western University Symphony
Orchestra: One Thousand and One
Sounds, Paul Davenport Theatre,
www.palacetheatre.ca

20TH

Disney on Ice presents
Celebrate Memories,
Budweiser Gardens,
www.londonpubliclibrary.ca

22ND

Coldest Night of the Year for
Mission Services of London,
Catholic Central High School,
www.missionservices.ca

27TH

Mom's the Word,
Palace Theatre,
www.palacetheatre.ca



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THE WINTER BLUES

SOLUTIONS *for* SADNESS



February is one of the most difficult months for us in Canada. It is one of the darkest and coldest months of the year. Although the days have started to lengthen, spring does not really seem foreseeable until the end of March. It is common to feel down during this time. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a well-defined clinical disorder where depression is experienced during the dark and cold months but remits at other times of the year. This depression may be characterized by low mood, excessive sleeping and overeating. Many people experience a lesser version of this - what we might call the winter blues.

A lack of sunlight has been proposed as one of the reasons for both SAD and the winter blues. Specific SAD lights are available to use for some time during the day to increase exposure to the ultraviolet light that we miss in the winter. A walk, even on an overcast day, for twenty minutes outdoors can also help to diminish this depression. Another proposed cause of this low mood is a lack of exercise. Exercise may also help to lift mood. We know that exercise can help to increase our “feel good” hormones known as endorphins.

There is little evidence for the use of Vitamin D to help with mood but using the “sunshine vitamin” during the cold months - from Thanksgiving to Easter - is recommended by Health Canada for other reasons and may help improve mood.

Paying attention to nutrition and self-care can also help to lessen depression. Social connectivity improves mood so getting out to meet friends or join a group at the library or at PUC may help.

In some Scandinavian countries, the dark months are embraced as a time to find comfort indoors, a concept often called “hygge”. A mindset that embraces this time of year is also helpful.

Finally, if mood does not improve with these lifestyle changes, you may require to seek help from your primary care practitioner or a mental health professional. We would never hesitate to seek treatment for a physical condition, and our mental health should be no different.

Wishing a winter of comfort and joy, and don't despair as spring is not far!! 🌸

Dr. Bhooma Bhayana is a family physician in London and the mother of two young men and grandmother of one lovely princess! She continues to find wonder and enjoyment in family practice despite more than 30 years on the job!

Newborn – Baby – Toddler

WHAT *is* FAMILY LEARNING?

Parents and caregivers are a child's first and most important teacher. Their words, interests, and actions are a powerful influence on their child's development, laying the foundation for a child's lifelong relationship to learning. This is the core of family learning.

Simply put, family learning is the learning family members engage in together over the course of their lifetimes. It takes place whenever a child is engaged with any caring adult in their lives. It occurs when members are participating in an activity together; but it also takes place when a family is discussing an experience had elsewhere, like at work or at school.

Through family learning, parents and caregivers have a unique opportunity to help their children access knowledge beyond their normal reach. This idea, known as the zone of proximal development, suggests there's so much children are able to learn and understand when they are supported by a caring adult.

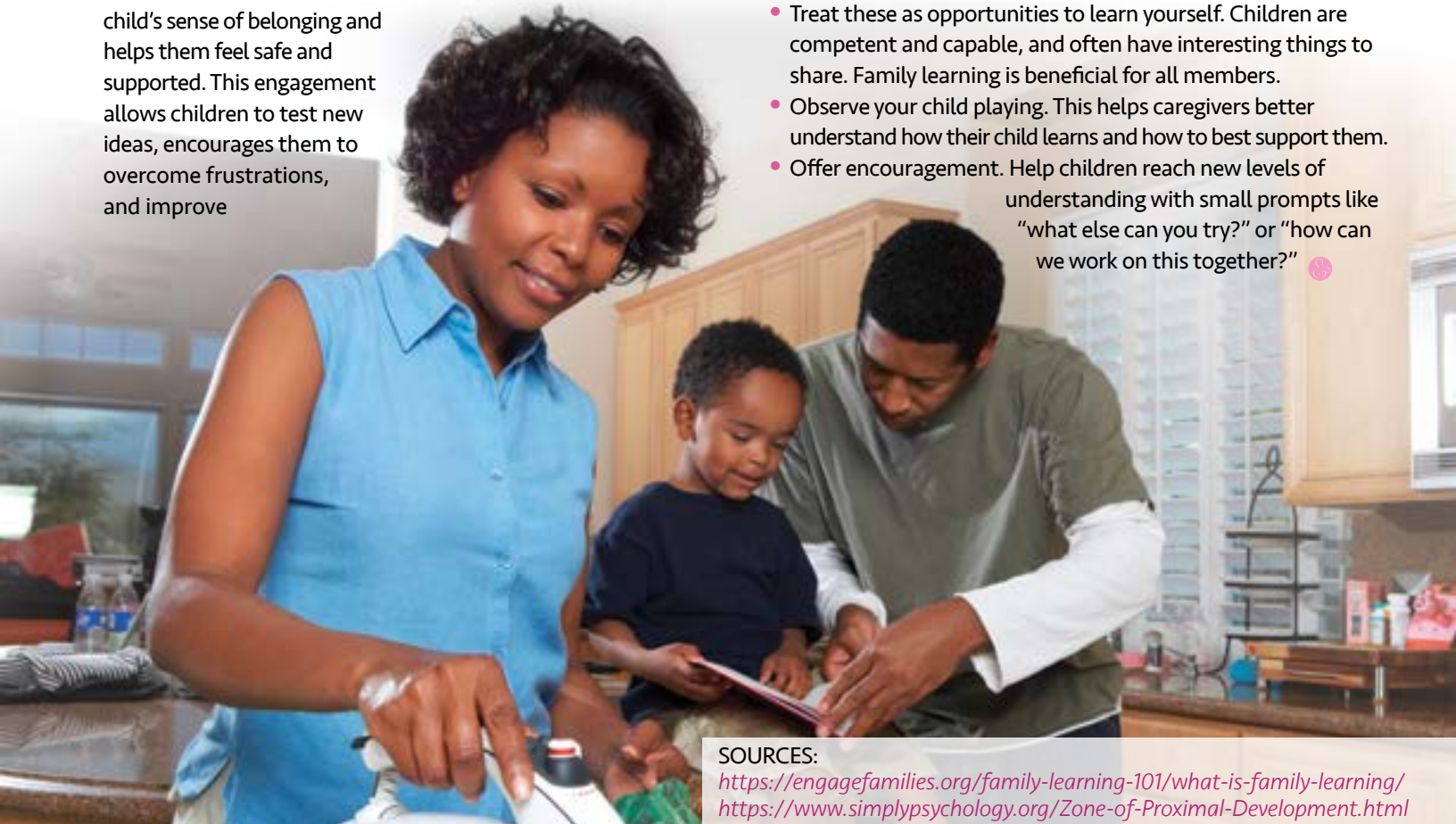
When caregivers actively engage in learning with their child, it demonstrates to the child that their ideas matter. It increases the child's sense of belonging and helps them feel safe and supported. This engagement allows children to test new ideas, encourages them to overcome frustrations, and improve

their resiliency. Family learning can have a positive long-term impact on a child's development.

With chronically overscheduled lives and a lack of quality family time, it is easy to feel like there isn't enough time to set aside for family experiences. Creating moments for positive family learning doesn't have to be difficult or time-consuming.

TO SUPPORT POSITIVE FAMILY LEARNING:

- Take time to play and learn with your child. For example, when it comes time to prepare meals, involve children in the cooking process.
- Turn weekly tasks, like grocery shopping or driving in the car, into opportunities for conversation, singing songs, or playing games.
- Let your child take the lead, even if they have a different method for accomplishing a task. This will give them a sense of accomplishment and independence.
- Ask your child how they would like you to be involved in their learning with questions like "where does this go?" or "what comes next?"
- Treat these as opportunities to learn yourself. Children are competent and capable, and often have interesting things to share. Family learning is beneficial for all members.
- Observe your child playing. This helps caregivers better understand how their child learns and how to best support them.
- Offer encouragement. Help children reach new levels of understanding with small prompts like "what else can you try?" or "how can we work on this together?"



SOURCES:

<https://engagefamilies.org/family-learning-101/what-is-family-learning/>
<https://www.simplypsychology.org/Zone-of-Proximal-Development.html>

EATING DISORDERS *in* TEENS

Eating disorders are psychological problems involving a disturbance in eating behavior. Teenagers of any gender are commonly affected, particularly those who were previously obese or overweight. Unhealthy habits may be formed to lose weight such as skipping meals or using laxatives or diet pills. When a large amount of body weight is lost too quickly, physical complications occur such as slow heart weight, low body temperature, low blood pressure, menstrual disturbances and body chemical imbalances. Pay careful attention to your teenager for dieting behaviors such as severe caloric restriction or reduction in food variety.

To prevent weight-related problems, discourage dieting, skipping meals or use of weight loss pills or laxatives. Avoid fad diets making unrealistic claims, and eliminating certain

foods or food groups. Promote sustainable healthy eating habits and physical activity behaviors. Help your teen maintain a healthy body image. Focus on healthy living instead of talking about weight. Frequent family meals are protective against obesity and eating disorders.

If you are concerned about an eating disorder in your teenager, discuss this with your child's doctor. Your doctor may perform history, physical exam and lab tests. Your teen may need a referral to a specialized eating disorder center for assessment and management. ●

Becky Biqi Chen was a resident in general pediatrics for three years at the Children's Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre. She is currently specializing in pediatric gastroenterology during her fellowship at the British Columbia Children's Hospital.



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ONE LOVE



Opportunities frequently present themselves when you least expect them. This was the case for me back in 2009. My daughter was travelling to Jamaica for two weeks as part of a parish summer camp. The church had been providing a summer skills camp to improve literacy, self-esteem and

life skills to Jamaican children for over 25 years. At the time, they were fundraising for a wheelchair for a young boy with spina bifida who lived in the hills of Jamaica and had never left his home. I had offered to provide a wheelchair and talked to the mom via satellite phone to determine his needs and size. Once I talked to Dante's mom I realized I could fit the boy with AFOs and provide an opportunity for him to walk.

I accompanied the church group and brought the young boy the wheelchair and bilateral AFOs. The experience was one which I will never forget. Standing in the middle of a sugar cane field in temperatures over 40 degrees Celsius, the entire community came out to see Dante leave his house for the first time. Everyone was thrilled, and there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd. I was hooked! The braces and wheelchair provided a life changing opportunity for both the boy and myself.

While I was in Jamaica I was approached by a retired nurse who was interested in setting up an orthopedic clinic where physically challenged children could get fitted for braces. The RIU hotel chain committed to financially supporting the paediatric orthotics clinic based in Negril. We have been running this clinic for over 10 years.

Over the years I have had the opportunity to volunteer and work side by side with the locals. I travel to Jamaica with a technician two to three times yearly with the stipulation that they bring two suitcases filled with used orthotic devices, socks and shoes. Usually we travel with 200 pounds of orthopedic braces and componentry. I provide my time, expertise and transportation. In return, I get all the Jamaican patties, jerk chicken, fresh mangos and hugs one could ask for.

The orthotics and prosthetics community in Canada has really shown their charitable character and support over the years. We have received donations from facilities and our clients. Gently used footwear, bracing and socks are greatly appreciated. Our services are provided completely free of charge. The majority of our patients otherwise could not afford the service.

We never know in advance what we are going to see, starting the day at 8 am and working until 8 pm. A four day clinic will be filled with 50 – 60 children with orthopedic concerns, cerebral palsy and spina bifida. There are over 250 children we regularly follow, spanning the entire island of Jamaica. Some will take three to four buses travelling all day to be seen, without a hint of complaint. They are just appreciative of the care they receive. They return home with a custom fit device, socks and footwear. By providing the appropriate care and footwear they now can attend school and participate in their communities.

The life of a physically challenged individual in a country without healthcare is extremely difficult, with many stigmas and hurdles. Over the years I have been blessed to follow the children and see their lives change with opportunities presented to them that otherwise they would likely never have experienced. Not only has this opportunity changed their lives, it has also changed ours. 🌸

*Dawn MacArthur Turner MSc CO c
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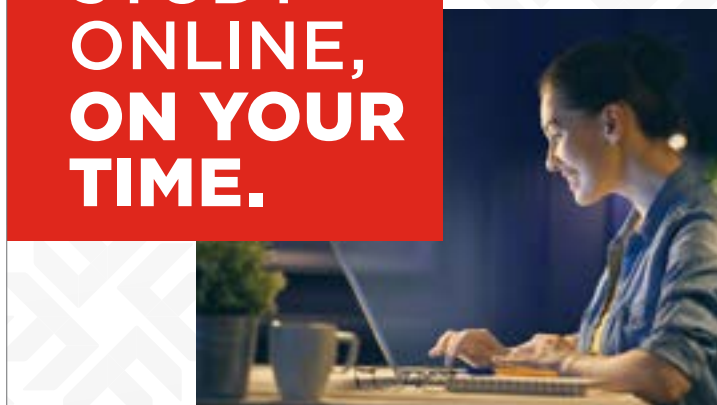
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February is Heart month, a time to bring attention to the importance of cardiovascular health. What are you doing to stay heart healthy?

Mikaeel: To stay heart-healthy, I am eating healthy and fibrous foods, as well as exercising.

Ella: I walk to school every day, workout whenever I have some free time, and participate in lots of sports and other activities that get me moving. I also try to eat pretty healthy.

What do you think adults could do to stay heart healthier?

Mikaeel: Adults could take the stairs instead of taking the elevator, as well as watching what they eat.

Ella: I think that since a fair amount of adults have office jobs, they might not get to be active very much. I think that they should try to get outside and do something at least once a day.

Do you have anyone you think about during Heart month and why?

Mikaeel: I think of my grandma because she had a stroke and did not survive.

Ella: So many of us have family or friends that have suffered with some sort of heart issue. Personally, I have a grandpa with a pacemaker, an aunt who had a stroke and another grandpa with stents. I am so thankful that they all got the help they needed and are doing great!

Give us a great exercise or healthy eating tip that helps the heart.

Mikaeel: One food that is helpful for your heart is fish because it contains omega 3.

Ella: Jump rope! I know you've probably heard this one before, but it is a really great way to get your heart pumping and it's also a ton of fun.

Give us a weird but interesting heart fact.

Mikaeel: Christmas day is the most common day of the year for heart attacks.

Ella: Your heart can still beat even if it's separated from your body. This is because your heart is not regulated by your brain. 🧠

Join 13-year
olds **Mikaeel** and **Ella**
every month as they share
perspectives on life
as a child sees it.

DAD SHAMING

Not that long ago, I saw an endearing photo of Daniel Craig (James Bond) carrying his baby daughter in a wrap-around carrier. I smiled thinking about the positive example he's setting and how meaningful it is to see major celebrities as engaged dads. And then I read the first comment under the photo: *#emasculatedBond*. I sighed. Soon after, I caught myself in the downward spiral of social media comments and dozens of unfortunate examples of dad-shaming.

Much has been written about mom-shaming in the media. Moms seem to be under the unrelenting and judgemental microscope the moment they become pregnant. They are raked over the coals for almost every decision they make – from pregnancy diets, breastfeeding, and going back to work; to dressing, feeding and disciplining their children. Yes, moms have it pretty bad. They are getting shamed from the media, from their families, and worst of all, from fellow moms.


On the other hand, there have been many positive strides in fatherhood in the last decade. We are seeing dads involved and very active in everyday parenting. More fathers are taking parental leaves, pushing strollers, volunteering in schools, and yes, carrying their babies in public. So to hear that dads are being ridiculed for their parenting decisions is very disappointing.

The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital in Chicago is studying this phenomenon and a recent survey shows that 44% of the dad-shaming comes from the child's other parent. I suppose that makes sense since our partner is closest to us when we are around our kids.

We're all guilty of stepping in when we feel our spouse isn't handling a parenting situation "correctly" and we've all barked unsolicited advice in the heat of a child-rearing argument. These make for the harshest of criticisms as they undercut the concept of parents working as a team. This kind of judgement implies that one parent – stereotypically mom – knows more about childcare than dad does. It's no surprise that some dads surveyed said they felt less confident in their abilities to parent and it made them want to be less involved with their children.

Other reported sources of dad-shaming included the child's grandparents (24%), strangers and social media (10%), friends (9%), and teachers/health care providers (5%). Discipline was the number one reason for being criticized, followed by being too rough, not paying enough attention, and meal choices.

Perhaps at the very root of shaming, there are some good intentions. We all want what's best for kids and when we see something we think is wrong, our knee-jerk reaction might not come out as intended. I speak for all dads when I say that we are far from perfect parents. Many of us didn't have ideal role-model fathers. We are learning the ropes as we go and we all want to be better. The punitive lens of criticism hurts us, and our relationship with our kids. Mom- and dad-shaming needs to stop and it starts with each one of us. Instead of using a judgemental tone, let's make a more positive effort to discuss our different parenting styles and come up with the best solutions for our kids. We don't have to put each other down to make a point and we can focus on helping each other be better parents. After all, we're in this together! 🧡



Frank Emanuele is a proud father of two sons, a special education teacher, and a director of Dad Club London.

WINTER SKIN CARE TIPS?

Winter in Canada can last as long as six months. We deal not only with cold temperatures, but also bitter winds. In the cold winter months, the skin's top layer will naturally become thicker to protect itself from the loss of moisture. But don't worry, there are few tips from my daily routine that will make your skin glow, even in the wintertime!

STEPS FOR THE AM

- 1 CLEANSER** - Choose one that's suitable for your skin type.
- 2 EXFOLIATE** - Do this once per week. Use a fine scrub or enzyme peel for oily, normal and combination skin; use an ultra gentle enzyme peel for sensitive, rosacea prone skin.
- 3 TONER** - This balances skin's PH level; use an astringent for oily skin.
- 4 10% AHA/BHA SERUM** - For use with oily, normal and combination skin to help dissolve dead skin cells and hydrate the epidermis layer. Do not apply to sensitive and rosacea prone skin (if so, skip this step).
- 5 MOISTURIZER** - Be sure to use an oil-free moisturizer for oily skin.
- 6 SUNSCREEN SPF 30-45** - This should contain at least 6% zinc oxide for UVA/UVB protection. Choose a sunscreen under 50 to lessen exposure to chemicals that are harsh to your skin.

STEPS FOR THE PM

- 1 REMOVE** makeup properly with botanical cleansing oil or micellar water, followed by a suitable skin cleanser to remove any residue.
- 2 FACIAL MASK** - Use this daily or weekly, depending on the instructions on the product.
- 3 TONER** - This will balance skin PH levels; use an astringent for oily skin.
- 4 RETINOL** - Aids in the skin cell turn-over process.
- 5 MOISTURIZER** - Optional for oily skin.

Make sure you drink plenty of water to keep hydrating your skin from the inside. A healthy and balanced diet can help your body detox naturally. Put your worries aside and get enough rest. Stress will limit sleep and inhibit blood flow, which are critical for your skin to regenerate.



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COLD WAR INTRIGUE *at the* DIEFENBUNKER MUSEUM



Have you been to Carp, Ontario? If you have, it's likely for one reason: to visit the Diefenbunker Museum, a 100,000 square foot, four-level fallout shelter designed to withstand a five-megaton nuclear blast. Located a short drive from Ottawa, The Diefenbunker was the country's best kept secret for 25 years – until it wasn't. Decommissioned in 1994, it was declared a National Historic Site and opened as a public museum three years later.

That's when Canada found out, during the Cold War, that the federal government built and ran a top-secret underground town designed to house select government and military members (and only them) if a nuclear bomb hit Ottawa. Stocked with 30 days of food rations for 535 people, the bomb shelter was equipped with a dentist's office, hospital, residences, offices and even vault, and ran as a top-secret communications hub 24 hours a day, employing 100 people at a time.



Now, it's a curious time capsule to an era when secrets could be kept, a remote farm could be excavated without question and vinyl records broadcast emergency messages over radio signals. Snaking through the narrow hallways and peering into staged rooms feels like moving through a mid-century institution crammed into a submarine.

Interesting history, but is it kid-friendly? Surprisingly, yes. Many little ones gleefully ran between floors the day I visited, hopping between metal desks in the boardroom and lifting phone receivers – a novelty for that generation. Yes, some things you can touch. The place was designed to sustain a bomb, after all.

Throughout the year, four-day spy camps run for the curious, ages six to 12. Apparently, the ominous sci-fi metal tunnel entrance to The Diefenbunker is only scary to those who lived this history. Open daily. Family admission rates available. 🧑👩👦👧

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Sherri Telenko is a freelance writer and blogger living in Southern Ontario. Sign up for travel ideas at www.dogtrotting.net or follow her on twitter @SherriTelenko.



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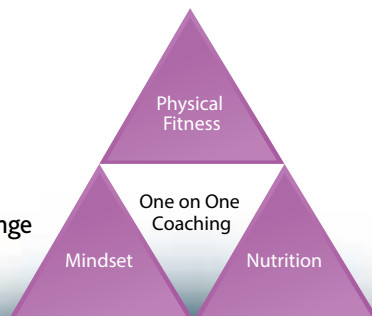
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Lotus Health & Wellness was founded by local Londoner Kelly Gallagher, M.Ed, after a number of years of personal experience with various fitness programs and health and wellness services. After many years spent as an educator she discovered that her own health, wellness and longevity journey could benefit others. This led her to create personalized programming in the areas of healthy eating, exercise and mindset for individuals wanting a full, vibrant and balanced life.

As a mother who also works, she really gets the challenges, effort and problem-solving that go into staying in good shape. "I developed my programming to keep on track for my own personal use" she laughs. "If not for the programs I'm positive I wouldn't eat healthy at all and I certainly wouldn't exercise as much as I do. I've made all of the mistakes in the past and used to struggle to keep in shape because of them," she says. Working with a number of health and fitness professionals, Lotus Health & Wellness provides personalized programming designed to guide you through developing the proper mindset to support healthy eating and fitness. Most people want to live their best and healthiest lives, but when faced with barriers such as raising a young family, careers and finding the energy to fit it all in, a lot give up on their health and wellness goals before achieving them.



Factoring in daily challenges such as building a positive mindset, in addition to addressing how to achieve significant weight loss, more time or elimination of chronic pain, Lotus Health and Wellness builds customizable programming that works for you. Once you've had your free initial assessment, a customized and time-flexible program is developed and you are able to choose from a number of programs including one week, six week and twelve week blocks of supportive coaching. Informed and relevant content, meal plans, recipes (family friendly too) and one-one or small group coaching are also available.

Lotus Health & Wellness also offers a unique anti-ageing program, including an exciting new and natural line of anti-ageing lip balms, and The Little Wellness Box - a specialty box filled with wellness treats each month, shipped to your door! How you move your body and what you eat should be as unique as you are!

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the BEAUTIFUL ART of FORGIVENESS

Has anyone ever done anything that has hurt you – from the heinous to the benign – that has led you to carry around a resentment with you? Me too. I mean, who doesn't hold some sort of grudge in these modern times? What with our swift social media responses, abuse epidemic and disconnection from each other, you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who is (as they say) resentment-free since '93. I cannot tell you the amount of times I have stiffened my heart against someone who has hurt me; I believe that our human instinct against emotional suffering often kicks in automatically when we feel that we have been wronged.

The problem with stiff hearts and resentments is the amount of space they occupy in our bodies, minds and souls. And perhaps, more accurately, is the kind of space that they take up, or how they do it - with clutter, heaviness and pain. I believe that if we wish to live a life of emotional freedom, we must begin to learn the beautiful art of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is, I often muse, the most mistaken concept there is. We often learn about forgiveness as children, with our tiny friends. In these circumstances, someone pulled our hair or pushed us, and the remedy was "forgive your brother". At these tender ages, we began to formulate that forgiveness meant saying, "OK, that's fine, don't do it again". However, as we age, we are no longer carrying around resentments about pulling our hair or taking our toys. Our anger and hurts come from big problems like divorce, abuse, trauma, broken friendships, addiction. Are we supposed to forgive that?

Here is where I want to explain the concept and act of forgiveness. Forgiveness is release. It is release of anger, resentments and the wish for vengeance. It is a deliberate act and process that you do, not to "OK" the actions of the other person, but to "OK" the inner workings of your soul. It is all about you and not the other person. Forgiveness is the act of releasing the wish that the past

could have been any other way. It is about changing our "story" around and turning it into one of compassion for self, survival and resilience. It is in taking our power back and releasing the hatred for the other.

I think that forgiveness is so often misunderstood that we ought to just re-name the whole thing entirely. Yet, calling it as it is now demands that we are willing to renegotiate our relationship with the term. I am a trauma therapist and trauma survivor, so I believe with a full heart that when we are abused, victimized or perpetrated against, we deserve to hold those who have crushed us to account. I believe in doing what we need to with these situations – whether that be all the way to the courts or in not pursuing legal action as it would just be too re-traumatizing.

However, even in these situations, the act of deliberate release sets us free. It is hard for me to think about forgiving my ex-husband in the traditional sense, however I can release those feelings of hatred and spite in place of something more soothing that also celebrates my own survival and resilience. That clears up space and helps me to place myself as the chief executor in my own life. It puts the power back into my hands. It allows me to remember that even though awful things happened, I survived them and I am free.

My wish for you is that during this month of love, you are able to pick a situation that has hardened your heart and you can begin to practice the decision and process of release. Fill yourself up with the good stuff, the compassion, the healing. Learn to soothe yourself and regulate your nervous system. Go gently and lovingly into your soul. You deserve peace.

May you be happy. 🌸

Jordan Thomas is a registered social worker and the owner of Nourish Counselling Services. Jordan works with women on improving their mental health and self-compassion. Follow along on IG @nourishcounselling.

CHERISH *the* PET

I recently had a scare with my senior dog, Roxy. When she started coughing, it brought back difficult memories of my husband's recent heart issues, and I was sure that we were going to have to make some tough decisions.

Once an agile collie-cross (an endearing term for, truly, a farm mutt) who could run faster than I could bike, Roxy's aging hips were now restricted by arthritis. Although far from a lapdog, I lifted her into the back of our SUV. As I prepared to drive, I looked in my rear-view mirror to see her mismatched blue and brown eyes peering up at me, happy to go for a ride. With tears in mine, we began the silent ride to the clinic to do diagnostics.

This Valentine's day, I'd like to recognize the unconditional love of the furry family members who, like my Roxy, have been with us through it all.

New parents are often told that children grow up quickly, but before children, there was the pet whose fur held the tears cried over the loss of a parent, who shared your first grungy apartment while you "found yourself", and who snuggled you to sleep after every bad breakup.

No one ever tells you to cherish these moments, because you're so busy just trying to get through them. Pets seem to age slowly, then all at once. One minute you're on your bike, racing your four-legged best friend down the long laneway on the farm where you grew up, and the next you're sneaking medication into her treats just so she's able to climb the stairs when she follows you and your husband to bed.

So cherish the pet. Cherish every grey hair on their muzzle and every extra time you have to call their name. Get down on the floor with them, tell them you love them, and give them your undivided attention, even when life gets crazy.

Fortunately, Roxy's diagnosis was good and her cough went away on its own. But one day, whether it's a cough or something else, I know we won't be so fortunate, and I'll have to let her go where all good dogs go. Until then, I'll cherish every walk we take, because it's easy to forget just how long she's been there beside me. 🐾

Dr. I. Wonder is here to answer your questions regarding your furry family members. If you have a question, email it to us at danielle@NeighbourhoodPet-Clinic.com. Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.





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WHAT are you GRATEFUL for this VALENTINE'S DAY?

I'm going to talk about something a little different this month. What are you grateful for? A simple question to ask yourself daily – not just on Valentine's Day. It's amazing the power those five words can have on your psychological, physical and emotional health... and your social life.

I challenge you to take a moment each day this month to reflect on what you are grateful for. Why you ask?

Simply acknowledging a few things you feel grateful for each day is a powerful way to create change.

I think it's important to consider all aspects of your health and your life when it comes to creating change – and focusing on what you are grateful for daily is one of those aspects that can influence your health, well-being and your choices.

Jenn Giurgevich is the owner of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. She is a Registered Dietitian and former contract Professor at Brescia University College with a wealth of nutrition knowledge. Over the last 10+ years, Jenn has paired her love for nutrition and health with her undeniable love for fitness, working as both a personal trainer and fitness instructor. Visit www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca for more info on how she can help you ignite your best self!

Studies show us that people who feel gratitude:

- don't get sick as often as others
- report fewer aches and pains
- exercise more often
- take better care of their health, sleep longer and even report feeling more refreshed upon waking
- experience more happiness, joy and pleasure daily
- feel more awake and energetic
- are more willing to forgive others
- feel less lonely and isolated
- are more likely to help other people
- behave in a generous and compassionate manner

It's as simple as starting your mornings off with two to three minutes of reflecting on what you are most grateful for. It will help you focus and channel all those positive feels to get you through the day.

Happy Valentine's Day everyone! 🍷



HOW TO RAISE A READER

As a parent, it may be difficult to know where to start and how to practice these early skills. Here are some simple activities that promote phonological awareness for you to try at home!



RHYMING

Choose stories and songs that have lots of rhyming words. Read the story or sing the song together. Encourage your child to identify rhyming words by talking about words that sound the same. Later, see if your child can add a rhyming word to the list.

SEGMENTING SOUNDS

Segmenting is the ability to identify words in sentences, syllables in words and individual sounds in words. You can tap or clap once for each word in a sentence, or jump for each syllable in a word. As your child progresses, you can work on identifying individual sounds in words. Make key chains with your child! Say a word like "baby" and have your child add one bead for every sound they hear (b-a-b-y = 4 beads).

LETTER SOUND CORRESPONDENCE

Help your child match letters to their corresponding sounds. You can play a sound guessing game, "what letter does M-m-m-mmmommy start with?" Or you could play "I Spy" and find objects that start with a sound, "I spy something that starts with the sound "b".

BLENDING SOUNDS

Blending is the ability to combine individual sounds to form a word. Try playing a mystery bag game! "In my mystery bag, I have a b-a-ll". The reward for blending the sounds into the target word will be time to play ball with you.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children with speech sound disorders are at risk for reading difficulties? Early intervention programs based on the development of phonological awareness skills are the first steps toward achieving reading and academic success. 🧠

Check out the **"Ready, Set, Read!"** program at Fern Speech and Language Services.

*Elizabeth Skirving, M.S., M.Ed., Reg. CASLPO
Andrea Jennings, M.Cl.Sc., Reg. CASLPO
Speech-Language Pathologists
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SUNSATIONAL SKIN IN PARADISE

Does the cold weather have you feeling blue? Skip the snow for a sunny escape and bring your beauty-besties along for the adventure! Here are a few of my favourite products to keep your skin perfect in paradise.

PROTECT YOUR POUT

Quench your lips with a multi-benefit nourishing lip balm that offers SPF sunscreen and sheer colour. My absolute favourite is Jane Iredale LipDrink® Lip Balm. A refreshing formula in an assortment of beautiful shades for the prettiest tint of colour while keeping your lips soft, smooth and protected.

GLOW WITHOUT THE GREASE

It's important to moisturize your body after a day in the sun, but no one likes the feeling of sticky skin in warm environments. Show off your gorgeous tan and get your body glistening with Hemp Code Dry Body Oil. A quick-absorbing, non-greasy formula that deeply nourishes the body in a luxurious blend of skin-silkening ingredients. Skin is left irresistibly soft and pleasantly fragranced.

Lisa Aquilina is a beauty and wellness professional who strives to help women take care of themselves and support their well-being.

REFRESH WHILE YOU REST

While it's important to protect your skin with SPF during the day, it's just as important to restore lost moisture at night. Hydramemory Skincare by [comfort zone] offers a complete range of hydrating products that instantly revitalize the skin! The cool, sorbet-like formulas quickly penetrate to get straight to work so you can layer under makeup during the day, or drench your skin at night for the ultimate beauty sleep.

COVER UP!

Conceal while you protect with Jane Iredale Powder-Me SPF® Dry Sunscreen. A water-resistant dry sunscreen for the face, body and scalp that provides SPF 30 protection and natural-looking coverage. Complete with a sponge applicator making it perfect to take on the go for reapplication.

Stay beYOUtiful! ☺



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