

# THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

SEPTEMBER 2025  
VOLUME 27 ISSUE 09

[www.themomandcaregiver.com](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com)

A FREE  
MAGAZINE

FOLLOW US



20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
*Captured  
Moments*  
PHOTO CONTEST  
IS HERE!

TIME TO  
**CAPTURE  
YOUR CHILD'S**  
SWEETEST MOMENTS

**CONTEST OPENS  
SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>  
FIND DETAILS  
INSIDE!**

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



MEDPOINT  
HEALTH CARE CENTRE



Dance extreme

CULINARY  
CATERING



LEXUS  
LEXUS OF LONDON

MANAGEPOINT  
TECHNOLOGIES INC.

# From Summer Play to September Routine

## HOW DANCE HELPS KIDS TRANSITION



September brings a return to routine—early mornings, packed lunches, and school schedules that can feel like a big shift after the carefree days of summer. While some children welcome the structure, others may find the transition challenging. That's where dance can play a quiet, steadying role.

Dance offers a familiar rhythm in an otherwise busy month. It's a space where children can move their bodies, express their feelings, and stay connected to the playful energy of summer—even as they settle into fall routines. For younger kids especially, having something consistent each week like a dance class can help ease the uncertainty that often comes with new classrooms, teachers, and schedules.

In the studio, kids are encouraged to explore, create, and grow—but within a

supportive and structured environment. They learn to listen, follow directions, and work with others—all skills that complement what they're doing in school. Plus, dance is a healthy outlet for the big emotions that often come with change.

Parents tell us all the time how dance helps their children feel more confident, grounded, and joyful during this busy time of year. And we see it too—in the smiles, the focus, and the proud "I did it!" moments that fill every class.

As your family shifts gears this September, consider how a little movement, music, and community might help smooth the transition—and make fall feel just a little more magical.

**REGISTER NOW AT DANCE EXTREME**

*Let's Dance!*



**Dance extreme**

725 Notre Dame Dr #1, London, ON  
519.657.3262





# CONTENTS

## EDITORIAL

A Place for Parents to Learn

# 04

## EVENTS CALENDAR

September

# 05

## NEW BEGINNINGS

Get Tested! Protect You and Your Baby

# 06

## FAMILY HEALTH

Resist Using Antibiotics

# 08

## MODERN MEDICINE

Fall in Love with your Skin this Season

# 09

## BIPOLAR ON THE BRAIN

Journal Entry #20

# 10

## KID ZONE

Where Kids Love to Eat (and Why)!

# 11

## OUR MENTAL HEALTH

Drugs: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly (Pt. 3)

# 12

## BIZ SHOWCASE

Outdoor Greening Project

# 14

## MORTGAGE WHISPERER

Kids & Mortgages

# 16

## MAKING MAGICAL MEMORIES

Destination Highlight: Disney Castaway Cay

# 17

## DAD-ITUDE

Life is Full of Choices

# 18

## TMI

Athletes, Not Afterthoughts

# 20

## ONE STEP AT A TIME

Keeping up with Technology

# 21

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Should You Cut Carbs in Menopause?

# 22

## ON THE COVER

We are thrilled to feature *Lilian* on our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary photo contest poster. She was first featured on our June 2021 cover, and we're so excited to have her back. Don't forget to enter your little one in our Captured Moments photo contest, or you'll be as sad as a girl who dropped her ice cream!

Photographer  
Photostylists

One-12 Photography  
Sabina Manji  
Melissa Warkentin



Publisher/Chief Editor Sabina Manji  
Assistant & Copy Editor Melissa Warkentin  
Graphic Designer Viado Bali

If you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us at 519.495.7316 or at [editor@themomandcaregiver.com](mailto:editor@themomandcaregiver.com).  
For sales contact [sales@themomandcaregiver.com](mailto:sales@themomandcaregiver.com)

THE MOM & CAREGIVER is published by Anibas Productions Limited, Publications Mail, Agreement Number 40834037  
PO Box 29118, London, ON N6K 4L9  
[www.themomandcaregiver.com](http://www.themomandcaregiver.com)

THE MOM & CAREGIVER is distributed FREE of charge. Anibas Productions Limited welcomes unsolicited contributions. Such material, if published, may be edited. Although Anibas Productions Limited cannot pay contributors, recognition will be given to the contributor. Anibas Productions Limited reserves the right to refuse any contributions or ads. Anibas Productions Limited cannot accept responsibility, in any way, for dissatisfaction or damages incurred by advertisers or their clients. Advertising rates and circulation information is available on request.

All rights reserved. Copyright 2025 ©

THE MOM & CAREGIVER

FOLLOW US [f](#) [i](#) [in](#) [p](#) [You Tube](#) [d](#)

THE MOM & CAREGIVER

# A PLACE FOR PARENTS TO LEARN

*"I've always loved the first day of school better than the last day of school. Firsts are best because they are new beginnings."* – Jenny Han

Well, it happens every year – the lazy, hazy days of summer turn into the bustling, bouncing first days of school. Here at The Mom & Caregiver, we are always ready to help you through that first month of new beginnings – our September issue is full of tips, tricks and encouragements to make this school year a great one!

**From Summer Play to September Routine: How Dance Helps Kids Transition** – "Dance offers a familiar rhythm in an otherwise busy month. It's a space where children can move their bodies, express their feelings, and stay connected to the playful energy of summer—even as they settle into fall routines." Find out how to leap into the 2025-2026 school year successfully on page 2.

**Homemade Apple Sauce** – "September means apples, and apples mean that it's time to make apple-sauce! Gather up your ingredients and supplies, and of course, your little helper." I think every parent's least favourite thing about back to school is making school lunches. Let's keep it fun and fresh this year with our delicious recipe on page 5.

**Athletes, Not Afterthoughts** – "I've come to realize something: girls in sports aren't just athletes. They're warriors. Gritty, tough, passionate — and still fighting battles they shouldn't have to." September means a return to fall/winter sports, but are all kids being treated equally on the playing field? Learn the painful truth on page 20.

**Kids & Mortgages: Setting the Foundation for Positive Mortgage Experiences** – "Teaching children money management skills early sets the foundation for their future experiences as a home owner." Here's your homework, parents. School your kids on home finances with three easy tips (page 16).

**Where Kids Love to Eat (and Why)** – "Is there a restaurant that makes you feel really special when you go? What makes it awesome?" We asked our Kid Zone kids this question – ask yours, and treat the family to a night out. (page 11)  
You deserve it this month!

All the best for back-to-school time – we hope it's an incredible year of fun, growth and learning!

*With gratitude,*

*Sabrina*  
PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR



For More Details and Events Visit

THE  
MOM & CAREGIVER .COM  
Your Online Parenting Resource



# EVENTS

## SEPTEMBER 2025

Enjoy YOUR  
LONG WEEKEND!

01<sup>ST</sup>

Outdoor Movie Nights:  
Inside Out 2, The Wortley Green,  
[www.london.ca/living-london/community-services/  
neighbourhood-programs-funding/outdoor-movie-nights](http://www.london.ca/living-london/community-services/neighbourhood-programs-funding/outdoor-movie-nights)

05<sup>TH</sup>

Gaming Lab,  
Stoney Creek Library,  
[www.lpl.ca](http://www.lpl.ca)

11<sup>TH</sup>

Lucky Lion Night Market,  
Victoria Park,  
[www.luckylionnightmarket.ca](http://www.luckylionnightmarket.ca)

13<sup>TH</sup>

EmpowerHer Fest,  
Covent Garden Market,  
[www.coventmarket.com](http://www.coventmarket.com)

20<sup>TH</sup>

2025 Grand Slam of Curling,  
Western Fair Sports Centre, ,  
[www.thegrandslamofcurling.com  
/events/wfg-masters](http://www.thegrandslamofcurling.com/events/wfg-masters)

23<sup>RD</sup>

NATIONAL DAY FOR  
*Truth & Reconciliation*  
30<sup>TH</sup>

IT'S THE *First*  
DAY OF *School*  
03<sup>RD</sup>

Airshow London,  
London International Airport,  
[www.airshowlondon.com](http://www.airshowlondon.com)

06<sup>TH</sup>

Rock the Runway: Noah Kahan,  
The Strumbellas and more,  
London International Airport,  
[www.rocktherunwaylondon.ca](http://www.rocktherunwaylondon.ca)

12<sup>TH</sup>

Terry Fox Run,  
Springbank Gardens,  
[www.run.terryfox.ca/928169](http://www.run.terryfox.ca/928169)

14<sup>TH</sup>

*Happy* FIRST  
DAY OF FALL!

22<sup>ND</sup>

London Reggae Fest,  
Covent Garden Market,  
[www.coventmarket.com](http://www.coventmarket.com)

28<sup>TH</sup>

Montessori Practical Life Activity  
ACADEMY OF LONDON

## Let's Make Applesauce!

September means apples. And apples mean that it's time to make applesauce!

Gather up your ingredients and supplies, and, of course, your little helper.

### What you will need:

- 4 large apples, ½ tsp cinnamon, ½ tsp vanilla extract, sugar to taste, and 1 cup water.
- Cutting board, child-safe knife and an adult knife, vegetable peeler or tabletop apple peeler, and potato masher.

Begin by washing the apples, and then peeling them. We have found that the tabletop peeler is very child-friendly and makes long strands of skin that are super fun to eat!



Next, you are ready to start cutting the peeled apples. If you have an apple cutter, you can start with this, then chop the slices into smaller pieces.



Add the apple pieces, sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, and water to a large pot.

Bring to a boil and let simmer for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.



Once the apples have reached the desired consistency, you can use the potato masher to help puree the apples a little more.

Serve alone ... or, as an extra sweet treat, serve on vanilla ice cream! *Delish!*

[montessori.on.ca](http://montessori.on.ca) [info@montessori.on.ca](mailto:info@montessori.on.ca)

“Children want the same things we want. To laugh, to be challenged, to be entertained and delighted.”

Dr. Seuss

FOLLOW US



MOM & CAREGIVER

# GET TESTED! PROTECT YOU AND YOUR BABY

When we're pregnant or planning a pregnancy, information comes at us from every angle. Well-meaning friends and family, health care professionals, social media influencers and websites all provide advice on preparing our bodies, homes, pets and finances for the impending arrival.

Sexually transmitted infections (STI) are rarely discussed, yet syphilis, a sexually transmissible infection, is on the rise in Canada. Anyone who is sexually active, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, can be affected, including women in their reproductive years (i.e., 18-39 years of age). It is possible to have syphilis and not know it, since symptoms can be mild or there may not be any symptoms. It is also possible to mistake a syphilis infection for another infection. If left untreated, syphilis can cause serious health issues, which is why getting tested is so important.

When a pregnant person is infected with syphilis, it can lead to serious health risks for the baby. Congenital syphilis occurs when the infection is passed from a pregnant person to their fetus

during pregnancy or to their baby during childbirth. If congenital syphilis is not detected or treated, it can lead to fetal death, birth defects, developmental delays and other serious long term health problems.

The good news is that syphilis is both preventable and curable. Testing for syphilis involves a simple blood test. All pregnant women should be screened for syphilis in the first trimester. Talk to your health care provider honestly about your risk of contracting syphilis to determine whether further testing at 28 to 32 weeks and at birth is needed. You should be tested more frequently if there is an ongoing risk of infection.

The spread of syphilis can be prevented by having protected sex (with a condom or dental dam). However, syphilis can also spread through contact with other areas of the body not covered by a condom. Anyone diagnosed with syphilis should inform any sexual partners so they can be tested. For more information,

visit <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/health/campaigns/syphilis.html>.

Testing – and, if necessary, treatment – is advised during every pregnancy to prevent congenital syphilis.

## ***Get Tested! Protect You and Your Baby.***

To book a free STI Test today, call:

- your health care provider,
- the Sexual Health Clinic at MLHU  
519-663-5317 or visit [www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)
- GetaKit (<https://getakit.ca/>) available in Middlesex-London region


## **REFERENCES:**

- Canadian Paediatric Society. (2024, March 28). Position Statement: Diagnosis and management of congenital syphilis – Avoiding missed opportunities. [www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/congenital-syphilis](http://www.cps.ca/en/documents/position/congenital-syphilis).
- Government of Canada. (2025, April 15). Syphilis guide: Key information and resources. [www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/sexual-health-sexually-transmitted-infections/canadian-guidelines/syphilis.html#a1.2](http://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/infectious-diseases/sexual-health-sexually-transmitted-infections/canadian-guidelines/syphilis.html#a1.2).
- Public Health Ontario. (2024, February). Maternal and Early Congenital Syphilis in Ontario: 2020-2022 Findings from Retrospective Case Reviews. [www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/C/24/congenital-maternal-syphilis-2020-2022.pdf?rev=e8910e62cf164cd28c4e89c358dd51ac&sc\\_lang=en](http://www.publichealthontario.ca/-/media/Documents/C/24/congenital-maternal-syphilis-2020-2022.pdf?rev=e8910e62cf164cd28c4e89c358dd51ac&sc_lang=en).



*Submitted by the Middlesex-London Health Unit*





*She didn't have symptoms,  
but this simple test  
protected her baby's future.*

*Syphilis is a growing concern in Canada,  
especially among women of reproductive age.  
It can be passed without symptoms and, if left  
untreated, may cause serious harm to both you  
and your baby. Testing is quick, treatment is  
simple, and early care makes all the difference.*

**Don't guess, just test.**



**Talk to your healthcare provider.**

If you don't have a healthcare provider or  
would like more information:

The Clinic  
110-355 Wellington Street (Citi Plaza), London  
519-663-5317

**ML** BUREAU DE SANTÉ DE  
MIDDLESEX-LONDON  
HEALTH UNIT  
[www.healthunit.com](http://www.healthunit.com)

# RESIST USING ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are one of the greatest miracles of modern medicine. It is hard to fathom the fact that epidemics and plagues that threatened millions in the past are now easily treatable.

The development of penicillin by Dr. Alexander Fleming in 1928 was rightly hailed as a miracle. However, the overuse of antibiotics now puts us in a precarious position. Many bacteria have developed shields where the antibiotics aimed their weapons. We are seeing an alarming increase in superbugs that resist currently available antibiotics.

Where we once thought we had conquered bacterial disease, we now are succumbing to devastating disease from sinister bacteria with monikers such as MRSA and VRE. As clinicians, we are being encouraged to practice “antibiotic stewardship”, meaning that we should be more thoughtful in our approach to treating



infections. Many infections, such as colds, are caused by viruses, and antibiotics do not work for them. Even ear infections and sinus infections that we treated with antibiotics in a knee jerk response are now known to often be caused by viruses.

In addition to leading to superbugs, the overuse of antibiotics impacts our health. Yeast infections and disruption of our healthy gut bacteria, as well as secondary gut infections such as clostridium difficile, result

from injudicious use of antibiotics. We are also learning that for many infections, shorter courses may be as good as traditional seven to ten day courses. The only exception is strep throat which still requires a ten day course.

As we head into cold and flu season, consider having a discussion with your health care provider. Is that antibiotic necessary? What symptoms should I watch for that would make me want to reconsider returning to check for a bacterial infection? Can I get by with a shorter course? We can all play a part in lessening the superbug evolution and preserving the miracle that Dr. Fleming envisioned!

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

## FOREST CITY COMMUNITY CHURCH

A Special Place...



For people looking to **discover or rediscover faith** in their lives.



For people seeking a growing experience of **community, purpose, and hope.**



For families wanting to give their kids a **faith foundation.**

SUNDAY SERVICE TIMES:

Central Campus | 3725 Bostwick Rd. | 9+11 am  
East Campus | 716 Classic Dr. | 9:30+11 am

[fccc.ca](http://fccc.ca)





# FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR SKIN THIS SEASON

## Laser Rejuvenation, Artistic Vision and a Fresh Start for Fall at London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics

As the kids head back to school and routines settle into place, September is the perfect time to finally focus on you. We're embracing the season of change with a spotlight on skin transformation and a nod to the artistry that inspires our space.

### Fall is Laser Season - Plan Now for Glowing Skin

Autumn brings cooler temperatures and less sun exposure—making it the ideal time to begin laser skin treatments. This season, we're thrilled to introduce Jessika, our skilled Registered Nurse and laser specialist, who is now offering the full range of Sciton® laser treatments, including TRL Erbium Resurfacing.

TRL (Tunable Resurfacing Laser) is a powerful treatment designed to target deep

wrinkles, sun damage, acne scarring and uneven texture. Our clients have been thrilled with the dramatic, skin-renewing results—it's like turning back the clock on your skin. With Jessika's gentle approach and expert technique, you're in trusted hands as you begin your skin rejuvenation journey.

Now is the time to plan ahead. Many laser treatments require a bit of downtime, and cooler weather helps healing. Start your series now and enjoy a refreshed, glowing complexion by the holidays.

### Beauty, Inside and Out - Meet the Artist Among Us

When you visit our clinic, you'll notice something special—not just the warm smiles or the curated treatments, but the original artwork that lines our walls. What many don't realize is that the artist behind several of these expressive paintings is none other than Dr. Damir Matic himself.

A gifted surgeon and a thoughtful creative, Dr. Matic brings his eye for beauty and balance not only to the operating room but to every corner of our space.

His artwork reflects his passion for detail and design—an extension of the care he brings to his patients.

Just like a new set of paint brushes or a fresh canvas, fall can be a time to refresh, reset and renew. Whether it's with a resurfacing laser treatment or by soaking in the beauty around you, we invite you to stop by, say hello, and explore what's new at London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics.



London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics  
(519)850-5435 | [www.londonplasticsurgery.ca](http://www.londonplasticsurgery.ca)



# London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics



## IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU





# ENTRY #20: YOU CAN'T GO UP UNTIL YOU GROW UP!

Are you going through something so painful that you think you can't take one more day of the suffering? I am. It really hurts. I just turned 50 years old this year. Suffering in life is a gift because the hard times that you and I have lived gives us experience.

Read this and think of all that you have been through. Here are some questions to answer:

- 1 Are you more compassionate as a result of the hard times? How?
- 2 Have you learned to be peaceful no matter what is happening around you because your lived experience has shown you that getting upset doesn't change your circumstances?
- 3 Have you gained wisdom over the years because of the painful times in your life? If so, where do you see it show

up in how you conduct yourself now versus when you were younger?

4 How has your lived experience shaped you in choosing your career? If so, how have the hard times given you skills that benefit your colleagues?

5 What skills do you have due to the suffering that you have been through? You could say that you and I have graduated from the school of life. I encourage you to make a list and keep it in a diary or on your computer to print. If you are

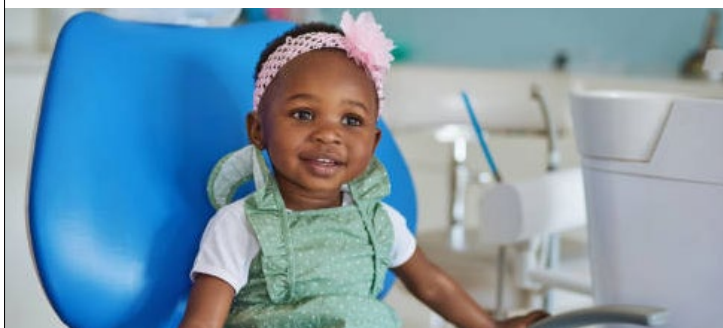
really struggling right now, it might be beneficial to post this list in your bathroom, car and beside your bed. On a day that you are discouraged or feel like having a pity party, you can refer to it to remind yourself that you're learning from your suffering.

**IMPORTANT!** Learn from my mistake. Let yourself gain the experience and heal. I stepped out too soon to help others when I wasn't ready. If a tree doesn't grow deep roots into the earth first, it will fall over because the branches are too heavy. The roots create stability.  
**REMEMBER! Pain + Experience = Wisdom** and Stability. It requires you to be vulnerable and seek out support. This is not easy, but living with this humility is the only path to the life you deserve.

Stephanie Preston creates videos on managing bipolar disorder. She is a Social Service Worker, Health Care Aide and suffers from severe bipolar depression herself. She loves being a grandma and is Crossfit obsessed. Follow her at [www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain](https://www.tiktok.com/@bipolaronthebrain) and [www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain](https://www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain).



## SMILE! YOUR CHILD IS IN GOOD HANDS



**ARI PEDIATRIC**  
**DENTISTRY & ORTHODONTICS**  
[www.pediatricdentistry.ca](http://www.pediatricdentistry.ca)

577 OXFORD ST  
TEL 519-679-6822  
LONDON

389 HYDE PARK RD.  
519-679-9860  
LONDON

215 FANSHAWE PK. RD. W.  
226-663-8748  
LONDON

1323 EXMOUTH ST.  
519-679-9860  
SARNIA



# WHERE KIDS LOVE TO EAT (AND WHY)!

***What's your favourite restaurant to go to with your family, and what do you always order?***

*My fav restaurant is the London Club and I'd like to get a burger.*

***Is there a restaurant that makes you feel really special when you go? What makes it awesome?***

*Plaza Sushi is the most special because I get a yummy marble drink.*

***If you could create your own restaurant, what kind of food would it serve and what would it be called?***

*It would serve absolutely everything and it would be called Adi's Inn.*

***Do you have a favourite place to eat when you're on a road trip or vacation?***

*Yes! McDonald's!*

Meet our Kid Zone  
writers, 11 and 7 year  
old siblings, **Lander** and **Adi**!  
Each month, they'll be sharing  
perspectives on life as  
a child sees it.



# DRUGS: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY (A FOUR PART SERIES FOR PARENTS WITH TEENS)

## FENTANYL

Fentanyl is a synthetic opioid that is used to treat acute and/or chronic pain. It is 100 times stronger than morphine. Carfentanil is also a synthetic opioid and it is 10 000 times stronger than morphine, and one of the scariest drugs that our children will be exposed to because of its suppression of their respiratory system. One kilogram of fentanyl can kill 500 000 people. A teen can overdose and die with a dose of fentanyl the size of five grains of salt.

To make it worse, most illicit drugs are mixed with various other drugs that also cause respiratory depression. Essentially, illicit drugs like carfentanil, also known as downers, tell your brain to breath less and eventually to stop breathing. In the last five years there has been a 113% increase in death from overdose in youth age 10-19.

*Becky Morrison is a Nurse Practitioner based out of Calgary who has specialized in mental health for over a decade. She is finally, after years of infertility, a mother of two busy little boys, and doting fur mom of her gentle giant, Stella. She is, and always will be, a strong advocate for mental wellness at all ages.*

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Having a conversation with your teen about the reality and dangers of “trying downers” is key. Trying carfentanil or fentanyl is not like trying cannabis. The risk is too high, which is a difficult concept for teens to accept. Educate your teens on how to use a naltrexone kit and making it available for them for their safety and that of their friends. Having a naltrexone kit does not increase their risk of trying illicit substances, but it will save a life as the purity or strength of each illicit substance varies by the week, colour, and from dealer to dealer. You never know what you are going to get when trying illicit substances and even though your teen might not be seeking out fentanyl there is a 42% chance of other substances being laced with fentanyl. Without naltrexone or immediate medical help, they can overdose and die.

These are very difficult conversations to have with our loved ones, but necessary in our current landscape of illicit substances. Take care.



**DONALDSON**  
HOME SERVICES

**Trades You Can Trust!**

**LOCAL TO LONDON  
& FAMILY OWNED**

Heating, Air Conditioning  
Plumbing & Renovations

**Donaldson proudly supports  
our local community!**

WESTMINSTER WORKING GROUP  
FOREST EDGE COMMUNITY POOL  
bgc London  
Home County Music & Art  
PHSS Medical & Complex Care in Community  
Children's HEALTH FOUNDATION



PROUDLY ANNOUNCING OUR

20<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL

# CAPTURED Moments PHOTO CONTEST

We're snapping with excitement to announce the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual Captured Moments Photo Contest — two decades of adorable smiles, heart-melting giggles, and over 325 local cuties shining on our covers! You can enter between September 17 – October 15, 2025. Don't blink or you'll miss it!

## NEW THIS YEAR!

To celebrate our milestone year (20 never looked so cute!), and thanks to your thoughtful feedback, we're making the contest even more fabulous with no more voting. That's right — no popularity contests, no social media stress. Just you, your little superstar, and our panel of judges ready to select 14 charming cover kids — no bias, no filters, no fuss.

## WHO CAN ENTER?

We're on the hunt for amateur snapshots of your little darlings (from birth to age ten). Got a photo that makes your heart burst? We want to see it! It's completely FREE to enter, and winners will be professionally photographed to grace the covers of The Mom & Caregiver Magazine throughout the year. You can find all the fine print and enter at [themomandcaregiver.com/contests!](http://themomandcaregiver.com/contests!)

## A BIG THANKS!

to our amazing sponsors — you're the wind beneath our wings (and the flash behind our lens)! So grab those phones or cameras and get ready to make some magic. Because every moment is a captured moment — and this year, it might just be YOUR child's time to shine!

THANK YOU  
TO OUR SPONSORS



# EMILY CARR PUBLIC SCHOOL

## Emily Carr Outdoor Greening Project



### PHASE 1

- Excavate and level the asphalt, then build up using a 6x6 retaining wall.
- Add drainage and Engineered Wood Fibre.
- Install Natural Climber, Magnet Panel, Log Sitting Area, Chalkboard Panel, Log Table and Mud Kitchen.

Cost of Phase One: \$42,455.45 + HST



### PHASE 2

- Install a Mud Kitchen, a 12x12 Pergola and Planter Boxes.
- A Wooden Car will be ordered for this space.

Cost of Phase Two: \$17,121.99 + HST




### PHASE 3

- Expand the retained area and install the Theatre and Log Table and Chairs.
- Add 3" of drainage and completing with 9" of Engineered Wood Fibre.
- Plant a new tree in the allocated space.

Cost of Phase Three: \$30,031.31 + HST

**Thank you for your support**



*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.* 

### Join the Fun & Help Us Grow!

Emily Carr Public School's Outdoor Greening Project is in full swing — and they need your support! They're on a mission to transform and upgrade three junior and senior kindergarten playgrounds into vibrant, safe and inspiring spaces where children can explore, imagine and thrive.

"We're calling on our amazing local businesses, corporate sponsors and community champions to partner with us in making this dream a reality. Whether it's a monetary donation, in-kind service, raffle item or sponsorship, your generosity will go directly toward building brighter play spaces for the little ones who need it most."

And guess what? There are plenty of fun ways to get involved!

The Santa Claus Breakfast & Holiday Market is back this November, now open for vendor registration — a perfect opportunity to showcase your goods to the community!

A 50/50 Raffle is on the way!

Raffle Baskets packed with goodies are being curated (a great chance for you to donate or promote your brand!)

And back by popular demand — the Facebook Online Auction is returning this season with more exciting prizes and community engagement!

"We would also like to send a heartfelt thank you to The Mom & Caregiver Magazine for their generous donation to our most recent online auction. Your support helps us dig deeper and grow stronger!"

When a community comes together, amazing things can happen. Help the Outdoor Greening Project turn concrete corners into green adventures and bring more joy, creativity and connection to the children of Emily Carr Public School.

"Growing Green, Growing Strong: Support Emily Carr's Outdoor Greening Project."

For more information, to donate or to get involved, find us on Instagram [@emilycarrogp](https://www.instagram.com/emilycarrogp) or email [emilycarrogp@gmail.com](mailto:emilycarrogp@gmail.com).







## BUY DIRECT FROM OUR LONDON LOCATION

Serving Canada Nationwide

### Specializing in bespoke products all made on-site

Do you have a logo you want  
on a pin or a medallion?  
on a Yeti or Stanley?  
on the front of an acrylic or glass award?



Canadian made with  
competitive and fair pricing



## 519-686-1891

Ask for Dave or Mike.  
Reference the Mom and Caregiver  
for a discount on your first order

✉ [info@strathcraft.com](mailto:info@strathcraft.com)

📷 [@strathcraftawards](https://www.instagram.com/strathcraftawards)

# KIDS & MORTGAGES:

## SETTING THE FOUNDATION FOR POSITIVE MORTGAGE EXPERIENCES

**H**ave you thought about what your children think about your family home? Do they realize what was involved in the purchase process? That payments have to be made to keep a roof over their heads? Chances are, unless you have explained it to them, they haven't given it much thought.

Teaching children money management skills early sets the foundation for their future experiences as a home owner. These three tips can help you start a discussion on the basics of saving and owning a home:

**1** Offering children an allowance for doing household chores is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the concept of "earning an income in exchange for doing work". As children earn money for their piggy bank or bank account, they will begin to understand what saving means. And when they want to use their savings to buy things, they realize

very quickly that they can only spend what they have saved. Relate this situation to your own, explaining that you work for the money you earn, and that money is divided up to pay for necessities first, followed by luxuries your family enjoys.

**2** Ask your children their thoughts about themselves owning a home one day. How do they respond? Then enhance their perceptions by setting some expectations: (a) to buy a home they need to commit to saving money for a down payment, (b) they need to plan ahead by being responsible with their money, (c) once they walk in the door of the house, the hard part is not over, they will need to make payments every month to keep the household running.

**3** Avoid talking concrete numbers with your kids. Home prices, mortgage amounts and interest rates will go way over



their heads. Learning solid money habits early will help them own a home one day.

By involving your children in age appropriate discussions about finances, and providing guidance when they ask questions about money, you are nurturing a sense of financial responsibility. When it's time for them to think about their own mortgage, they will be better prepared to begin that process!

.....  
Rhonda Stark, Mortgage Agent, Level 2, Mortgage Intelligence, (519) 868-6794, [www.rhondastark.ca](http://www.rhondastark.ca), [www.facebook.com/YourMortgageResourceConnection/](http://www.facebook.com/YourMortgageResourceConnection/)

## From First Steps to First Homes

*Raising a family comes with big dreams and one of the biggest is owning the **perfect home.***



**RHONDA STARK**  
**MORTGAGE AGENT**  
BROKERAGE #10428  
LEVEL 2

Whether you're buying your first house, refinancing, or investing, we'll help you make smart, confident moves.

**519.868.6794 | RHONDASTARK.CA**



## We're with You Every Step of the Way

We also believe in planting the seeds of financial literacy early — helping your kids understand saving, mortgages, and money basics as your family grows.

### Our Services Include:

- ✓ First-Time Home Buying
- ✓ Renewals & Refinancing
- ✓ Investment Properties
- ✓ Home Equity Access
- ✓ Self-Employed Solutions
- ✓ Pre-Approvals & Advice

**Let's build a brighter future — for you and the next generation.**



# DESTINATION HIGHLIGHT: DISNEY CASTAWAY CAY

The perfect beach day in the most magical paradise? Sign us up. Whenever I'm helping a young family find the right family vacation, I am absolutely bringing up Disney Castaway Cay - Disney's private island destination in the Bahamas reserved exclusively for guests sailing on Disney Cruise Line.

**Here's some of what makes Disney Castaway Cay so special:**

## EASY BEACH DAY - WITH FOOD INCLUDED

Step off the ship and you're steps away from fun. No need to worry about logistics - just get right to the memory-making knowing that towels, loungers, incredible family or adult-only beach access and lunch are already covered for you.

## PELICAN PLUNGE

Swim out to Pelican Plunge to enjoy this water-play area on a floating platform and take a slide down right into the lagoon! This is a truly unique way to keep your kids laughing, and such a fun addition to a classic beach day.

## MAGICAL TOUCHES

Classic Disney character friends don't want to miss out on the fun! Enjoy meeting characters off the ship and around the island, sporting their adorable island-inspired best. Or perhaps try out snorkelling together and keep an eye out for some hidden Disney artifacts alongside marine life at this island destination.

## AND MORE!

There are also excursion opportunities available, bikes to rent to explore the island and so much more. This is a destination not to be missed, especially for first-time cruisers or young families who are hoping to enjoy a Port Day with less coordination and more flexibility.

Want to learn more about Disney Castaway Cay or chat about the best vacation for your family? Let's connect. No extra cost to book together, just extra support along the way!



Jenna Mitchell is a travel advisor with Pure Magic Vacations specializing in family travel and Disney Destinations. You can connect on Instagram @puremagic.jenna or through email at [jmitchell@puremagicvacations.ca](mailto:jmitchell@puremagicvacations.ca).



# LIFE IS FULL OF CHOICES

As Captain Planet used to say (if you're an elder millennial like me), "The power is yours." Sure, he was talking about saving the planet — mullet and all — but the power of choice in 2025 is just as relevant for parents. When used intentionally, it can move mountains and create lasting impact in our homes and communities. But as Uncle Ben reminded Peter Parker, "With great power comes great responsibility."

And when Dumbledore told Harry in The Chamber of Secrets, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities," he wasn't just giving advice to a young wizard — he was speaking to all of us trying to get it right.

As a fellow dad, here are a few choices I invite you to consider:

**CHOOSE KINDNESS.** Smile. Make eye contact. Say hello. You never know whose day you're turning around by acknowledging their humanity.

**CHOOSE TO SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE.** The homeless gentleman sitting outside Tim Hortons near LHSC with the sign truly appreciates an extra coffee and a bagel being shared with him.

**CHOOSE TO SAY WHAT MATTERS.** Don't leave important words unsaid. Life's unpredictability demands we speak our hearts while we can.

**CHOOSE YOURSELF, TOO.** Wake up 30 minutes earlier and walk the dog. Pick

veggies over fries. Drink more water. Save that extra binged episode for tomorrow and get some more sleep. Call your doctor about that thing you've been ignoring.

**CHOOSE TO READ.** Read to your kids daily. Read for yourself, too. A University of Sussex study found that reading for just six minutes each day can reduce stress by up to 68%. Look it up if you don't believe me.

**CHOOSE TO PLAY.** Your kids will always pick you as their favourite playmate — if you pick them first.

**CHOOSE TO MAXIMIZE YOUR POTENTIAL.** If you're unhappy in your career or with your pay cheque, ask those who know and love you most what you should be doing differently. They will have ideas.

**CHOOSE TO BE PRESENT.** They're only this age once.

.....  
*Jeremy McCall is a married father of 3, a social service case manager, and known as "The Dadfather", being the founder and Past President of Dad Club London.*








**LS**  
**Lice Squad**  
.com  
*"Parent & Teacher trusted"*  
*Canada's leader in head lice removal products & services.*

For appointments or products go to [www.licessquad.com](http://www.licessquad.com)  
Stay tuned for current events on [www.youtube.com/@licessquad](http://www.youtube.com/@licessquad)

SERVING LONDON, WOODSTOCK, ST. THOMAS, SARNIA & SURROUNDING AREA • 519-473-4078

**D** **Dearness**  
FAMILY DENTISTRY

*Dedicated to healthy smiles for all ages*



974 Dearness Drive    ☎ 519-681-1905  
[bookings@dearnessfamilydentistry.com](mailto:bookings@dearnessfamilydentistry.com)  
[www.dearnessfamilydentistry.com](http://www.dearnessfamilydentistry.com)



One-12 Photography  
[www.one12photo.ca](http://www.one12photo.ca)  
519-777-1699

**Providence** CONSEIL SCOLAIRE CATHOLIQUE

**ONGOING REGISTRATION**  
It's not too late to register your child!



📍 📍 📍

🔍 **MyFrenchSchool.ca**

- More than French immersion
- Stimulating learning environment
- Safe and caring school climate
- Best French-language staff

**OUR FRENCH CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN YOUR AREA:**

<b>Frère-André</b> 400 Base Line West London 519-471-6680	<b>Sainte-Jeanne-d'Arc</b> 35 Fallons Lane London 519-457-3141	<b>Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf</b> 270 Chelton London 519-963-1219	<b>Sainte-Marguerite-Bourgeoys</b> 700 Bristol Woodstock 519-539-2911
--	---	---	--

# ATHLETES, NOT AFTERTHOUGHTS

As a mother of a teenage athlete, I spend a significant portion of my life in arenas, on sidelines and in parking lots, serving as chauffeur, Sherpa, sports psychologist, equipment manager and ATM. And I've come to realize something: girls in sports aren't just athletes. They're warriors. Gritty, tough, passionate — and still fighting battles they shouldn't have to.

Yes, we've made huge strides in women's sports — the PWHL, WNBA and MMA — and these girls are tackling stereotypes harder than opponents. But there's still a glaring gap at the local level too many refuse to see. Want a quick reality check? Look at the ice schedule. If girls make up 35% of registrants, why do they get only 12% of the ice time? That's not math. That's misogyny in a jersey.

The conversation around equality in sport often focuses on opportunity: access to ice, facilities or coaching. But the more critical issue is equity. Equity isn't offering the same — it's offering what's needed to achieve fairness. That means reallocating resources, rethinking legacy structures and, most importantly, confronting our own unconscious bias.

Because make no mistake: when girls win tournaments and walk away without recognition — while boys in similar leagues receive trophies and fanfare — it sends a clear message: their success matters less. They matter less.

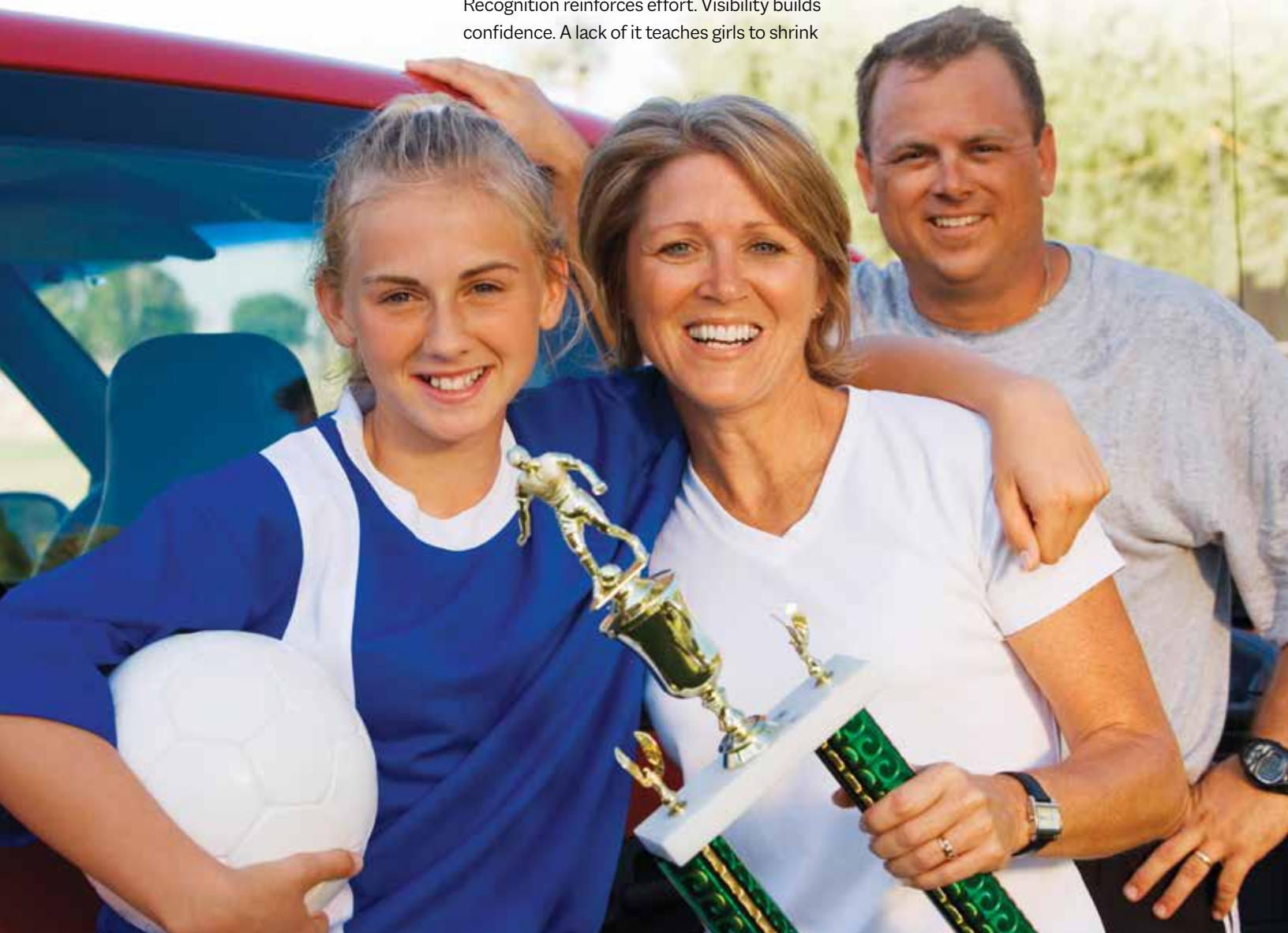
This isn't just disappointing. It's not good enough. Not for my daughter. Not for yours. Not for the future we say we're building. Recognition reinforces effort. Visibility builds confidence. A lack of it teaches girls to shrink

their wins and expect less.

So let's ask ourselves: are we unintentionally reinforcing outdated hierarchies? Are we truly creating space for girls to thrive — or are we quietly sidelining them? Our daughters aren't asking for favours. They're asking for fairness.

They're not just playing. They're preparing — for life, for leadership, and a future that depends on us getting this right. She learned how to fall hard, get up fast, and take up space like she means it. Sports taught my daughter how to take a hit, dig in, and drive forward. It taught me how far we still have to go.

.....  
*Janet Smith is a proud mom of one daughter and a marketing professional who is grateful for her rural roots in the London area. Follow Janet's funny and honest journey at IG & TT / @re.marketable.janet or FB / @janetsiddallsmith*







# KEEPING UP WITH TECHNOLOGY

Although some people might be new to the topic of 3D printing, orthotics and prosthetics as a profession has grown exponentially and has modernized many processes. The most common way to create a custom orthotic device is to heat up a sheet of plastic and mold it around a plaster cast. This method uses a vacuum system to ensure that the plastic forms fully around the cast to match the contours of the plaster as close as possible for an accurate device.

There are numerous types of 3D printing technologies available, but not every method is ideal for orthotics. The main technology on the consumer level is called fused deposition modelling (or fused filament fabrication). This is when a printer heats a strand of plastic, and a nozzle applies it layer by layer onto a bed. This method can take days to print one item, depending on the size and the internal structure. Orthotic devices are not typically



made entirely through this method as it does not create strong enough bonds and the devices cannot withstand enough force. However, this method is great for making tools and equipment that we use within the workshop and for adaptive devices.

More recently, engineers have developed a combination of methods to create Multi Jet Fusion printing (MJF), a method of printing in which the filament is replaced with powder material, meaning it can print an entire layer at once instead of using a nozzle. The printing bed is also much larger, with numerous devices being printed at once. This method produces much stronger

devices, including some weight-bearing devices that we can use in orthotics. Some clinics have switched to MJF for fabricating their foot orthotics. They begin with scanning the clients digitally with a handheld scanner, then sending the digital scan to the printer to create the desired foot orthotic. Modifications to the 3D design can be made on computer software before it is printed, and the printer can be programmed to stop at certain points to allow for materials to be added in between layers of the print. Some ankle foot orthoses and Starband cranial helmets are printed in this method.

Many students entering this field are encouraged to have some experience with 3D printing or 3D modelling as it is growing rapidly and continues to change the way we make custom orthotics.

Have questions before your visit? Don't hesitate to reach out, we're always here to help.

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



## CUSTOM ORTHOTICS OF LONDON INC.

**Keeping You Ahead, One Step at a Time since 1987**



At Custom Orthotics of London Inc. we are dedicated to providing our patients with an opportunity to return to their highest level of functionality by developing a treatment plan that meets their unique need.

We believe in earning the trust of our patients, not only by providing the highest quality and leading edge orthotic care, but also by treating each patient and their family with sincere compassion.

☎ (519) 850-4721 [www.customorthoticsoflondon.com](http://www.customorthoticsoflondon.com)

# SHOULD YOU CUT CARBS IN MENOPAUSE?

**SHORT ANSWER? PROBABLY NOT.**

**C**arbs often get a bad rap in menopause. But the truth is your brain and body still need them... maybe more than ever!

During perimenopause and menopause, hormonal changes (particularly the drop in estrogen) can affect how your body processes and stores carbohydrates. This can lead to increased insulin resistance, changes in appetite and shifts in body composition. As a result, many women feel pressured to cut carbs drastically in hopes of managing weight, energy or mood swings.

But let's be clear: carbohydrates are not the enemy! In fact, they're your body's preferred energy source and play a vital role in keeping things running smoothly. They help fuel your brain, support workouts and daily activity, and are essential for producing serotonin, the "feel-good" neurotransmitter that also helps regulate mood, sleep and appetite.

The key is quality and portioning, not restriction.

Rather than cutting carbs completely, focus on upgrading your carb choices and pairing them well:

- Choose high-fibre, slow-digesting carbs like oats, lentils, quinoa, chickpeas, barley and sweet potatoes. These provide lasting energy and help keep you full and satisfied.
- Include fruits and vegetables, especially those rich in fibre and antioxidants, like berries, apples, leafy greens and squash.
- Pair carbs with protein and healthy fats. For example, whole grain toast with avocado and eggs, or roasted sweet potato with salmon and steamed greens. This helps slow digestion, stabilize blood sugar and reduce energy crashes.
- Pay attention to portion sizes and how your body feels afterward. Tracking how different



meals affect your energy, hunger and cravings can be more helpful than cutting out whole food groups.

What happens if you cut carbs too much? You might experience fatigue, brain fog, irritability, poor sleep, digestive issues and even muscle loss over time...

especially if you're also active or trying to build strength. These symptoms can easily be mistaken for menopause symptoms when they're actually signs of under-fueling.

Bottom line: Carbs can absolutely be part of a weight-loss, hormone-supportive or energy-boosting plan during menopause. In fact, when chosen well, they support a balanced metabolism, better moods and sustainable habits.

So instead of ditching them, get strategic with them. Your body and your mind will thank you.

*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*



**YOUR LAWN. OUR CARE.**

**FREE**  
Liquid Aeration  
with any  
lawn care  
program.

- ✓ Fertilization & Weed Control
- ✓ Lawn Aeration & Overseeding
- ✓ Mowing & Trimming
- ✓ Pest & Grub Control

[www.brodies.on.ca](http://www.brodies.on.ca)  
519-245-6122

**BPS**  
BRODIES PROPERTY SERVICES  
\* SINCE 1952 \*

*Proudly Canadian,  
Locally Rooted &  
Independently Owned*

Awakening The  
*Greatness*  
Within Your Child



**Dance Extreme**

**REGISTER NOW FOR OUR 29<sup>TH</sup> SEASON**

725 Notre Dame Dr. #1, London, ON  
519-657-3262







# SCREENS

## Protect Against

- ◆ *Insects* ◆ *Sun*
- ◆ *Rain* ◆ *Wind*
- & *add Privacy*



*Visit Our  
5,000 sq.ft.  
Showroom  
TODAY*



**2050 Oxford Street East, London**

**519-455-2660**

[www.raymondbrothers.ca](http://www.raymondbrothers.ca)

*"The Shadiest Guys in Town"*



**BOLD.  
ALLURING.  
ELECTRIFIED.**



**2025 RX 350h F Sport Design**



**LEXUS  
RX**

**Starting from \$68,809**  
Plus HST & Licensing Fee.

519-680-1900

1065 Wharncliffe Road South, London, ON

[lexusoflondon.com](http://lexusoflondon.com)



**LEXUS OF LONDON**