

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

DECEMBER 2025
VOLUME 27 ISSUE 12

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A FREE
MAGAZINE

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BELIEVE
IN THE
Magic!

MAKE CINNAMON
SPICE ORNAMENTS..... **05**

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& HOLIDAY WISHES **16**

RETHINKING
RESOLUTIONS..... **22**

PREGNANCY - BABY - TODDLER



PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY

Holiday Magic in Motion

The holiday break is such a special time, kids are home, routines slow down (at least a little), and there are more moments to make memories together. But as wonderful as that sounds, every parent also knows there are days when little ones need something fun to do (and we need a moment to think, breathe, or wrap gifts without an audience!).

The good news? Holiday fun doesn't have to be expensive. Some of the best memories come from simple moments spent together.

Indoor Fun Ideas:

- Living room dance party: Put on your family's favourite playlist and dance like nobody's watching.
- Holiday craft table: Use wrapping paper scraps, buttons, glue, and imagination.
- Family talent show: Singing, dancing, magic tricks, anything goes!
- Baking day: Let the kids do the stirring, sprinkling, and taste-testing.

Outdoor Fun Ideas:

- Snowy scavenger hunt: Find pinecones, different footprints, or the perfect icicle.
- Build a snow family (not just a snowman!)
- Bundle up for a winter walk and listen for birds or look for holiday lights.

And for the days when you need to get things done, whether it's shopping, cleaning, prepping for guests, or simply enjoying a quiet cup of tea, Dance Extreme's Holiday Camp is a great option. With daily sign-up, children enjoy dancing, games, crafts, and holiday fun, while grown-ups get a few hours to recharge and get organized. It's a win-win that brings joy to everyone.

This holiday season, may your days be cozy, your hearts be full, and your living room have just enough glitter.

REGISTER NOW AT DANCE EXTREME

Let's Dance!



Dance Extreme

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ON THE COVER

What a magical day for **Ava**! Not only did she get to pretend it was Christmas in October, she also was allowed to jump on the bed (this one time only, Dad said!) Thanks to Dance Extreme for the festive frock, and thanks to Ms. Cynthia for a very loved lollipop.

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER

OUR DECEMBER ISSUE IS COMING TO TOWN!

Here at the Mom & Caregiver magazine, we are guilty of having a little too much fun turning classic holiday songs into creative “masterpieces” to fit our own wants and needs. And why break tradition this festive season? We have turned “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” into a version which brags up all of the holiday fun and parenting wisdom you can find in our December issue. *Enjoy!*

*You better watch out,
You better not cry,
You better not pout,
I'm telling you why...
Our December issue is coming to town!
We're making a list,
And checking it twice,
We've got a craft,
With cinnamon spice (page 5).
Our December issue is coming to town!
We're talking immunizations,
To keep all our kids safe (page 8).
We're talking Disney vacations,
Which would be great for goodness sake (page 13)!
Oh...
You better watch out,
You better not cry
You better not pout,
I'm telling you why...
Our December issue is coming to town!
With resolutions,
That don't make you cry (page 22).
And financial planning,
To give peace of mind (page 16).
Our December issue is coming town!*

Happy holidays! May they be filled
with peace, family and song!

Sabina
PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR

*The kids in all of London,
Will have a jubilee,
They're going to have some fun,
With a living room dance party (page 2)!
Sooo...
You better watch out,
You better not cry.
You better not pout,
I'm telling you why...
Our December issue is
coming to town!*



For More Details and Events Visit

THE
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EVENTS

DECEMBER 2025

London Knights vs. Kitchener Rangers,
Canada Life Place,
www.chl.ca/ohl-knights

03RD

Argyle Santa Claus Parade,
Dundas St.,
www.argylebia.coms

06TH

Hanukkah party,
Jewish Community Centre,
www.jewishlondon.ca

14TH

Chess for Kids (ages 6+),
Jalna Library,
www.lpl.ca

18TH

The Nutcracker,
Centennial Hall,
www.centennialhall.london.ca

21ST

MERRY
Christmas!
25TH

HAPPY *New*
Years EVE!
31ST

Holly Jolly Market,
Covent Garden Market,
www.coventmarket.com

05TH

Crouch Knitting Circle,
Crouch Library,
www.lpl.ca

11TH

Happy
HANUKKAH!

15TH

First DAY
OF *Winter!*

21ST

Frozen: The Broadway Musical,
Grand Theatre,
www.grandtheatre.com

23RD

HAPPY
Kwanzaa!
26TH



Montessori

Creative craft

Cinnamon spice Ornaments

Here's a sweet-smelling holiday activity to do with your little one!

Ingredients

- 1 cup ground cinnamon
- 3/4 cup applesauce
- 2 Tablespoons white glue
- 1 Tablespoon nutmeg, ground cloves, etc.

Instructions

- Mix all of the ingredients together in a big bowl until a thick, dough-like texture forms.
- Use your hands to gather and knead the mixture for 1-2 minutes until it's a smooth dough ball.
- Have your child sprinkle some cinnamon on a clean, smooth surface.
- Using a rolling pin, invite your child to roll out the dough. If the dough is sticky, sprinkle more cinnamon onto the surface.
- Roll the dough until it is about 1/4 inch thick and use cookie cutters to cut out the shapes.
- Roll, cut, repeat!
- Make a hole in the top of each ornament with a straw or skewer.
- Let them dry on parchment paper for 1-2 days.



Add twine or ribbon, and *voila* – adorable, spicy ornaments! **It's the perfect mix of mess, magic, and memory-making!**

montessori.on.ca

info@montessori.on.ca

“Time is non-refundable. Use it with intention.”
unknown

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MOM & CAREGIVER

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE WITH THE ROURKE RECORD

This is the second in a series of three articles reviewing recent recommendations on the Rourke record, an evidence-based guide to primary prevention for young children used by primary care practitioners in Canada. Updates can provide a snapshot of recent recommendations. In the last article we looked at updated nutrition guidelines. This time we will look at the guidelines around injury prevention and environmental health.

1 Exposures to pesticides is detrimental to neurodevelopmental health.

2 Well water is prone to contamination with chemicals and pathogens that particularly harm children. Well water should be tested regularly.

3 Things that can contribute to risk for SIDS (sudden infant death syndrome) are bed sharing or co-sleeping, sleeping on a sofa or cushioned chair, or in a car seat or swing. Overheating, second-hand smoke, alcohol

use by mothers, and use of sedating drugs by parents can contribute to SIDS.



4 To lessen the risk of choking, avoid hard, small, smooth and gummy foods under the age of four. Latex balloons can also lead to choking. Always check the age label on toys to make sure they are safe for your child. Learning choking first aid is also very important for caregivers.

5 There has been an increase in injury from ingestion of button batteries and edible cannabis products. These should be kept out of reach of children

Keep the Canada wide number for poison control on hand. They are excellent at advising course of action following an ingestion. The number is **844-POISON-X (844-764-7669)**.

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!





WOMEN'S HEALTH CENTRE & PROCEDURE SUITE AT LONDON PLASTIC SURGERY

As the year comes to a close, we're thrilled to share that our Women's Health Centre is open and accepting appointments — no referral necessary!

Our Women's Health Centre provides compassionate, comprehensive care for women at every stage of life — from adolescence through menopause and beyond. Each visit includes a consultation and assessment with our physician, Dr. Laurence Dales. Personalized treatment plans are created and testing and treatment arranged as needed. Follow-up appointments ensure continued support.

Dr. Dales helps to manage a wide range of concerns, including menopause and perimenopause symptoms (such as hot flashes, fatigue or weight changes), menstrual and hormonal challenges, adolescent and adult acne, postpartum recovery, bladder and vaginal health, and skin rejuvenation. Treatment options range from hormonal or other non-hormonal prescription therapies, lifestyle support and more depending on your goals.

LPS is Expanding — Coming Soon!

We're excited to share that London Plastic Surgery is expanding its surgical offerings right here in our new beautiful procedure suite.

While Dr. Damir Matic has long provided these procedures with signature precision and natural results, patients can now access them directly at LPS — with both local anaesthesia and IV sedation options available.

Procedures provided in the procedure suite will include eyelid surgery, scar revisions, skin lesion and scar removals, liposuction, mini facelifts, neck lifts, breast and body contouring, and more — all with a focus on comfort, precision and natural results.

Stay tuned for more details in the coming months as we continue to expand and bring more comprehensive care options to our community.



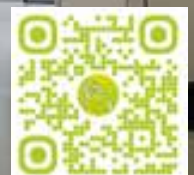
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London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics



IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU



KEEP YOUR CHILD HEALTHY WITH IMMUNIZATIONS

As the school year continues, and you pack backpacks and prepare lunches, do not forget one of the most important ways to help your child stay healthy - make sure their immunizations and their immunization records are up-to-date.

WHY IMMUNIZATIONS MATTER

Immunization protects your child from serious diseases and keeps everyone around them safe, especially classmates, teachers and family members who may be more vulnerable. When more children are up-to-date with their immunizations:

- fewer kids and staff get sick and miss school
- parents can stay at work
- classrooms stay open for learning

Refusing or delaying vaccines and immunizing products for your child puts them at increased risk of serious illness. Measles can spread to the brain, causing brain damage and even death.

Mumps can cause inflammation of the brain and heart muscle, hearing loss and sometimes permanent deafness. For many of the diseases that we immunize against, there is no cure; therefore, immunizations are the best way to prevent the disease and reduce community spread.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is natural to have questions about immunizations and the diseases they prevent. Take your questions to your healthcare provider. If your child is missing any routine immunizations:

- 1** Book an appointment with your family doctor, a walk-in clinic or the Middlesex-London Health Unit.
- 2** Report your child's updated immunizations directly to the Health Unit. The easiest way to keep your child's immunization record up to date is online, using the ICON tool. It is quick, secure and available in French too www.healthunit.com/immunization/immunization-records-and-reporting
TIP: Make it a habit—every time your child gets a vaccine, update their record using ICON.

HAVE QUESTIONS?

- Visit www.healthunit.com or call 519-663-5317.
- Speak with a registered nurse through the SickKids Immunization InfoLine at www.sickkids.ca/immunizationinfo.

Let us work together to give every child a safe, strong school career!



Submitted for the Middlesex-London Health Unit by Sarah Hill RN PHN and Heather Bywaters RN PHN



**Protect your family.
Get immunized
against COVID-19
and flu at your
healthcare provider's
office or local
pharmacy.**



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www.healthunit.com



ENTRY #23: ASK ME ANYTHING!

It's hard to believe that I have had the honour of sharing my heart in this amazing magazine for two years on January 1, 2026. I have always wanted to write books about how I can help people through my own personal mistakes and victories. However, being bipolar, the thought of writing books is exhausting.

The Mom & Caregiver magazine offered me an opportunity to write a column every month. I proposed the idea of journals. If you have been reading the last two years you know that I don't hold back. Honestly, what I have shared is exactly what I would write in my own private journals. The editor loved my concept, and I am forever grateful to have a safe space to share my voice.

It's now time for us to hear from you! I want to connect with you, so ask me anything about any topics that I have

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 and www.facebook.com/bipolaronthebrain.

covered (or not) over the past 24 months.

Here are some ideas to help you:

1 How do you manage your bipolar disorder?

2 What is codependency?

3 How do I cope with loneliness?

4 How do I cope with empty nest syndrome?

5 How can my partner and I communicate better in our marriage?



6 How do I overcome my shopping addiction and get out of debt?

7 What tips can you share with me to manage stress so that I can live a more peaceful life?

8 How long will it take for me to heal from deep grief and loss?

9 What do you recommend I do if I suffer from anxiety attacks?

10 What tips do you have to deal with the winter blahs that cause me depression due to the lack of sunshine I experience every year?

We truly look forward to receiving your questions because there is no magazine without our readers. If you want me to answer any questions for the 2026 issues, please send them via email to info@themomandcaregiver.com. Also, include your name or indicate if you wish to remain anonymous. I can't wait to read what you want to know!

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East Campus | 716 Classic Dr. | 9:30+11 am

fccc.ca



REFLECTIONS

What's something you learned this year that surprised you?

Lander - Everything in science class!

Adi - I learned how to type without looking!

If the year had a "rewind button," would you press it?

Why or why not?

Lander Yes, I would press it so I could go back to some of my greatest moments.

Adi - Yes, I would go back to Disney!

If you had to give this year a title, like a book or a movie, what would it be?

Lander New Beginnings and New Ends

Adi - I Love My Family

What's your favorite thing to do when it's dark by 4:30 pm?

Lander I love to watch a scary movie.

Adi - I love doing puzzles.

Meet our Kid Zone writers, 12 and 8 year old siblings, Lander and Adi! Each month, they'll be sharing perspectives on life as a child sees it.

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SIBLING RIVALRY

Growing up in a home with an older brother and younger sister was always full of fun, angst and full-blown brawls. We were turn-key kids so for a good part of the afternoon we had to manage (and survive) without parental support.

The natural friction between siblings can be very difficult to manage for any parent, however there are techniques to help parents keep the peace more regularly:

1 Praise your children when they are playing co-operatively or calmly following the family rules immediately. Positive reinforcements create healthy good behaviors, so for every time you catch them fighting, you want to catch them playing well and praise them 3-5 times as much in order to change the behavior.

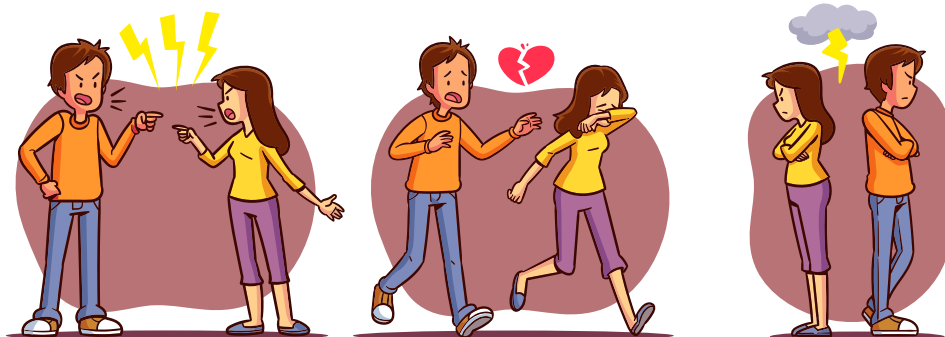
2 Get to the root of the problem/conflicts. Look for patterns with their fights. For example, you might see your children always fighting over a toy. The root problem is not

the toy but maybe a fight for your attention.

3 Teach children to let go of fairness. Life is not always fair so teach them how to cope with unfairness. When your children are upset because older brother gets to stay up late, tell them stories about when life was not fair for you and how you coped with it. This can be very difficult if a sibling has special needs requiring more attention from you. Children only need 20 minutes of 1:1 full parent interaction a day to feel loved, heard and seen.

4 Make a plan for when siblings fight because it is inevitable. You can coach an older sibling on how to respond in an effective way. (When the older child is hit, their plan is to leave the room and find mom or dad.) Set a timer for shared toys. Put stickers on toys that illicit more fights (like a new toy) that are not to be shared with siblings.

When we are clear AND consistent with our kids, we get the outcomes we want more often AND we get more peace. Take care!



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.

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MUSHROOM & LENTIL RISOTTO
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Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cup Arborio Rice
- 1/4 cup of Green Lentils
- 1/4 cup of Water
- 3 cups Vegetable Broth
- 2 cups Wild Mushrooms - Sliced
- 1 Shallot - Finely Diced
- 3 Cloves of Garlic - Minced
- 1/4 cup Salted Butter - Cubed
- 3 tbsp Olive Oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1/8 cup grated Grana Padano

Instructions:

1. In a pot bring 1/4 cup of water to a boil. Add in Green Lentils & cook for 20 mins or until tender. Once cooked strain & set to the side.
2. In a separate pot bring Vegetable Broth to a Simmer
3. In a large skillet, melt half your cubed butter & Olive Oil. Sauté onions and garlic until translucent. Add Mushrooms and sauté for 2-3 minutes.
4. Add Arborio rice & Cooked Green Lentil to the shallot and mushroom mixture & toast for 2 minutes.
5. Add warmed broth 1 ladle at a time. Stirring constantly. Once liquid is absorbed continue to add broth and repeat until rice is cooked & creamy.
6. Stir in half of your grated cheese and taste for seasoning.
7. Serve and garnish with the remaining Cheese & Cracked Black Pepper.



TRAVELLING WITH TODDLERS & PRESCHOOLERS MADE EASIER

Travelling with little ones can be magical. It also can be a lot of work. Luckily, Walt Disney World makes visiting with toddlers and preschoolers surprisingly smooth, thanks to thoughtful amenities and family-friendly design built into every corner of the resort - even things you haven't thought of that are already taken care of by Disney!

SEAMLESS TRANSPORTATION (No Car Seats Needed!)

One of the biggest perks for parents is the extensive, complimentary transportation system connecting Disney's resort hotels to their parks and Disney Springs. Once you arrive on property, buses, monorails, boats and the Disney Skyliner help families easily get around without worrying about car seats or parking. Each mode of transport is stroller-friendly, and most allow you to roll right on board. For families staying at a Disney Resort hotel, it's easy to head back midday for naps or pool time, then return later for more park fun once everyone is recharged.

Each mode of transport is stroller-friendly, and most allow you to roll right on board. For families staying at a Disney Resort hotel, it's easy to head back midday for naps or pool time, then return later for more park fun once everyone is recharged.

BABY CARE CENTERS IN EVERY PARK

These quiet, air-conditioned spaces include private nursing rooms,

changing tables, toddler-sized toilets and a kitchen area with a microwave and sink. They're also stocked with baby essentials for purchase in case you forget diapers, wipes or formula. The Baby Care Centers are a perfect spot to regroup, feed your child or simply take a breather before tackling more of your day.

AMENITIES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Every Disney Resort hotel provides cribs (upon request), bed rails and other amenities perfect for families. You can often find playgrounds or splash pads (depending on the resort) and resort activities for the whole family included in your resort stay.

Thinking about your first trip with little ones? I would love to help with your trip planning at no extra cost to you. I'll take care of the stress, you make the memories (and do the packing).

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 jtmitchell@puremagicvacations.ca.



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R.A.W. - REALLY AUTHENTIC WOMEN



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. 📸



Keeping It Real, One Story at a Time

Hi, I'm Sabina — publisher of The Mom & Caregiver magazine for over 27 years and host of The R.A.W. Podcast. What started as a passion project — a place to have real, unfiltered conversations about womanhood, motherhood and everything in between — has grown into something much bigger than I could have imagined.

The R.A.W. Podcast was born from a simple desire: to create a space where women and men could show up as their true selves. We laugh, we cry and we talk about the things that matter, without filters or perfection. Over time, R.A.W. has evolved into a community grounded in honesty, connection and heart.

That same spirit inspired the creation of R.A.W. Reviews — my way of supporting and celebrating the incredible local businesses that make our community thrive. Together with my video team, we visit these businesses, capture their stories, and share them in authentic, one-minute reels. Every review shines a light on the passion, creativity and people behind the brand, because behind every business is a heartbeat.

And now, R.A.W. is growing again — this time with purpose you can wear. Our R.A.W. and R.A.M. bracelets are handcrafted by women at My Sister's Place, a program that empowers those who've faced homelessness, violence and mental health challenges. Each bracelet tells a story of courage, resilience and hope — a reminder that authenticity isn't just about being real, it's about lifting others as we rise.

Our mission is simple: Wear your story. Change a story. If you'd like to purchase a R.A.W. or R.A.M. bracelet, or if you're a business owner who'd love to be featured in a R.A.W. Review, we'd love to connect with you.

Visit us at www.reallyauthenticwomen.com — and let's keep it real, together.

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YEAR-END PLANNING & HOLIDAY WISHES

Give the Gift of Financial Peace of Mind to Your Family

As the year winds down and the holidays approach, many of us take time to reflect on what truly matters most: our families, our homes and the sense of stability we work hard to create. It's also the perfect season to look at your finances and set yourself up for a stronger, more confident start to the new year.

One of the greatest gifts you can give your loved ones is financial peace of mind. With a few thoughtful adjustments, you can finish the year feeling secure and step into January ready to build lasting financial strength.

Start by reviewing your mortgage and overall financial picture. If rates have changed since you bought your home, or you have short term debt with payments stretching your cash flow beyond your comfort zone, a refinance could help you unlock equity for funding education, completing home improvements or paying off debt.

Next, as you prepare for the holidays, it's also a great opportunity to build better money habits that can last well into the new year. Here are three simple tips:

1 Set a Holiday Budget and Stick to It: Plan gift spending, travel and celebrations in advance. Knowing your limits helps you enjoy the season without financial regret.

2 Shop with Purpose: Take advantage of loyalty rewards, cashback offers or group gifts to stretch your dollars further. Carry this mindset into the new year for smarter, intentional spending.

3 Save Automatically: Set up a small, recurring transfer to your savings or investment account. Even after the holidays, this habit will help you build a cushion for future goals or unexpected expenses. Finally, celebrate your progress. Financial planning isn't just about numbers, it's about building a life you love and protecting the people who matter most.



This holiday season, give your family the comfort of knowing your financial house is in order. With mindful spending, smart saving and the right mortgage strategy, you can enter the new year with peace of mind and confidence for what's ahead.

Wishing you and your family a joyful holiday and a financially strong New Year!

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

Give your family **peace of mind** this holiday.

Whether it's reviewing your mortgage, accessing home equity, consolidating debt, or planning for the year ahead, **small financial steps today can bring lasting comfort tomorrow.**

**Start the new year with confidence
— connect with your mortgage
professional.**

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RHONDA STARK
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HOLLY JOLLY

Holiday Market

Dec 5 - Dec 21

Fridays: 4pm-10pm

Saturdays: 10am-9pm

Sundays: 10am-5pm

Check Out Our Website For All The Details



Covent Garden Market



@CoventGardenMarketCanada



www.coventmarket.com



THE WORK IS NOT FINISHED

As parents, we often function best by believing in a set of comforting, if unrealistic, ideals. That our kids will have lots of friends. Succeed in school. Excel in their passions. That no one will pick on them or make them feel small. That everyone will be accepted for who they are.

In some ways, the world has come a long way. We've made advances in healthcare. We can legally marry the person we love. And Leaf fans, somehow, still believe this might be the year.

But in other ways, we're spinning our wheels. The recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission remain largely unfulfilled. Access to mental health care continues to fall short.

This week reminded me—forcefully—that our work as parents and community members is far from over. At lunch downtown, I waited patiently for a parking spot, signal on, only for an elderly man to step into it and “save” it for his friend. The next

morning, I was aggressively tailgated for two kilometres in a 40-zone on the way to school.

At a Halloween employment workshop I helped facilitate, a participant loudly shared transphobic comments in front of transgender peers. That night, while trick-or-treating, a dad used a racist simile to describe his child—in front of someone of that race. Later, during post-trick-or-treating wine and candy-sorting, a neighbour launched into an anti-Indigenous rant while an Indigenous dad sat quietly in the same room.

These are not isolated moments. Every day, adults in London—educated, successful, “respectable” adults—say and do things that would have been shocking even a decade ago. I work in social services and live in a great neighbourhood. Yet ignorance is alive and well here, too.

The truth is simple: **the work is not finished**. We do not yet live in a society built on basic respect and acceptance. Pretending otherwise is a disservice—to yourself, to

your neighbours and to your children, who deserve the best role models possible. They are watching, learning and preparing to build the Canada we keep telling ourselves already exists.



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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.

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NEED-TO-KNOW NOTHING

There comes a time in every parent's life when we must confront the harshest truth of all: our teenagers don't want our help. We're now on a "need-to-know" basis—and according to them, we need to know nothing.

This fall, I've watched my daughter and her friends navigate the swirling chaos of high school, team sports and group chats. And

I've had to do the hardest thing imaginable: butt out. One of the best pieces of advice I ever got came from my mom: "Stay out of the girl drama—especially don't let it creep into your friendships with their parents." Because teenagers? They'll turn you into a liar or a villain overnight. While you're still avoiding Karen at the rink, your kids have already made a TikTok together and moved on. They work through it. We stew.

It's tempting to step in. You want to fire off a strongly worded text, demand justice or host an intervention in your SUV. But unless someone's being harmed or bullied? You're not the solution. You're the problem. Teenage drama isn't for fixing. It's for surviving. It's where they learn to speak up, screw up, and figure out who's worth their mascara. Every time we interfere, we rob them of resilience.

The teenage brain is pure chaos: emotional regulation is optional, loyalty shifts faster than cell reception in a parking garage, and empathy takes the scenic route. Their ability to flip their seat and see both sides? About as developed as their ability to put a dish in the dishwasher.

So welcome, friends, to your bite-your-tongue, swear-under-your-breath years—where waiting out the drama is an Olympic sport. It might feel like doing nothing, but it's the most important parenting move you'll make.

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



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INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

December 3rd marks International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a day to celebrate the abilities, achievements and resilience of people living with disabilities. It's also a chance for families and caregivers to reflect on the small supports that can make a big difference in everyday life, like orthotics.

Disabilities can affect movement, balance and muscle control, but every person's experience is different. Some children walk independently with a little extra support, while others rely more on braces or mobility aids. What matters most is helping them participate fully in school, play and daily life.

That's where orthotics come in. Devices like ankle-foot orthoses (AFOs), knee-ankle-foot orthoses (KAFOs), wrist-hand orthoses (WHOs), and custom footwear or inserts are designed to support muscles and joints, improve alignment and make moving more comfortable. For a child, the right orthotic



might mean running with friends on the playground, joining gym class without pain or simply walking more confidently through the school day. For adults, orthotics can reduce fatigue, improve posture and help them stay active and independent in their daily routines.

Orthotics aren't just about physical support, they help people take part in

life with confidence. When a child can move more comfortably, they can focus on playing, learning and socializing. When an adult has the support they need, they can care for their family, enjoy hobbies and engage with their community without unnecessary discomfort. These small supports make big differences in quality of life.

This International Day of Persons with Disabilities, we celebrate not only the achievements of those living with disabilities, but also the caregivers and families who support them every day. Orthotics are one tool that can help people live more independently, safely and confidently.

If you're wondering whether orthotics could help your child or loved one, our team is here to guide you with advice and personalized solutions. Together, we can help individuals of all abilities move more freely, participate fully and enjoy everyday life to the fullest.

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RETHINKING RESOLUTIONS: WHAT IF WE DID IT DIFFERENTLY THIS YEAR?

This month kicks off a special two-part Food for Thought series about New Year’s resolutions, but with a twist! December is all about setting the stage and reflecting, while January will focus on small, meaningful action.

Every December, the same question pops up: “What’s your New Year’s resolution?” And every year, I feel a little twinge of guilt if I don’t have a perfect answer ready. Lose weight? Be more patient? Finally get organized? (How many times have we said that one?). But maybe this year, instead of jumping into a list of things to change, we start with a pause.

December can be such a blur. With holiday concerts, gift lists, extra sugar everywhere... the list goes on! But it can also be the perfect time to slow down for a moment and look back.

Jenn Giurgevich is the founder of Spark Nutrition & Health, a virtual nutrition consulting business. Visit www.sparknutritionandhealth.ca for more information

Ask yourself:

- What actually went well this year?
- What brought me joy or made me feel proud?
- What do I want more of in the year ahead?

We’re so used to focusing on what needs fixing that we forget to celebrate what’s already working. Maybe you found a new walking buddy, started packing better lunches (or packing a lunch, period!), or finally learned to say “no” when your plate was full. Those small wins matter.

So this month, give yourself permission to not plan a massive transformation. Instead, choose a word or theme for your new year. Something that feels grounding, like



“balance”, “growth” or “calm”. Let that guide you instead of strict rules.

Because come January, you’ll already be moving in the right direction...not from pressure, but from a place of awareness and self-kindness.

Cheers to a peaceful holiday season to you and yours.



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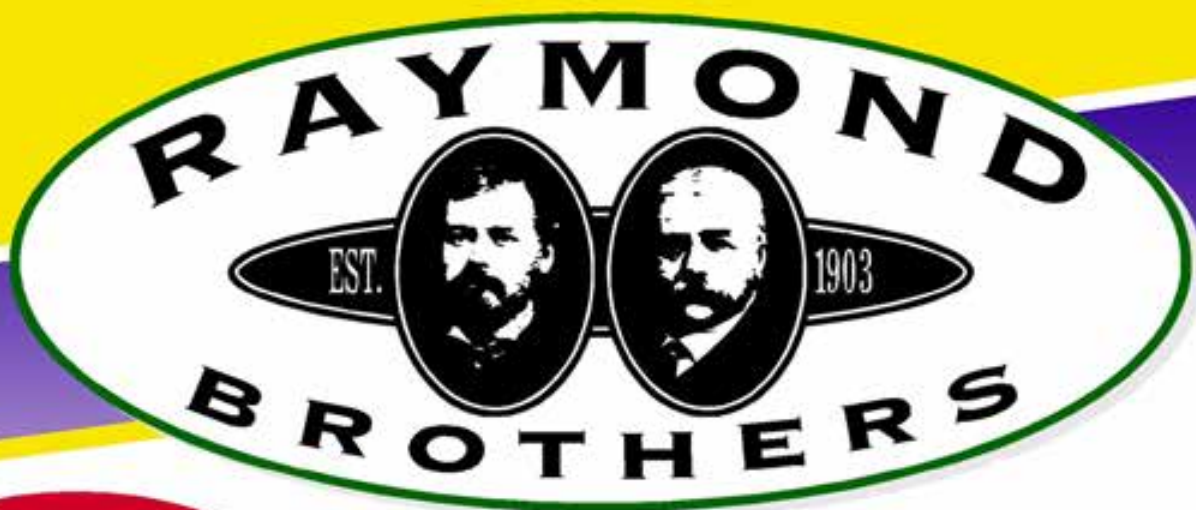
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