

A Free Magazine for Parents and Caregivers

This **GIRL** is
going **PLACES**

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

MARCH 2020
VOLUME 22 ISSUE 3

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**AGE
IS JUST A
NUMBER**

**SUGAR
SHACK
SEASON**

**LET'S TALK ABOUT
PROTECTION**
(sun protection, that is)

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ON THE COVER

She's all packed up and ready to go, and we truly believe you'll go big places in your life, **Maci!** Maci loves Smarties and doing the "mike drop". She had a great time playing hide and seek with Daddy and the teddy bears at our photo shoot.

Photographer
Photostylists

One-12 Photography
Sabina Manji
Melissa Warkentin

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IT COULD ALL BE GONE...

As I sit to write this editor's note, 📝 I'm going to be jet setting to a warm destination. Life truly is so short, and nothing is promised to us but this moment. This statement became so real and surreal in the sudden death of Kobe Bryant, which to be honest affected me more than other people's passing, and I think it made me think about how this young amazing athlete had made his way to the top, and he had all amazing things going for him, and he was in the stage of his life where it was time to sit back and enjoy raising his growing family. 😞 Within a split second, it was all gone. My heart goes out to his beautiful wife, Vanessa, that has not only lost the love her life, her husband, but also her precious daughter, Gianna. I can't imagine what it would be like to be grieving the loss of two family members, and still have to continue on with life, raising your other children. So what I take from this is you just never know what could happen, so don't wait to tell that person you love them, don't take for granted that they will always be by your side, don't get caught up in the small stuff because at the end of the day it could all be gone.

We are again reminded that life is short from our cover kid's mom, Julie Phillips. But she has turned things a different way, grabbing life by the horns and taking control. You can read her heart-felt story of family strength, health and true love on page 17.

I know need to practice what I preach here, and that this is going to be a part of me. So let me take this time to tell all of you I love you, I appreciate you, I hear you and I see you!!! And thank you for all you do to help make us the best parenting magazine and parenting community! You help us strive to be better, so from the bottom of my heart, 💖 and with gratitude,

Sabina 🌸

“I think it's necessary to let kids get bored once in a while – that's how they learn to be creative.”

- Kim Raver

MAR 03/2020 EVENTS

3RD

Riverdance 25TH Anniversary Show,
Budweiser Gardens,
www.budweisergardens.com

6TH

PA Day Camp:
Colour Me Happy,
Museum London,
www.museumlondon.ca

12TH

Irish Rovers,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

16TH
20TH

March Break camps,
Fern Speech and Language Services
(519)438-1315 or
slpskirving@gmail.com to register

17TH

HAPPY
St. Patrick's
DAY

21ST

Indian Beats, Sir Frederick
Banting Secondary School,
[www.facebook.com/
events/1441743509326732/](https://www.facebook.com/events/1441743509326732/)

31ST

English Conversational Circle
for Adult Newcomers to Canada,
London Public Library Bostwick branch,
www.londonpubliclibrary.ca

5TH

Fred Penner: The Cat Came Back
40TH Anniversary Tour,
www.londonmusichall.com

10TH

Room,
Grand Theatre,
www.grandtheatre.com

14TH

Maple Harvest Festival,
The Museum of
Ontario Archaeology,
www.archaeologymuseum.ca

16TH
21ST

Juno's Reward,
Grand Theatre,
www.grandtheatre.com

18TH

Playdough Free Play,
London Public Library
Sherwood branch,
www.londonpubliclibrary.ca

25TH

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CRUSH *the* THRUSH

Adjusting to a newborn and the demands of breastfeeding is one of the most difficult stages of being a new mom. In addition to this, having any form of illness can tip the balance and make it difficult to cope. One of the most common infections in early infancy is oral thrush. It has a big impact on baby's ability to feed, and is trying for both mom and baby.

WHAT IS THRUSH?

Thrush is caused by a common yeast infection that inhabits the mouth. It appears as white pasty patches on baby's tongue, gums, inner cheeks and throat. It can be passed between baby's mouth and mom's nipple, making it very difficult to treat.

HOW CAN I RECOGNIZE THRUSH?

Sometimes mild residue on baby's tongue may look like thrush. If it goes away with wiping it is unlikely to be thrush. If the residue is more difficult to remove, and the underlying area is raw and red, it is more likely to be thrush. Babies may be fussy or seem uncomfortable during feeding when they have thrush.

TREATMENT

It is important that both mom and baby are treated to prevent perpetuating thrush. Your primary care provider may prescribe an anti-fungal cream for mom's nipples, and a similar oral treatment for baby. Keeping milk residue from sitting on baby's tongue can also help as yeast likes to live on the sugar in mom's milk. Keeping nipples dry can also help to get rid of thrush as yeast thrives in a moist environment.

PREVENTION

Thrush is very common and is not worrisome or serious. It is a nuisance though, and difficult to get rid of. Prevention by wiping baby's tongue with a clean washcloth after feeds, which keeps residue from sitting on the tongue, can lessen the chance of having thrush. Keeping nipples dry can also be helpful. Avoiding antibiotics that disturb our natural protective bacteria can also lessen the risk of developing thrush.

One of the best resources for treating thrush is Dr. Jack Newman's website. He is our own Canadian breastfeeding guru.

The following site gives further information on his recommendations for treating yeast in the infant – mother duo so that we can “crush the thrush”. 🌐

<https://ibconline.ca/information-sheets/candida-protocol/>

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!



FREEDOM *from* SOCIAL NORMS

One of my favourite subjects in my undergrad was Social Psychology: the study of how our thoughts, feelings and behaviours are influenced by others and, ultimately, our desire to be like others. I was fascinated by the concepts of belonging and fitting in, and the incredible power these concepts seem to have over us. Think about something as simple as getting on an elevator and how much social norms dictate your behavior. You leave as much personal space as possible and maybe say hello, but don't talk too much and always (ALWAYS!) face the door. Fail to do any of these things, and it can feel quite uncomfortable for all involved.

But what if we're talking about something far more important than how you behave in an elevator? The truth is, we apply this same way of thinking when it comes to common milestones in life, like post-secondary education/training, getting married and having children. When we stray from what's considered "normal", it seems to make people uncomfortable and may even give them a sense of entitlement to ask questions or make comments that would otherwise be off-limits.

As the parent of an only child, I know this all too well. I've been asked many times when I'm having another, while others have told me, in no uncertain terms, that I must have another. These statements often include cautions about the ills that may befall my little singleton, if he doesn't get a brother or sister. Forget that these concerns are misguided – there's no evidence to support the stubborn belief that "only"

children are maladjusted or unhappy¹. There's a bigger issue at play here. If I have an only child by choice, this assumes I don't know what's best for my own family. If not by choice, it adds insult to injury if someone can't have a child, or they've previously lost a child. And of course, there's the added challenge of how to respond to this situation in a way that isn't equally uncomfortable.

Social norms are particularly fascinating because, while they seem like they're set in stone, they really aren't. Consider the following examples:

- Eye contact - In dominant North American culture, it's considered rude or dishonest if you avoid eye contact. However, in other cultures, eye contact can be seen as aggressive or disrespectful.
- The colour pink: For many today, pink is seen as a "girl" colour, but it was considered masculine 100 years ago
- The "nuclear family" – A family of married parents and two children being the norm is an anomaly from the 1950s and 60s, even though we continue to hold families up to this rigid standard.

This means the social norms we live by are actually quite fluid, dependent on where and when we live and who we are. We all have varied personalities, unique backgrounds and experiences, as well as different strengths and needs. It stands to reason then, that the way we live our lives should be just as varied. When we look beyond social conventions, and more importantly, when we can be supportive of each other's choices, we all win. And when in doubt? Just stay in your own lane. 🌈

1. Sandler, Lauren. One and Only: The Freedom of having an only child and the joy of being one.

Gillian Hubick MSW, RSW
Child & Family Therapist
Vanier Children's Services



LET'S TALK ABOUT PROTECTION

Sun protection, that is! Being a professional in the skin care industry for more than a decade, I have treated my clients with corrective treatment and proper skin care regimen. The most important part for anti-aging is DAILY sun protection with SPF. This month I discuss how to protect your skin from sun damage.

There are three types of radiation wavelengths: UVA, UVB and UVC. Shorter wavelength UV radiation is less able to penetrate the skin.

UVC, which is short-wavelength, is the least damaging type of UV radiation. It is completely filtered by the atmosphere, so it does not reach the earth.

UVB is longer than UVC and can cause burns to the skin if you stay under the sun without sun protection.

UVA has the longest wavelength and can penetrate deeper to the skin, causing skin aging such as hyper-pigmentation, fine line, deep wrinkles, and more.

According to the Cancer Society, in Canadians age 30 to 49, the most commonly diagnosed cancer is melanoma, with a 7% rate from 2011-2015. People taking photo-reactive drugs should wear an SPF containing UVA-specific sunscreens. The most recommended broad-spectrum is UVA/UVB SPF30, not higher than SPF45.

There are two kinds of sunscreens on the market:

'Physical Sunscreen' and 'Chemical Sunscreen'.

PHYSICAL SUNSCREEN - Creates a barrier on the skin that filters out UV rays, also called Sun Blocks. Mineral based ingredients are used, such as Zinc Oxide and Titanium Dioxide to block UV rays. These are less likely to irritate the skin and better for rosacea prone skin. It's safe to use on babies and during pregnancy.

CHEMICAL SUNSCREEN - Absorbs and scatters the harsh UV rays. Also called organic sunscreens, they contain chemical compounds that include formulas like Oxybenzone, Octinoxate, Octisalate and Avobenzone. These chemicals change UV rays into heat, then release them from the skin and scatter them. The problem with chemical sunscreen is that many ingredients are required to create both UVA and UVB protection and higher SPFs, which causes irritation and redness for rosacea prone skin because changing the UV rays into heat exacerbates flushing. Compared with physical sunscreen, it can clog pores and increase breakout on acne prone skin. ☹

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CEREBRAL PALSY

March is cerebral palsy (CP) awareness month! Today we are going to discuss cerebral palsy and how orthoses can help individuals with CP improve their quality of life. Ensuring mobility and independence is of utmost importance in order to optimize any child's development including children with CP. Orthoses in particular can help to maximize physical development for children with CP. Cerebral palsy is a neurological disorder that can appear in infancy or early childhood. The central nervous system is affected, resulting in permanent changes to body movements and muscle coordination. Some of the symptoms of CP can include:

- lack of muscle coordination (ataxia)
- stiff or tight muscle along with exaggerated reflexes (spasticity)
- walking with one foot or leg dragging
- walking on toes
- crouched gait
- scissoring gait
- muscle tone that is too stiff or floppy

There is no cure for cerebral palsy, however there are many treatment options available which can enhance or better the individual's life. Some of the common treatments include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, drugs to control seizures/relax muscle spasms/alleviate pain, surgery to correct anatomical abnormalities/release tight muscles, braces or other orthotic

devices, wheelchairs, rolling walkers and other communication aids.



— March —
**CEREBRAL
PALSY**
Awareness
Month

Due to the varying degrees of severity associated with this pathology, there are a vast number of orthotic treatments available.

Orthotic devices work by:

- providing a stable base of support
- establishing efficient gait
- minimizing the effects of spasticity
- reducing excessive energy expenditure required to move
- reducing hip and knee hyperextension
- strengthening weak muscles
- controlling/correcting muscular imbalances
- correcting poor skeletal alignment
- preventing further deformity

Some common bracing solutions include night time stretching splints to help overcome contractures, Lycra body suits to decrease tone, and upper and lower extremity bracing for proper alignment of the body. If you have any questions about cerebral palsy or how orthoses can help your child, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office! We would be glad to answer any of your questions. 🌐

Katie Davis MSc COc
Custom Orthotics of London



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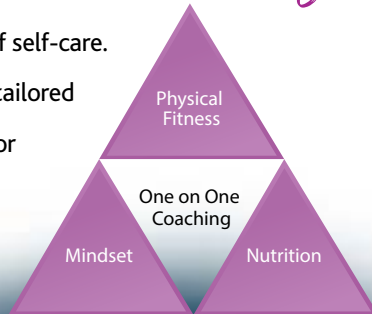
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A LITTLE BIT LUCKY

Often, when we think of St. Patrick's day, pots of gold, leprechauns and luck come to mind. Do you consider yourself lucky?

Mikaeel: I don't really consider myself lucky.

Ella: I don't think I have good luck or bad luck, but I do think that I am lucky to live in a place where I have a family, food, a house and good education.

When people do well in life, do you think it's luck or something else that got them there?

Mikaeel: I think when someone succeeds, it's because they put time and effort into it.

Ella: I think it's a little bit of luck and a lot of hard work.

Do you have a good luck charm?

Mikaeel: No, I don't because I don't believe in lucky charms.

Ella: I have a necklace that has three good luck charms on it: a horseshoe, a four leaf clover and a ladybug.

Do you ever enter contests or buy raffle tickets – why or why not?

Mikaeel: I don't unless the raffle or contest is for charity or the entry is free.

Ella: No, I usually don't because I prefer to spend my money on something I'm guaranteed to get.

We're looking for a good laugh – tell us a St. Patrick's Day joke.

Mikaeel: What do you call a fake Irish stone?

A shamrock!

Ella: Why are so many leprechauns florists?

Because they have green thumbs! 🍀

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

Out of this World!

MARCH EVENTS

March 14 & 15

ROM Planetarium*

March 14

1:00 - 3:00 pm

Kids' Club Craft

March 18

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Westmount Family Centre
Community Art Project

March 19

ROM Planetarium*

March 19 - 22

VOCPRI Charity Book Sale*

March 20

10:00 am - 12:00 pm

TVO mPower Mall Tour
Meet & Greet TVOKids Hosts

March 21

10:00 - 11:30 am

London Public Library
Fun activities!

March 21 & 22 & 28

ROM Planetarium*

* See our Website or Facebook for show times

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GAME NIGHT

I would love to say that we have a regular weeknight dedicated to playing games with our kids. Alas, our *fly-by-the-seat-of-our-pants* lives haven't blessed us with such consistency in our family schedules. Playing games is just something that naturally happens when we're all home and have the time. And it's time that we all thoroughly enjoy!

On a lazy Sunday afternoon, it's quite common to see our living room littered with half-open boxes of board games, a table covered in Lego, and a few decks of cards scattered on the rug. There are so many benefits to playing games with our kids. Learning to take turns, how to win gracefully, and how to lose patiently are important social skills we try to work on. Games can be very language-rich and help our young kids with their reading and speaking skills. We read rules together, solve problems, learn strategies, and practice patience and attention skills. I also really enjoy how games help to promote conversations, as we scheme and plot against one another, and relish together in celebration after a hard-earned victory.

Some of our favourite board games include Monopoly Junior, Sequence for Kids, Connect Four, Dominoes, Kerplunk, Guess Who, and Blokus. Some of the belly laughing, face-palm worthy games that my kids love are Doggy Doo and Flushing Frenzy – yes, both are games that involve poop! My six year-old just started playing Checkers and Battleship, which are gaining momentum and feeding into his competitive nature. We also really enjoy card games such as Skip-Bo, Uno, and the ol' classic Go Fish.

Of course, there are games that our family hasn't enjoyed all that much. Operation results in too much frustration and the Pokémon card game makes me cringe every time it comes up. We're not quite ready for Scrabble or Chess yet, but I'm hopeful they'll be added to our family fun nights soon!

And while I try to promote screenless games as much

as possible, we also do enjoy playing video games with our boys. Our recent purchase of a Nintendo Switch has been quite popular – to kids and grown-ups alike! Whether it's a competitive game of Mario Kart with the neighbours, or some alone time building in Minecraft, age-appropriate video games can also offer some benefits to our kids. The right games can help promote problem solving, turn-taking, pre-planning, and creativity. Turn the volume off and the subtitles on and you've got some highly motivated readers on your hands. Kids want to be good at games and also like to teach each other how to play, making video games quite social if you set the stage for it.

So whether you choose to play cards, board games or video games, make it quality bonding time with your kids. Dive into the game together and have some fun! 🎮

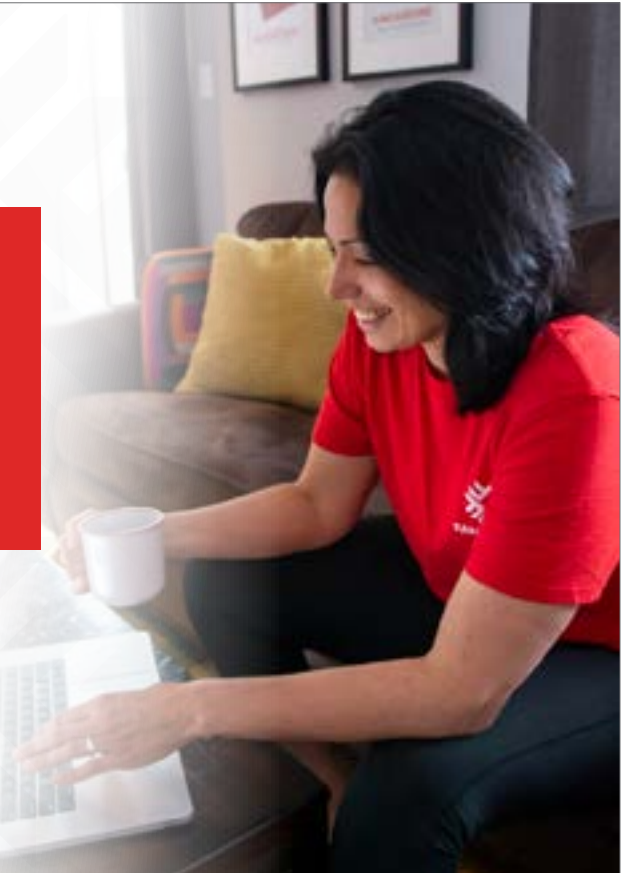
Frank Emanuele is a proud father of two sons, a special education teacher, and a director of Dad Club London.



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MAPLE TOWN *celebrates* SUGAR SHACK SEASON

March is maple time – maple syrup festivals pop up across Ontario celebrating the sweet sap that runs from trees, eventually ending up on breakfast pancakes (after a bit of processing). One of the best festivals almost has its own postal code: Maple Town, in Campbellville, Ontario.

Every weekend during the month of March (and every day during March Break, 10 am to 4 pm), the Mountsberg Conservation Area turns acres of forest into Maple Town, an almost Hansel and Gretel-like experience. Start at the entrance and follow the signs (and crowds) over the train tracks and into the woods following the scent of grilling flapjacks and steam from boiling sap cauldrons.

Celebrating the heritage of maple is the point, so past to present methods of turning sap into syrup – over an open fire to sugar shack – are demonstrated living-history style at various points on the tour. Each station is connected by a paved trail (so strollers are possible). Note, the walk from parking lot to Maple Town is long but scenic especially if trees are snow covered.

When weather permits, horse-drawn sleigh or wagon rides are available to tour you through the magic sap forest, and few

people miss hot breakfast at the pancake pavilion in the woods. Maple Town is included with admission, and check out the conservation area's Raptor Centre, barn play area, and horse stable on the way out.

Other March Break and weekend sugar shack festivals nearby include Sweet Water Season at the reconstructed Iroquoian Village at Crawford Lake Conservation Area in Milton; Bronte Creek Maple Syrup Festival at Bronte Creek Provincial Park, Oakville; and every Sunday at Westfield Heritage Village, Rockton. 🍷



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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Sharing Seeds of Kindness Children's Book



Sarah, Min and Jackson are friends who enjoy being in the 2ND grade. Until one day something happens that causes their smiles to turn into sadness.

Sarah and Min are bullied on the way home from school. Not wanting to tell their families, or return to school, they decide to keep it a secret. Eventually the truth comes out. As their families and friends gather around them, they try to find ways to help Sarah and Min overcome the bullying. Then something unexpected happens that helps the girls restore their faith in mankind!

Sharing Seeds of Kindness



www.sharingSEEDSofKINDNESSchildrensBOOK.wordpress.com

Each month we introduce you to a business that offers families in London and the surrounding area, services or products you won't want to miss. 🌱

Has your child ever felt like they didn't matter, or that they were stupid or weird, and that no one liked them? If your child has ever experienced bullying, racism or discrimination, I believe the answer to this question is "yes". A child's journey through life should be filled with love, laughter, hope, joy, peace and big dreams, but unfortunately hurtful words spoken by others can lead to isolation and loneliness.

Sharing Seeds of Kindness is a book that encourages children to believe in themselves and realize how valuable they are. It is my hope that this book will also create meaningful conversations within families about bullying, racism, discrimination and how to be kind to others.

Come join Sarah, Min and Jackson on a journey that brings hope and kindness to the world around them.

The Story:

Sarah, Min and Jackson are friends who enjoy being in the 2ND grade. Until one day something happens that causes their smiles to turn into sadness. Sarah and Min are bullied on the way home from school. Not wanting to tell their families or return to school, they decide to keep it a secret. Eventually the truth comes out.

As their families and friends gather around them, they try to find ways to help Sarah and Min overcome the bullying. Then something unexpected happens that helps the girls restore their faith in mankind!

Purchase:

You can purchase *Sharing Seeds of Kindness* on Amazon in English, Croatian, Chinese (Mandarin), French Canadian, Greek, Russian and Spanish. If you live in the London/St Thomas, Ontario area, please email Kathy for book orders at sharingseedsofkindness@hotmail.com (\$12 tax included)

Share the Light:

Kathy's desire is to help bring light into a child's world. She believes there are millions of good, kindhearted people around the world who do this every day. Her passion is to help children see the good in themselves and to be a voice against bullying, racism and discrimination (all of which she has experienced). If you would like Kathy to come speak at an event (church/school/fundraiser), please also send her an email.

Visit www.sharingseedsofkindnesschildrensbook.wordpress.com



AGE *is just a* NUMBER

Life sure is full of surprises. Some wonderfully exciting, others incredibly terrifying, but there is one common denominator - they are all life changing. The last three years for the Phillips family have been nothing short of eventful.

In 2016, after years of contemplating, I made the decision to undergo bariatric surgery. I was 37, a type two diabetic, suffering from high blood pressure, and struggling with depression. Although I was blessed with a beautiful daughter, wonderful stepson, and loving husband, I was sick and tired of the weight, and needed some help to take my life back. The process of bariatric surgery is not a quick one. There are many appointments with therapists, dietitians, social workers, nurses and surgeons, along with other criteria a patient needs to meet to be approved for the bariatric program. It took years, but I finally was accepted in August 2017.

Life was about to change. Not just for myself, but for my family. They were about to embark on this journey to get "me" back, I was going to get "me" back, and I was ready. On November 2016, as I sat in my cubical at work, I received the call. To this day, I can still hear the call as vividly as the day I answered the phone. The nurse on the other end was from the bariatric program; thoughts raced through my head. Were they moving my date up? Was my blood work okay? "Nope", she calmly stated. "Mrs. Phillips, we are going to have to place your surgery on hold." "WHAT!", I exclaimed. "You're pregnant". I remember a rush of emotions flooding my body. My coworkers told me that I sat unresponsive for several minutes before blurting out those same words, "I'm PREGNANT".

On June 27, 2017, we were again blessed with the birth of our daughter, Maci. Instant love is the only way I can describe how she completed our family. All fears quickly vacated. She was here, she was healthy, and she belonged in my arms. Maternity leave was a time where I found myself reflecting on what the future held for me and my family. With my husband's support, I made the decision to follow my dreams and head back to Fanshawe in the Early Childhood Education Program. I was accepted and started in the fall of 2018. Surgery was subsequently scheduled for August 2019. With the support of my family and friends, today I am down three sizes, currently successful in the third semester of the program, and the lucky mother to Jaeden, 16, Olivia, 13, and Maci, 2. I will leave you with this: it is never too late to take a chance, and it is never a bad idea to follow your heart, as anything is possible. 🌸

Julie Phillips
(mother of this month's cover kid, Maci)



the ONLY CERTAINTY of LIFE is DEATH



Recently, I was in my therapist's office, and for some reason our conversation snaked its way to my beloved, late Grandmother. I was asked what my Grandma was like, and the question caught me completely off guard. I was suddenly taken back to her essence: her smell, her cooking, the fact that she had beautiful red hair that was professionally styled weekly, was married three times, raised five children on her own, and enjoyed a sneaky skinny menthol cigarette now and again.

I started bawling. In fact, as I write this to you now, I feel the tears burn at the back of my eyes. I miss her. God, I miss her. But we don't talk about her anymore, because she is dead, and I've concluded in both my work and professional life that no one has a clue what to do when someone dies. As a society, we are woefully unprepared for the only certainty of life - death. When we lose someone we love, it's like they slip away into some kind of scary nothingness, and everyone around you is just desperate to get on with things. We fear death, so we block it. That's what I did, I shoved the loss of my beloved Grandma, the woman who made me feel like I rose the sun, down into the deep unknowns of my psyche.

I hear these stories all the time in my office. In all transparency, as a young social worker just starting out, I felt that I could tackle any "problem": mental illness, addiction, abuse, domestic violence - you name it. These issues had a plan, they had a path forward. But death? What could I do about death? The young me felt lost and afraid of the bereaved. I wanted to run back in time and pick up client's loved ones and bring them back, with a "whew- that was close!"

Over time, my fear of death turned more to curiosity. I began to notice that when someone died, I felt their presence. When clients came into my office internally shredded with the rawness of grief that no one wants to talk about, I would feel an energy and a sense that the veil between two worlds might not be as thick as I once believed. I started to become a witness and a friend to the consuming pain of loss. I asked questions about their loved ones. I began to ask things like, "do you feel them near?" and "tell me what they were passionate about". Talking about the dead has a beautiful way of bringing them back into this life, drawing them nearer. I learned that mostly, people want to tell you about their loved ones. They just need you near, holding their hands, so they don't have to feel so terrified and alone when doing so.

After the funeral is over and the crisis has passed, the reality of life without our loved ones sets in. And this, by and large, is when most people are left alone. If you have experienced this, you know exactly what I am talking about. When someone dies, it reminds us of our worst and biggest fear - that death awaits us all. Yet in reality, we are all just walking each other home. What has helped is learning about death and becoming more familiar with its certainty. When we begin to lose that fear, we can move towards helping each other heal.

And for now, while you are alive, 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.

BITE PREVENTION *and* CHILD SAFETY: BE A TREE

Many children are familiar with the shrill sound of a fire alarm. They immediately understand that the jarring Eee! Eee! Eee! means to drop everything and proceed to safety.

Fortunately, despite all the fire drills of childhood, most people live relatively fire-free lives. Not once in my adult life have I had to actually "STOP, DROP and ROLL", but that phrase was embedded into my mind as a child. Should I ever catch on fire, I know what to do.

So why aren't our children also learning the phrase, "BE A TREE"?

This phrase describes how to behave around dogs and could save a child from harm.

"BE A TREE" means:

- Stop and plant yourself in the ground
- Tuck in your branches (arms)
- Watch your roots grow (look at your feet and count your breaths until you know you are safe)

When meeting a new dog, we should first "be a tree" until we can ask the pup's parent if we may pet him. If they say yes, we shouldn't lean over the dog, grab or pat his head, or even make eye contact. It may take practice to overcome our initial excitement, but we should approach the dog calmly from the side and stroke him gently, letting the dog show you what he's comfortable with and following his lead.

When children are comfortable with dogs or have a dog of their own, they are even less likely to approach them with caution or to listen to the warning signs that their boundaries are being crossed.

An uncomfortable dog may yawn, tuck their tail between their legs, side-eye, lick their lips, or even growl. We should never punish dogs for giving us these warning signs, because they are like subtle fire alarms telling us, "Danger! Proceed to safety!". That's how we know we've crossed a boundary and it's time to "be a tree".



STOP



Fold in your Branches



Watch your Roots Grow and Count

Drills help to teach our subconscious how to recognize when we're in trouble and to keep ourselves safe. Most of us will never find ourselves trapped in a burning building, but because of fire drills, we know what to do just in case. Dogs are such a big part of our lives that "be a tree" is one drill that many children could use in real life almost every single day.

Let's get practicing! 🐾

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@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com. Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.

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COOKING FUN 101

this MARCH BREAK

March break is here!!..

OK, I get it. I can hear the excitement in response to those four words (or lack thereof). Whether the kiddos are going to camp, daycare, to Grammie's and Grampie's, or staying at home with you, it's good to have a plan in place to keep them busy. While the week may not even be here yet, you may find yourself struggling to find ideas to keep them busy and ways to keep them off that darn iPad and TV.

I'm here to the rescue!

Keeping in line with the "food" and "healthy eating" theme, here are some fun ways to keep your kids busy in the kitchen during March break. **BONUS** – they'll also walk away with some awesome food skills.

1 SQUEEZE BOTTLE PANCAKE ART

Who doesn't love pancakes in fun shapes! You don't need any fancy skills either. All you need is pancake batter, a squeeze bottle and a pan/griddle. Make sure to supervise the wee ones with the hot pan/griddle. The options are endless!

2 HOST A COOKING PARTY

Help your kids plan a party with their friends – a cooking party! This may take a bit of planning, some adult help and a little bit of elbow grease to clean up afterwards, but I assure you it will be worth it. Have your kids choose three recipes – an appetizer, a main and a dessert. Shop together for the ingredients. Invite their friends over. Get cooking! My favorite recipes for cooking parties with the kids are:

APPETIZER – veggie cups (place a bit of light ranch dressing in the bottom of the cups and add thin slices of their favorite veggies – try celery, carrots and peppers)

MAIN – mini personal pizzas (let them dress and decorate their own pizzas with their toppings of choice)

DESSERT – fruit kebabs (let them choose the fruit and create their own kebabs...add in some mini marshmallows for fun)

3 COOKIE CUTTER SANDWICHES

Have the kids prepare sandwiches of their choice and then make them into different shapes using cookie cutters. Works great for PB&J, lower fat cheese and low fat deli meat sandwiches.

4 LIVING ROOM PICNIC

I suggest the living room, but if your kids are up for an adventure, and it's not too cold, why not picnic outside (bundled up, of course)! Let the kids decide what to choose for the picnic (encouraging healthy choices), prepare it, and then set up in the living room or outside for a lovely family picnic.

There are so many benefits to getting your kids involved in preparing and cooking food, as well as allowing their creative juices to flow. Here are just a few:

- Kids learn about nutrition and healthy eating.
- Teaching kids to cook will instill food skills to last a lifetime.
- It's a boost to their self-esteem and confidence in the kitchen.
- It allows for family time and bonding.
- Kids are more likely to eat what they make.
- Cooking helps reinforce subjects like science, math and creativity.
- Kids can help contribute to the family through helping in the kitchen.
- Kids learn how to work together as a team – a great life skill!
- Preparing meals and cooking teaches kids about planning and making healthy food choices.
- It's FUN! 🍪

Happy March break to you and yours!

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!



MAKING AND KEEPING FRIENDS

When we send our children off to school, we all have high hopes for what they are going to learn each day. Why is the sky blue? What is 10×2 ? But some of the most important growth and development can't be learned from a textbook, or by taking tests. It's what happens on the playground, in between classes in the halls, and during group projects. Learning how to not only make friends, but also to keep them comes easily to some, but can be more tricky for others.

As parents, we all want our children to develop meaningful friendships. If your child seems to be struggling to form relationships with his/her peers, social skills can be explicitly taught, practised, and carried over into day-to-day life. Elizabeth A. Sautter, author of *Make Social Learning Stick*, describes the important skill of being a social detective. This involves being able to look and think about the situation and the people in context. We can teach our children to use their eyes, ears, and brain to find clues towards what others might be thinking about. If we are successful social detectives, we can take the perspectives of other people and understand that they can have thoughts and feelings that are different than our own.

While at school, children are constantly asked to work together to accomplish a common goal. For some children, it is especially challenging to put aside their own ideas and not stick to their own

agenda. Elizabeth A. Sautter describes this important skill as "following the group plan". Being part of a group involves considering what others are thinking and what they might do based on interpreting their physical actions and the subtle meanings of their language. Sometimes, children need explicit guidance in order to establish ways to recognize the subtle social cues that may be easy for us to see and act on.

Explicit instruction in a group setting can make all the difference for children who are struggling to make and keep friends. When children are given the tools they need to be socially successful, and given the chance to practise these skills in a small group setting, their social communication skills are given the chance to blossom.

Fern Speech and Language Services has partnered with Learning to Connect to offer Connect to Play: a group for children with social communication difficulties to learn strategies for making and keeping friends. 🌀

Elizabeth Skirving, M.S., M.Ed., Reg. CASLPO
Andrea Jennings, M.Cl.Sc., Reg. CASLPO
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SPRING CLEAN *your* BEAUTY ROUTINE

The days are getting longer and the weather is warming up. It's the perfect time to spring into the new season and give your beauty routine a makeover. Here are some simple ways to freshen up your everyday essentials.

OUT WITH THE OLD

Take inventory of your makeup and skincare and purge products that are old or expired. Store your winter-inspired favorites to make room for spring splurges. Keep the purge session simple: toss what you don't use, keep what you do, and organize what remains. My rule of thumb is when in doubt, throw it out!

IN WITH THE NEW

The spring is a perfect time to switch textures and tones when it comes to makeup. Swap out your matte lipsticks for sheer and creamy formulas. Choose brighter, bolder shades for eyes that can be worn as both shadow or eyeliner. Switch to lightweight, buildable foundations for a radiant complexion while benefiting from flawless coverage.

WARM UP

Don't wait for brighter days to catch a few sun rays. Create an all-over sun-kissed glow with bronzing products that are buildable and washable. Glowing skin can be achieved with a liquid or cream bronzer for a more natural sheen, or a soft bronzing powder swept over forehead, cheeks, and nose.

FRESHEN UP

A new fragrance is the perfect way to welcome the blossoming season. Whether you like sweet and sultry, fresh and floral, or earthy nature-inspired aromas, dress you skin in a fragrance that energizes you from head-to-toe. 🌸

Stay beYOUTiful!



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



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