

# THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

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YEAR TO  
SPARKLE!**

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# PIZZA HUT LONDON

LOCALLY GROWN AND FAMILY OWNED



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Hey London,

We would like to introduce ourselves - Kari and Ashley Hilton. We're the proud owners of the Pizza Huts here in town.

Pizza Hut London was established in 1986 when Jeff and Kathryn Hilton opened the first of nine Pizza Hut locations right here in the Forest City. After many great years in the business Jeff and Kathy passed the torch to the next generation. We couldn't be more proud to follow in their footsteps.

We both work hands on in the restaurants and behind the scenes while raising our three young children in London, just as Kari's parents once did.

Supporting other locally owned businesses is one of our top priorities. We enjoy giving back to the community by holding fundraisers for local charities and uplifting other local businesses in Forest City. Our annual 12 days of local giveaways on our Instagram page is one of our favourites.

When you order Pizza Hut you're not only eating the best pizza in town you're supporting a locally owned and family grown business and for that support we are truly thankful. We want to make our customers proud to order Pizza Hut and we will continue to work hard to do so.

Not a Londoner? Don't worry, we got you - our locations also deliver to Komoka, Kilworth, Ilderton, Byron and Lambeth.

Much love,

*Ashley and Kari Hilton*







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## ON THE COVER

Who wouldn't love a colourful donut during a photo shoot? Sweet *Bentley* came into the shoot with dad, but then it was mom to the rescue to get some smiles. *Bentley* certainly smiled when we said "All done!" Special thanks to Chick Boss Cake for the delicious donuts - we all helped to eat them up!

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER





# BE A STRONG YOU IN 2022

**W**hat is your one word for 2022? That is the question we are loving this year. Gone is the pressure of making and keeping resolutions! Our sweet author, Rebecca, explains that choosing one word is a simple way to guide you in the direction you need to go throughout the year and provide clarity when you're making decisions in 2022.

So I gained inspiration from our January edition to help me choose my one word. Should it be "sparkle" from our front cover banner? Should it be "hope" from our Kid Zone writers, Charlie and Harrison (page 11)? Should I focus on "me-time" courtesy of Frankly Fatherhood (page 12)? Or should I get back into "routine" after a wild pandemic year (find tips from Meaghan Terzis on page 9)?

I want to get you all started on your one-word journey by sharing my answers to the questions Rebecca posed in her article (page 22). This is just a start, and these are my answers - yours may, and should, vary greatly depending on your feelings and desires this year.

What could I use more of in my life?

*Peace.*

What could I use less of in my life?

*Drama.*

What skills or traits would I like to have?

*Staying in my own power more often.*

Most of the time I feel...

*like I'm spinning.*

I want to feel... more often.

*calm.*

Stay tuned to our social media pages throughout the year. They are a warm and welcoming community of people experiencing your highs and lows, understanding your day-to-days, and having a laugh along the way. Plus, you might just get a peek at what my one word is for the year, and how I'm achieving it!

A very happy new year to you and your families,

*Sabina*



*We are like snowflakes, all different in our own beautiful way.*

- Unknown



Editorial photography  
by Flavia Zaidan  
Make-up by Sanah Zebian



# January

Happy 2022!

01<sup>ST</sup>

Time for resolutions!

[www.kiddycharts.com/printables/free-new-year-resolution-sheet-for-children/](http://www.kiddycharts.com/printables/free-new-year-resolution-sheet-for-children/)

02<sup>ND</sup>

London Knights vs. Flint Firebirds, Budweiser Gardens, [www.londonknights.com/](http://www.londonknights.com/)

07<sup>TH</sup>

Snow Angel, Original Kids Theatre Company, [www.originalkidstheatre.thundertix.com/events/191139](http://www.originalkidstheatre.thundertix.com/events/191139)

14<sup>TH</sup>

A BBQ favourite turned winter slow cooker dish, [www.themomandcaregiver.com/honey-bbq-drumsticks/](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com/honey-bbq-drumsticks/)

10<sup>TH</sup>

Try skiing, skating or snowshoeing at an Ontario Park this month, [www.ontarioparks.com/winter](http://www.ontarioparks.com/winter)

16<sup>TH</sup>

Make a rocking paper snowman! [www.easypeasyandfun.com/rocking-paper-plate-snowman/](http://www.easypeasyandfun.com/rocking-paper-plate-snowman/)

19<sup>TH</sup>

Rosemary Grilled Chicken for supper tonight? Yes please! [www.themomandcaregiver.com/rosemary-grilled-chicken/](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com/rosemary-grilled-chicken/)

23<sup>RD</sup>

Make a Giant Dot to Dot for some indoor fun, [www.whatdowedoallday.com/motor-skills-activity-giant-dot-to-dot](http://www.whatdowedoallday.com/motor-skills-activity-giant-dot-to-dot)

27<sup>TH</sup>

We're snowing and blowing up bushels of fun! [www.themomandcaregiver.com/its-snow-fun/](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com/its-snow-fun/)

30<sup>TH</sup>

And now make a real snowman! [www.themomandcaregiver.com/do-you-wanna-build-a-snowman/](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com/do-you-wanna-build-a-snowman/)

20<sup>TH</sup>

Make Rice Krispie Snowballs with the kiddos, [www.delish.com/holiday-recipes/christmas/g3161/white-desserts/?slide=14](http://www.delish.com/holiday-recipes/christmas/g3161/white-desserts/?slide=14)

25<sup>TH</sup>

Broadway in London: Harry Potter and The Prisoner of Azkaban, Budweiser Gardens, [www.budweisergardens.com/events/detail/harry-potter-in-concert](http://www.budweisergardens.com/events/detail/harry-potter-in-concert)

29<sup>TH</sup>



## Healthy Snowman Snack

### What you need:

- Rice cake
- Cream cheese
- Raisins (eyes & mouth)
- Red pepper (scarf)
- Orange pepper (nose)

### What to do:

1. Spread cream cheese over rice cake.
2. Place raisins on cream cheese covered rice cake to create eyes and a mouth.
3. Place a piece of orange pepper in the center to create a nose.
4. Use slices of red pepper to create a scarf for your snowman.

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# TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

January is often a time that we turn over a new leaf. "Out with the old" goes the adage. For many of us we cannot simply do away with the past. There may be adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) such as abuse that continue to surface and threaten our mental health. There may be other traumas such as intimate partner violence or microaggressions based on our race, gender or other facets of our identity.

These traumas not only affect our mental but also our physical health. In her book, *The Deepest Well*, Nadine Burke Harris provides compelling evidence that past trauma is associated with rates of chronic disease and also with cancer risk. Bessel van der Lolk also notes in the book, *The Body Keeps the Score*, that trauma impacts many elements of our physical, mental and spiritual well-being.

Many practitioners now practice counselling or care that is termed "Trauma Informed Care." This is essentially reminding ourselves

that what happened to us is a big part of our health and our behaviour. One cannot treat the present without keeping in mind what happened in the past. We all have a right to be seen, to be secure, to be safe and to be soothed.

If you feel that a past adverse experience is impacting your health or holding you back in some way, reach out. Your primary care practitioner is a good place to begin. Mental health is very much in the realm of most of our awareness as primary care practitioners. The new year is a good time to move on and turn a new leaf but only after naming the emotions and attending to the past. &

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



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# IS YOUR CHILD “ON TRACK”?

**H**ave you ever wondered about your child's development? Do you know if your child is “on track” to meeting their developmental milestones?

- Some parents are satisfied if all their children seem to develop in similar ways. But what if they don't? What if you only have one child?
- Some people rely on the opinions of others to reassure themselves about a child's development. For example, “Uncle Joe was the same way growing up. Your son is fine!”
- Still other parents observe their child's playmates or listen to other parents who might say, “My Maebel has been doing that for months now! Your Julie isn't?”

All three of these methods can cause problems. They may result in unnecessary anxiety and worry in parents, or worse, small concerns, easily dealt with, may be dismissed until they grow into big, difficult problems.

The best way to monitor your child's development is to use a standardized checklist, such as [www.lookseechecklist.com/](http://www.lookseechecklist.com/). Sign-up to receive these age-based checklists regularly. There are 13 different checklists available between the ages of one month and six years.

Here are some common questions about child development:

*What do I do if the checklist says my child should be able to do something and they can't?*

*Submitted by Heather Bywaters RN MN PHN on behalf the Middlesex-London Community Early Years Partnership*


Sometimes parents don't realize that their child should be working on a skill at a certain age, such as stacking three blocks by 18 months of age or kicking a ball forward at 30 months. Don't panic! Try to give your child opportunities to practise for about two weeks and then repeat the checklist. If they are still having difficulty, speak to your healthcare provider or call a Public Health Nurse at **519 663-5317**.

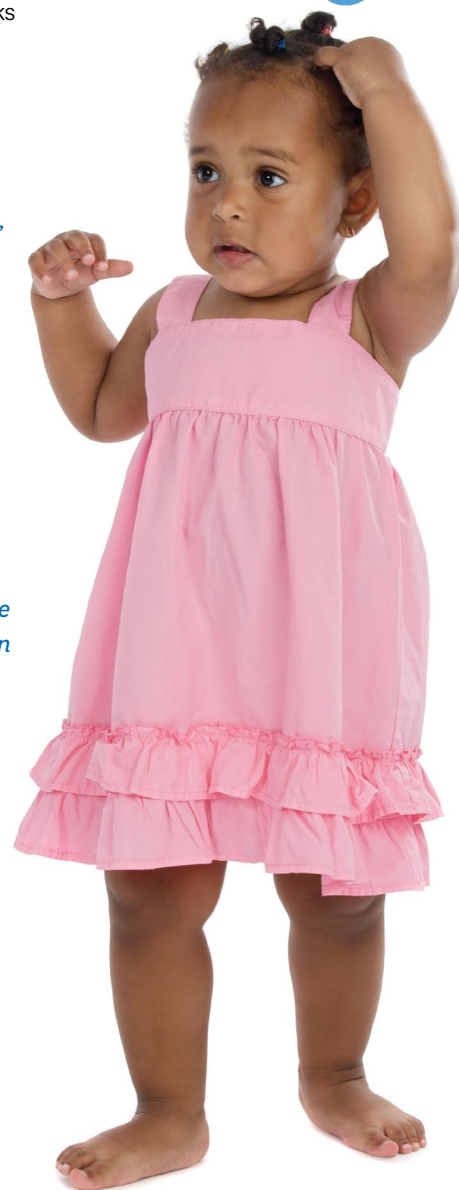
*What if the checklist says everything is fine, but I know something is not quite right?*

Don't wait and see! The checklist is not a diagnostic tool and it only looks at some basic skills in the areas of Emotional, Fine & Gross Motor, Social, Self-Help, Communication and Learning & Thinking. You know your child best. If you have a concern, speak to your healthcare provider or a Public Health Nurse **519 663-5317**.

*I am not sure how to play with and stimulate my baby/child's development. How do I learn this?*

Each Looksee Checklist provides many ideas for playing with children. They are also available in French, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Russian and Farsi. [www.familyinfo.ca/](http://www.familyinfo.ca/) has information about in-person and virtual playgroups where families can learn and interact together.

For more resources to support your child's development see: [www.healthunit.com/early-child-development](http://www.healthunit.com/early-child-development). 





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# MEET JANICE OF CUSTOM COVERS!

As a young girl, I developed a love for fabric, colour and design. Learning to sew at an early age, I went on to dress firstly my dolls and play space with window treatments, and then my first home. Although I spent over 20 years in banking and business, my love of home décor was a passion. When circumstances allowed a change of career, it was a logical choice to turn my experience designing and sewing for friends and family into a new opportunity.

So as a result, I have been one of the owners of Custom Covers in Exeter for 15 years. Completing a warm, cozy space for our clients through blinds, shades, shutters and window coverings is the majority of our business. But we are able to also create in our on-site workroom, draperies, sheers, bedding, and almost any home décor item that can be sewn.

*Janice Brock,  
Owner, Custom Covers and Custom Shades*

Our Exeter retail location carries a supply of good quality bedding and towels by Cuddle Down, a Canadian manufacturer we are proud to partner with. Cozy duvets, sheets, duvet covers, shams and accent pieces are our specialty

Even through COVID times in the last two years, we have added a second location at 1422 Fanshawe Park Road East. Custom Shades of London boasts a talented team of designers. In-home consultations, safely, have been our signature along with exceptional customer service.

Each client is treated individually, with budget and style in mind, to create a space, large or small, that is the signature of the home owner. We look forward to working with you to find the perfect solutions to polish and personalize your space. &

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 **CustomShades**  
of London



# GET BACK INTO ROUTINE AFTER THE HOLIDAYS

We all love the holidays but they can definitely throw us off our game. Here are a few things I do to get myself back into a routine for the new year:

**1 EXERCISE** - Moving your body is incredibly good for your health. It boosts your energy, promotes more restful sleep and increases confidence.

**Tip:** Set a workout schedule that works for you. Set your alarm, lay out your workout clothes the night before and no excuses.

**2 NUTRITION** - Eating nutritious meals is so important to our overall health. Eating fruits, vegetables, healthy fats, lean sources of protein and complex carbohydrates is key. Cook from home and avoid eating out. Stay away from sugar, alcohol and processed foods.

**Tip:** If you're having a hard time with your diet try keeping a food journal to track the foods you're eating. Also look into working with a nutritionist that can help make you a diet plan.

**3 STAY HYDRATED** - Drink lots of water throughout the day (aim for 8 cups a day). When we are thirsty it can trick the brain into thinking we are hungry. So, staying hydrated will prevent overeating.

**Tip:** Always have a water bottle with you and fill it up as often as you can. &



Meaghan Terzis - Lifestyle Coach and Biz Mentor, empowering women through fitness, essential oils and healthy living. [meaghanterziswellness.com](http://meaghanterziswellness.com)

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# A LIFE'S WORK

For anyone, the ability to communicate is to be valued above many things. Vocal tone, song, speech, sign, gestures, facial expressions, and actions differ across cultures and ethnicities, but share a defining characteristic: their complexity and importance are only found in human beings.

So, it's no wonder that delays or problems in communication are a big deal. They should be. In small children, any setbacks can snowball to affect how they learn from and interact with their parents, teachers, and other kids. In adults, a stroke or a brain injury could impact how they go about so much of their daily business. We all need language, whether spoken, signed, or written.

I became a Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) because I wanted to make this fundamental aspect of humanity my life's work. So I can understand how the brain works when it hears or reads a story. And how it uses its different parts to piece together

words into sentences. And how it uses words to make important decisions. And how it commands all sorts of muscles to create sound and shape that sound into words.

I also became an SLP to know how to help when things aren't working like they're supposed to. To help parents help their late talking toddler. To help kids speak more clearly or stutter less. To help teachers care for their voices. To help brain injury victims think and make decisions. To help grandparents ask for what they need. And SO. MUCH. MORE!

It's my life's work. And I am proud of it. Since opening a private practice in 2014, after years of working and learning in the public service, I've been lucky to be able to help so many clients across southern Ontario. I've instilled in my professionals the same passion for a keen eye and an understanding heart: To combine our knowledge and professional



opinions with the needs of the client and the family. As we begin 2022, we look forward to continuing to bring timely, flexible care to even more communities in London, with the opening of our 5<sup>TH</sup> clinic...in Northridge! 🌐

*Mohamed (Mo) Oshalla, MHSc.,  
Speech-Language Pathologist & Executive Director,  
Ontario Speech & Language Services*



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# WE HAVE HOPE FOR YOU, 2022!

## What are your predictions for 2022?

**Charlie:** My prediction for 2022 is that there will be more negative effects on the earth that are caused by global warming. AND the Toronto Maple Leafs will not win the Stanley Cup! My favourite team is the Ottawa Senators.

**Harrison:** My prediction for 2022 is more of a hope that schools will not close anymore due to the pandemic. School is so much better in person. I also predict that Canada will do really well in the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, China. Go Canada!

## Any guesses what's to come in London, Ontario, Canada, the world?

**Charlie:** I'm hoping that in 2022 we won't have to wear masks anymore. We will just have to learn to live with COVID-19 just like we live with the flu. Around the world I think that AI will become more helpful so small things will be done with smart technology.

**Harrison:** We live near the new Amazon distribution centre that's being built and I predict that when it opens there will be a lot of new jobs and A LOT of traffic. This could be a problem for people who own stores around here because people find it easier to order online and get it delivered right to their door. I hope that doesn't happen.


## What are YOU most excited about in 2022?

**Charlie:** Next year I turn twelve. I am most excited about still being a kid with not a lot of responsibilities except for my chores. I love playing with my friends outside, but when I turn thirteen, I will have a lot more responsibilities.

**Harrison:** I'm most excited about sports and everything opening up. People will get to spend more time with family, and go on more vacations and hopefully not worry about the pandemic as much.

## What goals or resolutions have you set for the upcoming year?

**Charlie:** My goal for 2022 is to do something to help someone everyday, big or small. People do a lot of things to make my life good so I want to do that for other people.

**Harrison:** My 2022 goal is to become better at running and become a better sketch artist. I would also like to practice more to become better at playing the guitar. 



Meet 11 year-old twins, Charlie and Harrison, our new Kid Zone writers! Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.





# DADS NEED ME TIME TOO

I don't believe in New Year's resolutions. Sure, I should exercise more and eat healthier but just thinking about these seemingly gargantuan goals is stress-inducing and the perfect recipe for failure and self-loathing.

Instead, I am making a more palatable commitment to take more ME time this year – and you should too. We all deserve to take a pause in our fast-forward child-centered life and slow down a little so we can enjoy it. Whether you're the working dad, the stay-at-home dad, or any version in between, the last couple of years have really put us to the test. It's time to put our responsibilities and parenting guilt to the side for a moment and focus on our own self-care. Let's make a conscious effort to pick a few things that we love to do and put it in into the calendar.

For me, I'd love to make more time for quiet things. It would be awesome to get a long relaxing massage or knock off several chapters of the book I've been trying to read for the last four months. I could unwind with a new video game, revisit my passion for

photography, or binge watch a show I keep meaning to watch.

What's also super energizing for me is time for loud things! I love going out for dinner or drinks with friends that I don't get to see often. I am a fan of concerts, live theatre, comedy clubs, and action movies. The thought of seeing a new Star Wars, James Bond, or Marvel movie still excites me!

You might consider a hike, playing sports (doubles as exercise for yourself!), watching a game at a bar with your friends, building something, a quick getaway with a loved one, or just a day to lie in bed an extra few hours. Plan for it, book it in, and get the help you need to make it happen.

Time to yourself helps to recharge, disconnect, refocus, and improve your own mental health. It also helps you to be a more patient and present parent. And once you feel better, you won't get too stressed about squeezing in a little exercise and eating a bit healthier. 🧘







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





# GEN-Z bullying



## WHAT'S THE ANTIDOTE?

Studies show a shocking 1 in 3 adolescents are bullied in Canada. Bullying occurs once every seven minutes on the playground and even once every 25 minutes inside the classroom. More astounding, 47% of Canadian parents report at least one of their children has been a victim of bullying.

### *How do we help our kids handle the challenges they are facing in today's society?*

I believe mental fitness is the antidote. So I launched an app to teach mental and emotional resiliency to our youth. I'm Jason Brown, the CEO of dripdrop—the Mental Fitness App for Gen Z.

Our app uses gamification principles and tangible rewards to motivate tweens and teens. Youth complete mental fitness video lessons and challenges to earn coveted rewards. Lessons cover topics like taming anxiety, how to live courageously, and—yes—bullying.

To help our kids deal with bullies, I reached out to Lisa Seward who has an interesting approach to mental fitness. She teaches self-confidence and risk-taking using drama and comedy.


Lisa has an Honours Degree in Psychology from York University and is the Founder and Director of The Yonge Street Players

Theatre School, an award-winning school teaching comedy and improv to kids and teens. She has also been a child and parent coach for over 12 years.

Using her unique perspective, Lisa developed a video series for dripdrop called “4 Tools to Handle Bullying.” Whether they are the bullied or just a by-stander, these tools empower our kids to respond to conflict with confidence.

One of my 14 year old son's favourite tactics from the series is how to turn an insult into a compliment. This befuddles the bully and diffuses the situation—letting kids walk away with their heads held high.

Studies have shown that, in the majority of cases, bullying stops within 10 seconds when peers intervene, or do not support the bullying behaviour. I feel better knowing my son is now armed with effective tools to stand up for himself and his friends.

Interested in learning more? Visit [yongestreetplayers.com](https://yongestreetplayers.com) or sign up for instant access to the dripdrop app at [dripdrop.gg](https://dripdrop.gg) 

*Jason Brown is the CEO of dripdrop. He's also the proud dad of a teen boy who is levelling up his life in the real world (not just the online world.)*





# CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE PROVIDENCE


## *French Catholic School Virtual Visits*

The Conseil scolaire catholique Providence serves almost 10 000 students in its 33 schools: 24 elementary and nine secondary schools. Providence is known for its top academic performance and innovation. With a graduation rate of 93%, the Csc Providence ranks first in Southwestern Ontario, according to the most recent data published by the Ministry of Education.

Since Providence schools deliver high quality education in a 100% francophone environment, the graduates master Canada's two official languages, and can continue their postsecondary studies in English or in French, as they choose. Their high-level bilingualism and sense of belonging to the francophone community, in a world where English is everywhere, offers them a promising future with many career opportunities.

As a Catholic school board, the Csc Providence guides its students into becoming engaged citizens in their community, capable of proudly affirming their faith, their language and their culture. There is no tuition fee and transportation is provided within the catchment area.

While an in-person visit to the school is not possible again this year, all Providence schools will hold a Virtual Open House on Thursday, January 13<sup>TH</sup> at 6pm.

Reserve your spot online at [MyFrenchSchool.ca](http://MyFrenchSchool.ca), and join us for a live virtual visit of a Providence French Catholic school! 



**Choose Conseil scolaire catholique Providence, your ally in education!**

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Thursday, January 13, at 6 p.m.

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**Our French Catholic schools:**

- Frère-André, London
- Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc, London
- Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf, London
- Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeoys, Woodstock



 **CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE Providence**



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**Are YOU Ready to Find Your NICHE?**  
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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. 🌐

Alexandra Nichelle Elliott, a new solopreneur, made the leap just over a year ago into the world of online retail. Having worked in the competitive fashion retail market for the past eight years, Alex is no stranger to understanding the value of building strong customer relationships and stand-out merchandising. Finding herself at home during the pandemic, she had time to rediscover her creativity, love of learning and self-reflect on what truly brings her joy.

"I'm constantly trying to surround myself with creativity. I grew up in an entrepreneurial and artistic home surrounded by colour, texture, form and beauty which made me feel alive and ultimately became the tools with which I expressed myself. After graduating from OCAD University, my full-time career afforded me no time or energy to pursue my art and I lost connection with my creative joy." Encouraged and supported by her partner and family, Alex courageously embraced her creative passion full-time and started her own business bringing all her creative skills together. NICHE Boutique was born.

NICHE Boutique is an online store curating collections of stylish and unique goods for home and self. Brands are Canadian with a focus on supporting women-owned businesses. NICHE celebrates all women, empowering relationship-building while promoting self-love and expression! NICHE thanks the creative, talented, entrepreneurial and value centered women who "are" NICHE Boutique. NICHE makes it easy to support local, offering free delivery in London and Kitchener-Waterloo areas, while also providing shipping across the country. If you're looking for the perfect gift for a loved one, a new mom or caregiver, NICHE is here to help! "Choose from a selection of uniquely curated gift boxes filled with Canadian women-designed products and top it off with a customized card which we can even write for you!"

In the hope to help others in the ways needed most, NICHE is also committed to making a difference for the vulnerable in our communities by supporting various local and national fundraising initiatives.

**NICHE Boutique is offering a 10% off discount code on your first order.**

**Discount Code - Mom&Caregiver10**

**WEBSITE:** [www.nicheboutique.ca](http://www.nicheboutique.ca)

**SOCIALS:** [nicheboutique.ca](https://www.nicheboutique.ca)

**EMAIL:** [alexandra@nicheboutique.ca](mailto:alexandra@nicheboutique.ca)



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**416.278.3266**  
[@nicheboutique](https://www.instagram.com/nicheboutique)

Curating collections of Canadian, sustainable and stylish products designed by female artisans.



# NEW CAN BE EXCITING!

**A**re you new to investing? Do you have a New Year goal you are embarking on?


With the start of a new year there has never been a better time to start saving and investing. If you are new to investing, you likely have questions and may not be sure where to begin.

When it comes to investing, whether a new investor or someone who just wants to have more confidence, or you have set a goal for the year ahead, the hardest part is knowing where to start and what questions to ask. A financial planner can help you get on track and take control of your financial future – this includes getting started, asking the unknown questions, selecting investments that best suit your personal and financial needs and creating a realistic plan to meet your goals.

*Jennifer Taylor,  
CFP®, PFP,  
Financial Planner,  
RBC Royal Bank*

## THREE TIPS FOR INVESTORS:

- **START NOW** – It is important to start investing as early as possible. While you might not be able to make a big financial commitment, over time, even a little adds up.
- **INVEST REGULARLY** – One of the most effective ways to save is to have an automatic savings plan. Many people don't even miss the money, because they never see it.
- **DIVERSIFY** – A diversified portfolio reduces the risk of market and economic volatility. While there is no such thing as an optimal balance that's right for everyone, working with a financial planner will help you find the right asset mix for you.

*Please know: It's never too late to start investing!* 



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# MOM GENIUS @ WORK

My daughter and I were having a good giggle together the other day. She had the hiccups and every time she tried to say something she would hiccup. I love when kids hiccup. Their entire body hiccups with them. Shaking, convulsing, and seizing suddenly, usually at the most inopportune moment.

The sentimentalist that I am relished the opportunity to recreate moments I shared with my father when I was young and had the hiccups.

I told her an obviously bold-faced lie that every time she hiccups, she loses brain cells, so she better stop quick because she doesn't have many to spare. Then I asked her to shake the can of whip cream (don't judge, it's a great snack when you can't find chocolate at 2 am.) I mischievously suggested that she grab the big guy a beer and see what happens when he opens it. Then I suggested that had she just

invented the latest popular dance move, she was going to be a TikTok star! But still the hiccups continued.

Suddenly, the atmosphere in the room changed to a serious and dark mood - she threatened to pass them to me. She thought I was going to fall for that old wives' tale,

contagious schtick? Not a chance. I warned her in my best Jackie Gleason impression that I was going to send her to the moon if she did.

Then I remembered the cure. "Let me just hold you by the feet and hang you from the stairway. It works every time...really...", I egged her on. She rolled her eyes at me, and finally broke the jokes, with a get serious look. I asked if she had held her breath. That didn't work. The old plug your nose and swallow resulted in nothing but popped ears (new problem, different story.) So, I tickled her, and promptly got swatted. That one almost always worked.

Time to haul out the heavy artillery, the big kahuna, the ole reliable. "Can you say the alphabet backwards?" Mission accomplished, mom genius at work, drop the mic. I'm the best mom in the world. 🎤

*Janet Smith is a proud single-mom of one daughter and a marketing professional who is grateful for her rural roots in the London area. She is a big believer in connecting with people through laughter and honesty.*



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# HOW TO **SAVE MONEY** ON **VET BILLS**

**O**ur furry family members seem to need a trip to the vet at the most inconvenient times... such as in January when our credit cards are still recovering from their holiday hangovers! Here are four tips to help save money on vet bills, helping you to get ahead financially while not compromising on their care:

## PET INSURANCE

While we know our pets are members of the family, they're unfortunately not covered by OHIP! However, they still need the same quality of X-rays, bloodwork, ultrasound, medication, and other technologies in order to diagnose and treat effectively. Your veterinarian may be able to recommend an insurer, or you can reach out to your regular insurance company to see if pet insurance is a product they offer. While the range of coverage may vary according to your monthly budget, any insurance is better than no insurance!

## MAINTAIN A HEALTHY WEIGHT

If you can't easily feel your furry family members' ribs, it's time to set a New Year's resolution! Even a few extra pounds can increase the risk of cancers, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and bladder stones, which are all costly to treat. Plus, you can save money on pet food every day by giving your pet the appropriate amount for their target weight! Your veterinarian will be happy to help you make a weight loss plan to help your furry family member live a longer, healthier life.

*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](mailto:danielle@NeighbourhoodPetClinic.com). Our team at Neighbourhood Pet Clinic will tap into their collective experience to answer your various questions.*

## FEED A QUALITY DIET

A high-quality diet might have a higher price tag initially, but because of its nutrient quality and more digestible ingredients, the actual cost-per-day may be lower than a generic grocery store brand! However, note that just because a food is more expensive, it doesn't always mean that it's high-quality. For example, studies have shown a potential link between grain-free food and heart disease.

To choose the best food for your pet, ask your veterinarian for a lifestage-specific recommendation.

## PET-PROOF YOUR HOUSE

Avoid an emergency trip to the veterinarian by familiarizing yourself with household items that can be dangerous if ingested. Some common culprits include antifreeze, rat poison, lilies, chocolate, marijuana, chicken carcasses, tennis balls, corncocks, human medications, and (if your dog loves to snack on textiles) socks and underwear!

Our pets age much faster than we do, so while it may be an upfront investment, an annual doctor's exam is the best way to save money by keeping disease at bay. As the saying goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!" 🐾



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\*available within the city of London, Ontario\*





# LUNCHBOX HELP FOR THE NEW YEAR

Well, the hustle and bustle of the holidays has come to an end, and we are now back to the reality of LIFE! With that comes planning meals, chauffeuring kids, and packing lunches. I'm here to help you with the latter.

Whether your kids are off to school, home-schooled, or home from school for any reason, lunch is on the menu. We all want to provide healthy options for our kids, but that proves to be challenging when it comes to lunch. How many lunchboxes come home half eaten?

Here are my five favorite tips and tricks to making healthy school lunches your kids will want to eat!

Getting your kids involved in planning and making school lunches is a great way to help them build their own healthy eating habits. Bonus is that if they help make it, they'll be more likely to eat it!

- 1 On the weekend, plan out weekday lunches with your kids. Include veggies, fruits, protein foods, and whole grains where possible.
- 2 Get a head start. Cut up extra veggies and fruit or make hard-boiled eggs for easy grab-and-go snacks.
- 3 Cook extra food – dinner leftovers make a quick and easy lunch.
- 4 Keep it simple - create a snack bin every few weeks to keep in the kitchen for easy snacks. I like to include unsweetened apple-sauce, nuts and seeds, crackers, and granola bars in mine.
- 5 Prep as much as you can the night before. Then simply pack a lunchbag in the morning and off they go.



## LUNCH IDEAS YOUR KIDS WILL LOVE

Keep your kitchen stocked with these healthy foods so you can whip up a quick, healthy lunch in no time!

- Whole grain wrap or pita pockets + chicken or hummus + veggies
- Layers of fruit + yogurt + whole grain cereal
- Vegetable soup + whole grain crackers or bread + milk
- Cheese cubes + whole grain crackers + veggie sticks
- Whole grain pasta and sauce + veggies + yogurt dip
- Cheese + whole grain English muffin + apple slices

When it comes to healthy eating, a little planning goes a long way! 🍎

Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. Visit [www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca](http://www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca) for more information.



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# PREGNANCY & COMPRESSION SOCKS ARE THEY RECOMMENDED?

**P**regnancy is a very special time in a woman's life. Your body goes through many physical and hormonal changes in order to support the growth of the baby. There are several factors that increase one's risk for blood clots during pregnancy.

- **Blood thickens and clots easier** – In order to protect the baby and the mother from uncontrollable blood loss during birth or in the event of a miscarriage, the mother's blood becomes thicker.
- **Hormonal changes** – As a result of the hormonal changes, your blood will clot faster and your veins will dilate. The vein walls expanding leads to a decrease in the effectiveness of the blood transport back to the heart. This damage to the vein walls can lead to the development of varicose veins.
- **Blood volume increase** – To accommodate and nourish the growing fetus, your blood volume will increase 40-50%. The growing

uterus will also apply direct pressure on the veins. This can cause partial blockage full blockage impeding the blood flow back to the heart, increasing the mother's blood pressure.

The risk of thrombosis is much higher in pregnancy due to the increase in blood volume and clotting, combined with damage to the veins and their effectiveness. The risk of thrombosis is highest right after giving birth and during the weeks that follow.


*What can you do to help control some of these adverse effects? Compression socks may be your answer!*

Wearing compression socks alleviates discomfort and achiness but MORE IMPORTANTLY reduces the risk of venous inflammation, thrombosis and varicose veins!

## THIS HAPPENS BY:

- Promoting blood circulation
- Providing relief for the veins
- Reducing edema/swelling

The compression helps with the blood flow back towards the heart and prevents pooling or edema in the lower extremities. Wearing compression socks is therefore advisable from the very start of the pregnancy!

Compression socks can come as knee highs, thigh highs or leggings. Please ensure you are sized by a certified provider to ensure the fit and compression is appropriate. If they are not correct this could make the problem worse. If you would like to talk to a certified compression sock fitter please do not hesitate to reach out to our office and we would be more than happy to help you find the right fit for you! 

*The Custom Orthotics team (519) 850-4721 [office@customorthoticsoflondon.com](mailto:office@customorthoticsoflondon.com) | [@cool\\_bracing](https://www.instagram.com/cool_bracing)*



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# WHAT'S YOUR ONE WORD FOR THIS YEAR?

For the last three years, instead of focusing solely on New Year's resolutions, I've decided to focus on choosing a word for the year. It helps to guide me in the direction I need to go and provides clarity when I'm making decisions. It's a simple way to remain laser focused throughout the entire year instead of trying really hard to achieve your NYE resolutions, only to find your momentum dwindling in the cold February wind when you inevitably give up on them. Choosing your one word for the year is also a more holistic, positive and uplifting approach to your self-development journey. It's worked wonders for me throughout the years of building and scaling my million dollar bakery business and becoming an author.

My word two years ago was "intentional" meaning anything and everything I decided

to do throughout that entire year was going to be done with intention and meaning, and not out of obligation. My word this past year was "impact" and so everything I did throughout this year needed to be aligned with having an impact on other people. As a result of allowing my word to guide me this year, I published my first book, *The Million Dollar Bakery*. I received hundreds of messages from readers saying how my story has impacted their lives. Here's how I go about choosing my one word:

Reflect on this past year and ask yourself these questions. Write down whatever comes to mind without over-thinking:

- What could I use more of in my life?*
- What could I use less of in my life?*
- What skills or traits would I like to have?*
- Most of the time I feel \_\_\_\_\_.*
- I want to feel \_\_\_\_\_ more often.*

Once you review your responses you'll have a better understanding of the direction you'd like to go. Now create a list of the first 10 words that come to mind and write them down. Sit with these words and choose the one that resonates most with you. Often times it's the first word you wrote down. This should be your one word for the year! 🍪



Rebecca Hamilton, Owner, Chick Boss Cake

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