

A FREE
MAGAZINE

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

JUNE 2026
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 06

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Dads
**FOR THE
WIN!**

GREEK PITA BURGERS FOR DAD'S DAY	5
PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH	6
LEXUS OF LONDON GOLF CLASSIC.....	19

PREGNANCY - BABY - TODDLER



PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY

Celebrating the Season

(AND ALL THE FEELINGS THAT COME WITH IT)



June is a month full of endings. School wraps up, activities come to a close, and big moments like recitals and final games fill the calendar. While it's an exciting time, it can also bring a mix of emotions for kids.

Some children feel proud and happy. Others might feel nervous, emotional, or even a little sad that something they've loved is ending. All of those feelings are normal.

This is a great time to check in with your child. Ask simple questions like, *What was your favourite part of this year? What are you most proud of? What will you miss?* These small conversations help children reflect and feel supported as they move through change.

Dance recitals are a perfect example of this season. They're not just a performance,

they're a celebration. Every class, every practice, and every moment of effort leads to that time on stage. It's a chance for children to feel proud of themselves and share their hard work with family.

As parents, it's important to remind our kids that it's not about being perfect. It's about showing up, trying their best, and enjoying the moment. When we celebrate effort, we help build confidence that lasts far beyond June.

This season may feel like an ending, but it's also a beginning. With a little support, reflection, and celebration, children can step into summer feeling proud, confident, and ready for what's next.

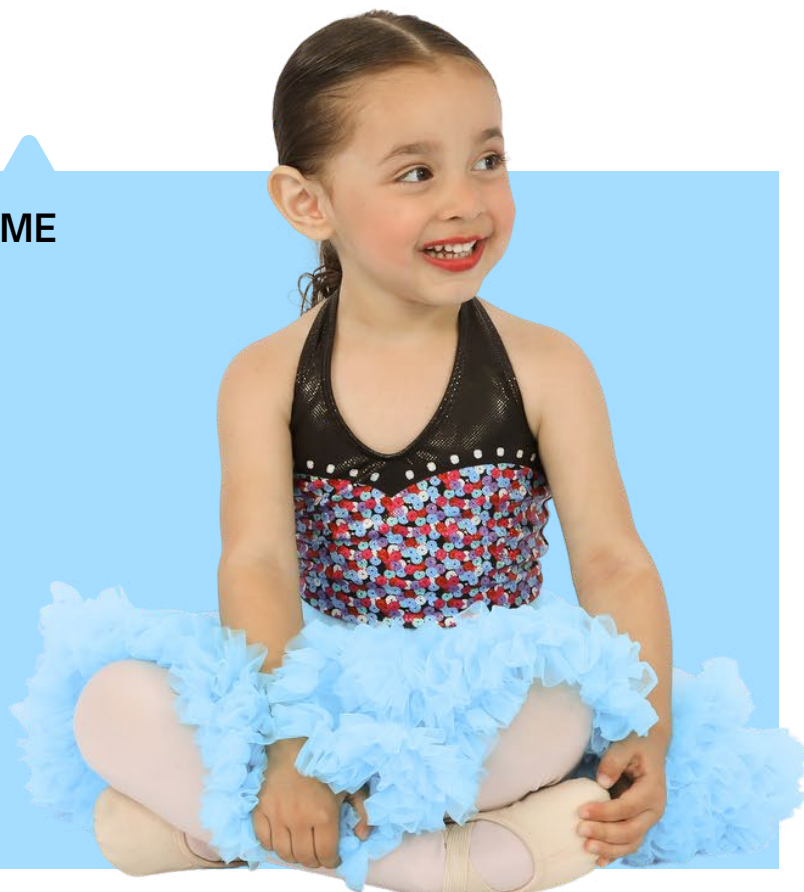
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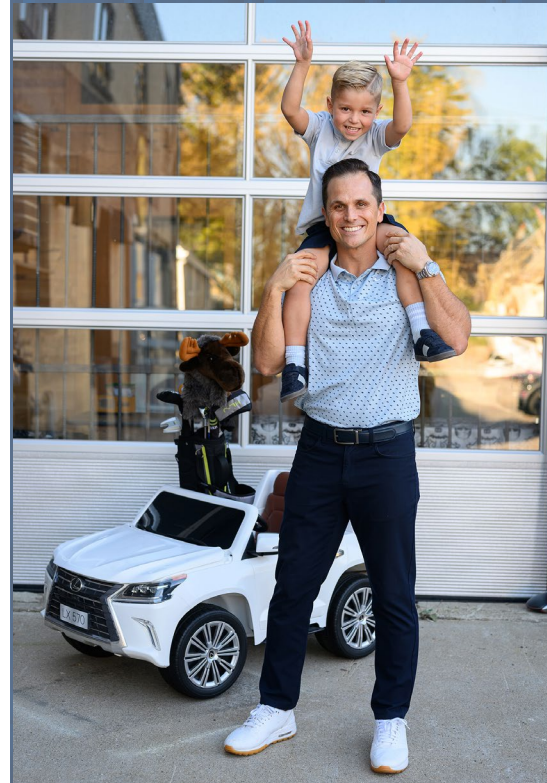




CONTENTS

ON THE COVER

Ashton was such a pro at posing and smiling that Dad, Adam, kept asking, "Do we even need me?" We're so glad to have both Ashton and Adam in celebration of Father's Day! Big thanks to Lexus of London for the mini Lexus, and Bob Martin's Golf for the clubs!



EDITORIAL
Lunchboxes Down, Grills Up! **04**

EVENTS CALENDAR
June 2026 **05**

NEW BEGINNINGS
You Are Not Alone: Supporting
Perinatal Mental Health **06**

FAMILY HEALTH
Know Your Numbers - Part 2 **07**

SPECIAL FEATURE
Lexus of London
Golf Classic **08**

BIPOLAR ON THE BRAIN
Journal Entry #29 **10**

KID ZONE
I'm Curious... **11**

COMFORT CARE
The House That
Raised Her Back **13**

BIZ SHOWCASE
Luscombe Consulting **14**

WHOLE-PERSON CARE
The Greatest Gift a
Father Can Give **15**

MORTGAGE WHISPERER
Summer Fun, Smarter Savings **16**

TALK WITH JEN
Opening Up About
Psychotherapy **17**

DAD-ITUDE
Self-Love Isn't
a Slogan **18**

MODERN MEDICINE
The Official Start of Summer **19**

COUNTRY GIRL,
MODERN MOM
Meet Meda! **20**

ONE STEP AT A TIME
Why Does Baby
Always Look One Way? **21**

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
Fuelling Your Family
For Summer **22**

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

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THE MOM & CAREGIVER

LUNCHBOXES DOWN, GRILLS UP!

June is a month of transitions—of winding down and gearing up, of reflection and anticipation. As the school year draws to a close and the rhythm of summer begins to take shape, families celebrate milestones and everyday moments that define this season.

Father's Day arrives right in the middle of it all, offering a pause to recognize the many ways dads and caregivers show up. In this issue, we spotlight stories that reflect the evolving experience of fatherhood. The Lexus of London Golf Classic (page 8) supports prostate cancer research and patient care through the London Health Sciences Foundation. We also have an important (and often overlooked) conversation about perinatal mental health for dads. See the signs and risk factors on page 6. We believe that supporting dads in their health and well-being ultimately strengthens the entire family.

June also signals the end of the school year—a milestone that carries a mix of excitement, relief and a touch of nostalgia. Backpacks get

emptied, artwork comes home in stacks and routines begin to loosen. It's a time to celebrate growth, resilience and the small victories that carried our children through the year.

If your meals are becoming more relaxed, moving outdoors or fitting into longer, sun-filled days, then our Greek pita burger recipe (page 8) is perfect for you—simple, satisfying and ideal for celebrating the end of school or Dad's special day!

At The Mom & Caregiver, we know that parenting doesn't follow a single script. June reminds us to embrace both the structure we're leaving behind and the flexibility ahead. We celebrate the dads who are present in all the ways that matter most: not perfect, but committed, and not distant, but engaged. In the big gestures and the small, they remind us that care is an active, ongoing choice. And that choice makes all the difference.

As you move into summer, we hope you find time to celebrate and to enjoy the everyday moments that matter most.

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR

Sabrina



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EVENTS

JUNE 2026



Mamma Mia!,
Palace Theatre,
www.palacetheatre.ca

04TH

The London Beer Fest,
Dundas Place,
[www.instagram.com/
thelondonbeerfest](http://www.instagram.com/thelondonbeerfest)

20TH

Professional Bull Riders,
Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

05TH

Happy
FATHER'S DAY!

21ST

Maker's Club: 3D Keychain,
Bostwick Library,
www.lpl.ca

09TH

Today IS
NATIONAL INDIGENOUS
PEOPLES DAY

21ST

Women of London Music,
Palasod Social Bowl,
www.fclma.ca/fclma-music-week-2026

11TH

Kinky Boots,
Canada Life Place,
www.canadalifeplace.com

23RD

Latin Street Party,
Dundas Place,
[www.londontourism.ca/events/
latin-street-party](http://www.londontourism.ca/events/latin-street-party)

12TH

Happy
LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!

25TH

London Children's Festival,
Victoria Park,
[www.canadasbiggestparty.com/
victoria-park-childrens-festival](http://www.canadasbiggestparty.com/victoria-park-childrens-festival)

19TH

Empanada Fest,
Covent Garden Market,
[www.stereocaliente.com/
festivals](http://www.stereocaliente.com/festivals)

27TH

Made with Love:
Father's Day Edition,
Crouch Library,
www.lpl.ca

20TH

Summer Day Camp:
Dream Big!, London
Children's Museum,
www.londonchildrensmuseum.ca

29TH

I grew up on Kool-Aid and chicken wieners. Hand-me-down husky Wranglers. A father I never met.

But my mom showed up. Every single day. Holding things together with whatever she had, which was never enough and always somehow enough. Then Coach Burkhart did something she couldn't. He bought me my first pair of soccer cleats and put me on a team. He believed in me. A coach could redirect an entire life.

Fast forward to my 40s. I was 295 pounds on a catamaran in Jamaica and the snorkeling guide told me the weight belt only holds 250 pounds. *That was my moment.*

I spent the next year and a half dropping 75 pounds through CrossFit and working with a nutrition coach. A coach changed my trajectory again.

That's why I do what I do.

I work with moms & caregivers who pour into everyone else, and wake up one day not recognizing themselves. My program builds the nutrition habits and daily structure that fit into a real life.

My name is Kevin Cope. I coach what I live.

This is The Cope Effect.

Every month in this column, I'll give you one system, one habit, and one move you can make this week — no gym required, no perfect life needed. Welcome — you're exactly where you're supposed to be!



“The heart of a father is a masterpiece of nature.”

Unknown

FOLLOW US



YOU ARE NOT ALONE: SUPPORTING PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

Welcoming a new baby is often joyful, but it can also bring emotional challenges. Many parents experience changes in mood, stress or anxiety during pregnancy and after birth. About 1 in 5 mothers and 1 in 10 fathers experience a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder. Learning about perinatal mental health helps families recognize when support is needed.

WHAT IS PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH?

Perinatal Mental Health (PMH) refers to emotional wellbeing during pregnancy and up to one year after baby is born. During this time, some parents experience conditions such as depression, anxiety or obsessive compulsive disorder. These conditions are common, treatable and not a source of shame.

BABY BLUES VS. PERINATAL MOOD DISORDERS

It is normal to feel emotional ups and downs after having a baby. The “baby blues” may include tearfulness, mood swings, irritability or feeling overwhelmed, and usually resolve within two weeks. When symptoms are more intense, last longer or interfere with daily life, this may be a sign of a perinatal mood or anxiety disorder.

WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

Anyone can experience perinatal mental health challenges. Risk may be higher for parents with:

- A history of mental health concerns
- A thyroid condition
- High levels of stress
- Limited supports
- Ongoing sleep deprivation

CARING FOR YOURSELF MATTERS

Symptoms can begin during pregnancy or anytime within the first year after birth, so it is important to take care of yourself - for you and your baby. Sleep is especially important for mental health. Try to sleep when your baby sleeps and let other tasks go. Eating regularly, staying connected and asking for help can support your well-being. Safe and effective medication options are available during pregnancy and breastfeeding - talk with your healthcare provider.

DADS AND PARTNERS MATTER TOO

PMH affects fathers and partners as well. Signs may include irritability, withdrawal, anger, anxiety or feeling overwhelmed. Risk increases with stress, lack of sleep and limited support.

SUPPORTING A LOVED ONE

If someone you care about is struggling, ask them, “How are you really doing?” Offer practical help—meals, cleaning, holding the baby—or simply listen without trying to fix things.

WHERE TO GET HELP

You are not alone. With the right support, things can get better. Reaching out is the first step. The Middlesex-London Health Unit can help connect you with local supports. Visit www.healthunit.com/pregnancy-parenting/perinatal-mental-health/ or call 519 663 5317 (press 5) to speak to a public health nurse. Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (West Region) offers free, short-term, evidence-based cognitive behavioural therapy for adults 18 years of age and older with depression or anxiety. Learn more at www.ospwest.ca.

REFERENCES

- Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatments (CANMAT). (2024). *Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Perinatal Mood, Anxiety, and Related Disorders*.
- Middlesex-London Health Unit. (2026). *Perinatal Mental Health*. <https://www.healthunit.com/pregnancy-parenting/perinatal-mental-health/>
- Postpartum Support International. (2025). *Postpartum Mental Health*. <https://postpartum.net/>



Submitted by Linda Weir, BScN, RN, CPMHN(C)
for the Middlesex-London Health Unit



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS | PART 2

This is the second of a four part series about the numbers that you should know about your health.

Over 11.7 million Canadians have been diagnosed with diabetes or pre-diabetes. It is estimated that many people have been living with diabetes for up to two years before being diagnosed. The symptoms at onset can include excessive thirst, frequent urination, blurred vision and fatigue.

The hemoglobin A1c is used to diagnose and to follow the status of diabetes. It represents the amount of sugar that sticks to red blood cells. Red blood cells have a life of 120 days in the body so it can reflect the status of known diabetes. It is less cumbersome for diagnosis than the previous ways we had to diagnose diabetes that required fasting and multiple tests after drinking a sugar load.

An A1c of more than 6.5 confirms the diagnosis of diabetes. A level of 6.0 to 6.5 represents pre-diabetes. A level of 5.5 to 6.0 represents "at risk" for diabetes. These levels are equivalent to a red, dark yellow and light yellow light for the diagnosis of diabetes.

The level can also help us to know the severity of known diabetes. A higher A1c is linked to

increased risk for complications of diabetes such as vision change, kidney disease, and risk for heart and stroke.

It is recommended that adults over age 40 or those at higher risk (family history / obesity etc), and every three months to follow the status of known diabetes. In those with stable diabetes the A1c can be checked every six months.

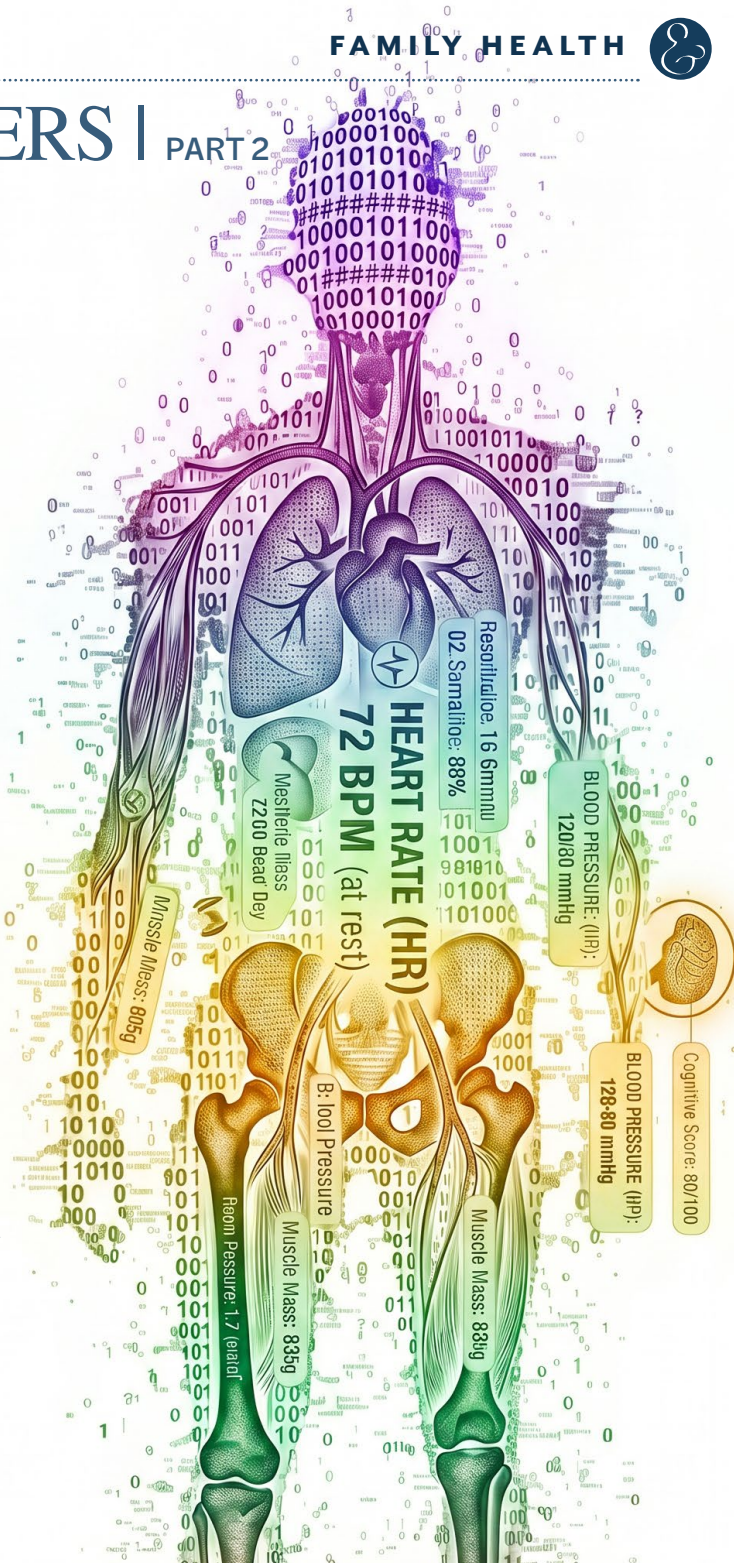
It is important to know your A1c. Speak to your primary care practitioner to discuss your risk profile and whether it might be prudent to check.

An invaluable resource to better understand diabetes and lifestyle is the website of Diabetes Canada. www.diabetes.ca.

They have excellent information meal planning, blood sugar management and exercise and activity. They also have virtual diabetes education classes because it is not always easy to make it in to diabetes education classes.

Stay healthy and be empowered by knowing your numbers!!

.....
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!





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LEXUS OF LONDON GOLF CLASSIC

The Lexus of London Golf Classic has become one of the most impactful charitable sporting events in London, combining community engagement with meaningful contributions to healthcare. Founded in 2000, the annual tournament and gala have grown into a premier fundraising initiative dedicated to supporting prostate cancer research and patient care through the London Health Sciences Foundation.

At its core, the event brings together golfers, sponsors, healthcare professionals and community members for a two-day experience that includes a gala, auction and golf tournament. Beyond its social and recreational appeal, the Golf Classic has a clear and consistent mission: to improve outcomes for men diagnosed with prostate cancer. This cause is particularly significant given that approximately one in seven Canadian men will develop the disease during their lifetime.

The financial impact of the Lexus of London Golf Classic has been substantial. Over the past two decades, the event has raised more



than \$1.6 million, with all proceeds remaining within the London community. These funds directly support research initiatives and patient care programs at local institutions, particularly at the London Health Sciences Centre. This localized funding model ensures that donations translate into tangible improvements in diagnosis, treatment and patient support services.

One of the most notable contributions linked to the Golf Classic is its role in advancing innovative research infrastructure. Fundraising efforts have helped support the development of initiatives such as a prostate cancer

biobank, which collects and stores biological samples for scientific study. Such resources are critical for understanding the progression of prostate cancer and for developing more effective, personalized treatments.

Medical experts in London have emphasized that the Golf Classic has played a crucial role in enabling cutting-edge research and treatment programs. These include efforts to better understand the disease's behavior and improve its clinical management, ultimately enhancing patients' quality of life.

In addition to funding research, the event also raises awareness about prostate cancer and fosters a strong sense of community involvement. By engaging donors, volunteers and participants, the Lexus of London Golf Classic continues to build a culture of philanthropy and collaboration. Its enduring success demonstrates how community-driven initiatives can make a measurable difference in the fight against cancer, both locally and beyond.

GREEK PITA Burgers



FOR DAD'S DAY!

INGREDIENTS:

- Ground beef or ground lamb
- Salt and pepper
- Pitas
- Tomato
- Cucumber
- Red onion
- Feta
- Tzatziki sauce

DIRECTIONS:

- 1** Form a patty with your ground meat. Salt and pepper well. Grill to your desired doneness.
- 2** Cut a small piece off the edge of your pita and open up the pocket.
- 3** Stuff pita with burger patty, tomato, cuke, onion, feta and tzatziki.

4 Enjoy!

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JOURNAL ENTRY #29

HOW DO YOU HANDLE YOUR THOUGHT LIFE?

Have you considered that if you aren't mindful of how you allow random thoughts to settle into your mind on any given day, they can totally dictate what kind of day you will have? How can you take control of your thought life so that you can live a meaningful, joyful and peaceful life?

I wanted to share this with you because I have completed so much therapy and used my personal faith to get past horrible traumas. In order to fight the post-menopausal belly bulge (so I feel like myself again), my coach has me doing yoga along with my workout. Yoga is stirring up some emotions about my past. I have cried a few tears while asking myself, "Didn't I deal with this junk with my psychiatrist along with medications prescribed by my doctors?" I told my husband what I am going through and he said, "You forgave those people over 25 years ago for your sake, not for theirs."

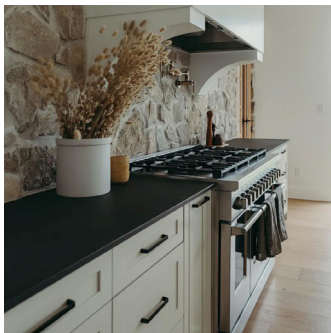
Pastor Joyce Meyers says it best when she shares, "We live life forward, but

we understand it backwards." We don't understand our suffering at the time, but when we look back we can understand how, as well as why, we made it through some very terrible times. Honestly, without my painful experiences, I have nothing to look back on to share with you in order to hopefully help you in your life.

My advice? Don't try to make sense of all that's happened to you. It will never make sense. Use your past to be a kind, compassionate person. Go around doing good. When negative thoughts come into your head say out loud (like I do), "I love myself and I love people. I am excited because something great is going to happen today!" I am bipolar, however, I still try to do my part to be positive. If you also have a mental illness, you can make it worse by giving up. Remember, see your doctors, take your prescribed meds, stay on a regular sleep schedule, eat healthy and stay hopeful that good things are coming your way!



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.



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I'M CURIOUS...

The last day of school feels like...

Adi - torture - I love being in school!

Lander - freedom!

The thing I'm most curious about is...

Adi - photography (like my mom!)

Lander - how people created AI.

What's something you used to believe is true, but now you know is not?

Adi - I used to believe that money buys happiness.

Lander - I know that scary movies aren't scary.

If I ran a summer camp, we would...

Adi - play all day.

Lander - run an MMA camp for kids.



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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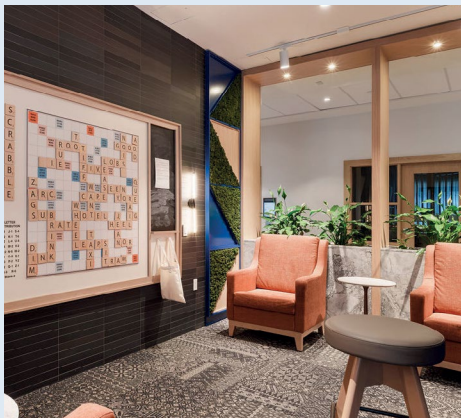


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THE HOUSE THAT RAISED HER BACK

There's something strange about standing in front of a house that remembers you before you ever understood how it worked. For Emma Clarke, it's the same home with the crooked porch step, the stubborn winter-sticking mailbox—and a furnace that used to rattle like it was barely holding on.

She used to ride her bike past it every day. Now she's back in steel-toe boots, clipboard in hand, working as a contractor across her childhood neighborhood—with Jayden's Mechanical behind her approach to every system she touches.

"Still struggling," she mutters in the basement, eyeing the old furnace. "Same problems, different year."

Emma isn't just renovating homes—she's upgrading comfort. Drafty windows, aging HVAC systems, neglected maintenance... all the things people live with until they don't have to anymore.

At first, it's nostalgic. Every job comes with a memory. But over time, she stops seeing the

Jayden's Mechanical, (519) 273-HEAT (4328), www.jaydensmechanical.com, @jaydensmechanical

houses as they were and starts seeing what Jayden's Mechanical always taught her to focus on: reliability, efficiency and preventative care that keeps problems from showing up in the first place. Furnaces get tuned instead of tolerated. Ductwork gets sealed instead of ignored. Comfort becomes something built in—not hoped for.

By the end of the project, the neighborhood doesn't feel new. It feels right again. Emma stands on the sidewalk of the street she grew up on, hearing the quiet, steady hum of systems finally working the way they should.

And it lands simply: Coming home isn't going back. It's making sure everything behind the walls is working for the people inside them—just like Jayden's Mechanical is built to do.



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
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For many entrepreneurs and business owners, balancing growth, financial responsibilities, operations and family life can feel overwhelming. Behind every successful business is someone carrying enormous responsibility — not only for their company, but for the people who depend on them at home.


That is where we come in

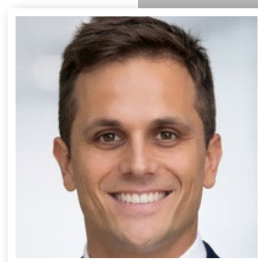
With more than 22 years of experience across finance, operations, sales and strategic leadership, Luscombe Consulting is passionate about helping business owners make clearer, more confident decisions that improve both their businesses and their quality of life.

At Luscombe Consulting, we work alongside entrepreneurs to provide strategic, financial and operational insight that helps maximize resources, improve efficiency, increase profitability and create long-term stability. Beyond reports and financial analysis, our focus is helping people reduce stress, gain clarity and create businesses that support the life they truly want. What makes our approach different is that we do not believe business challenges are solved with generic advice. Every company — and every family — has unique goals, pressures and opportunities. We take the time to understand the full picture so practical solutions can be implemented to drive meaningful results. Over the years, we have helped businesses improve operational performance, streamline systems, reduce costs, increase revenue and navigate periods of significant growth and transition. From private equity ventures and construction developments to fintech platforms and local businesses, the common thread has always been helping leaders make smarter decisions with confidence.

As technology continues to evolve, we also help businesses understand how modern tools, automation and emerging AI solutions can improve efficiency, strengthen reporting, enhance decision-making and create scalable operational advantages in an increasingly competitive marketplace. As Father's Day approaches, it is a reminder that success is about more than business growth — it is about creating security, opportunity and balance for the people we care about most. Business owners often spend so much time taking care of everyone else that they rarely have a trusted strategic partner helping guide them through important decisions. Our goal is to become that trusted resource — bringing insight, structure and clarity so entrepreneurs can focus on what they do best.

When businesses operate stronger, families benefit too.

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. 





THE GREATEST GIFT A FATHER CAN GIVE

The Harvard Study of Adult Development, spanning over eight decades, tracking hundreds of lives, reveals a profound truth perfect for Father's Day reflection: **the quality of our relationships determines our happiness and health more than anything else.**

LIFE WELL-LIVED:

The Surprising Discovery

Researchers expected wealth, career success or physical health to predict happiness. Instead, they found something simpler yet more powerful:

- Close relationships keep us happier and healthier
- Loneliness kills: as much as smoking or obesity
- Quality over quantity: a few deep connections matter more than many superficial ones
- Good relationships protect our brains and bodies as we age

For Dads: Your Greatest Legacy isn't:

- The size of your paycheck
- Your job title or achievements
- The house you provide

• The toys you buy
It's the relationship you build with your children and family.

The study shows that children who feel securely connected to their fathers:

- Develop stronger emotional resilience
- Build healthier relationships throughout life
- Experience better physical and mental health
- Navigate challenges with greater confidence

This doesn't require perfection—just consistent, genuine presence.

WAYS TO CONNECT TODAY:

Quality Time

- Put away devices during conversations
- Create weekly one-on-one traditions
- Be fully present, even for 15 minutes daily

Emotional Availability

- Listen without trying to "fix" everything
- Share your own feelings and vulnerabilities
- Validate their experiences and emotions

Consistent Investment

- Show up for the small moments, not just big events
- Remember: they spell love as T-I-M-E

• Repair rifts quickly when you make mistakes
The Research Is Clear:

Men who prioritized warm relationships at age 50 were healthiest and happiest at age 80. Those who isolated themselves or invested primarily in work faced earlier decline. Whether you're a father, have a father, or mentor young people, commit to connection. The greatest wealth isn't in a bank—it's in the hearts of those you love. Your presence today shapes their tomorrow. Happy Father's Day to all who embrace this sacred work.

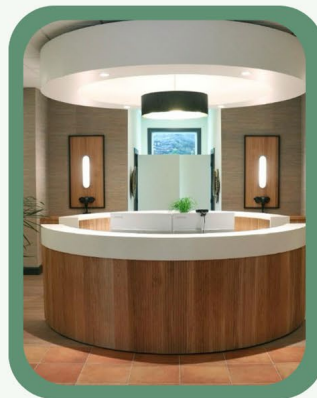


Dr. Kylea Potvin, Medical Oncologist and Founder, Eir Centre, 226-289-6644, Info@eirhealing.ca



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SUMMER FUN, SMARTER SAVINGS

As summer approaches, many families ask: How can we afford camps, vacations and memorable experiences without stretching the budget too thin? The answer may be closer than you think—right inside your mortgage.

A mortgage check-up is one of the most overlooked ways to free up cash flow. By reviewing your current rate, terms and financial goals, you may uncover opportunities to lower monthly payments or access equity. Put more money back into your pocket for summer fun!

Your mortgage should align with your broader financial goals, not just your interest rate. Adjusting your mortgage structure, such as extending amortization or refinancing, can reduce monthly costs and improve short-term cash flow. That extra breathing room can help cover everything from day camps to a long-overdue family getaway.

With the rising costs of goods and services



in this unpredictable economy, a trending question homeowners are asking with respect to their mortgage is “Am I paying more than I need to?” If you haven’t reviewed your mortgage recently, the answer could be yes. Even small changes, like securing a better rate or consolidating higher-interest debt, can lead to noticeable monthly savings and a more comfortable cashflow.

For parents, this matters even more. Summer is about creating memories—bike

rides, road trips, backyard barbecues—not stressing over bills. A simple mortgage check-up can help you reallocate funds toward what really counts: time with your kids.

Refinancing may also give you the flexibility to enhance your home for summer enjoyment. Accessing equity could fund landscaping projects or backyard upgrades like a pool, hot tub or outdoor kitchen—creating a space where family memories happen every day.

A summer refinance can also help you get ahead of fall planning. Setting aside funds now for tuition, school supplies, competitive sports or extracurriculars can ease the financial pressure that often arrives in September.

Another smart tip is to revisit your budget with fresh eyes. Understanding your income and expenses can reveal opportunities to redirect spending toward family experiences. Think of your mortgage as a tool, not just a payment. With the right strategy, it can support your lifestyle—not limit it.

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

Make More Room for Summer



What if your mortgage could help fund your family’s best summer yet?

A simple mortgage check-up could free up extra cash for **camp, vacations, and everyday moments that matter most.** Whether it’s lowering your payments or accessing equity, small changes can create real breathing room.



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Let’s take a look—your summer might be closer than you think.

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OPENING UP ABOUT PSYCHOTHERAPY



Spending my early years in Northern Ireland and moving to Canada without many family connections also shaped me, especially experiencing how meaningful it was when neighbours and new friends offered support. That gratitude directly impacted my commitment to help others through community involvement. I run a small donation centre for people and animals in need, offer peer support to students, coach soccer, and host a teen youth group where we prepare and distribute care packages.

I returned to school in my 30s while raising my two daughters, now ages 10 and 14, alongside my supportive husband and life as a dog person. During the pandemic, I navigated homeschooling while completing my Master of Arts in Counselling Psychology, a time that

brought growth, perspective and learning. At this point in life, I bring together my professional and personal roles by offering grounded, evidence-informed support to people experiencing significant stress and overwhelm, and collaborate with agencies in London to offer low cost and free therapy, when they may not otherwise have access to support. At the root of it all, I find people are often just doing their best, and sometimes need a little help along the way, something I have experienced over the years.

DISCLAIMER: *this information is for educational purposes only and does not constitute psychotherapy or a therapeutic relationship.*

TALK WITH JEN

Before becoming a registered psychotherapist, I was someone who people from all walks of life opened up to, even in grocery store line ups! I think that came from a natural empathy that helped others feel safe. While I was a compassionate listener, I did not always have the tools to help in the ways I wanted to, and that curiosity about human behaviour led me down the path of psychotherapy.

Jen Wall is a Registered Psychotherapist with Talk With Jen Counselling and Psychotherapy, a virtual practice based in London, Ontario, supporting caregivers and professionals in high-stress roles.

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SELF-LOVE ISN'T A SLOGAN

It's officially the midpoint of 2026, and we're living in full-blown information overload. With the rise of AI and the precision of big data, we now exist in a world of hyper-personalized content. Ads don't just target demographics anymore, they target you.

Your devices are always tracking. I realized this when I told my brother-in-law, in person, that I couldn't join a family run because of two meniscus tears. Ten minutes later, Instagram served me ads for \$90 knee sleeves. No microphone needed. Just data doing what it does best.

Here's the problem: we're being targeted at our insecurities. In a world where quick fixes like Ozempic and peptides

are marketed as shortcuts to health, it's never been easier to feel bad about your body.

And our kids are watching. They notice differences. Who's faster, stronger, taller. Who can do a pull-up or a backflip. And they're also listening to how we talk about ourselves.

If you've gained some weight or slowed down since your 20s, welcome to the club.

But how you talk about it matters. Saying, "It's harder for Dad to dunk

because my knees hurt," models

awareness and self-respect. Saying, "I've got a dad bod," or worse, teaches self-criticism.

The same goes for food. "No cake for me, it goes straight to my stomach," sends a message. Modelling balance and moderation sends a better one.

Our kids don't need perfect bodies modelled for them. They need healthy relationships with movement, food and self-worth. That comes from what they see us do every day. Stay active in ways you enjoy. Make thoughtful choices. Speak to yourself with the same respect you'd want for them.

Self-love isn't a slogan. It's a habit your kids are quietly learning from you. So take care of your health. Be kind to yourself. And remember, the example you set will always speak louder than the jokes you make at your own expense.

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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THE OFFICIAL START OF SUMMER

June marks the official start of summer—and just like that, school routines are out and a new, more relaxed rhythm begins. Between vacations, kids at home, weddings and last-minute plans, it's easy for your own self-care to slip down the list. But summer is actually one of the most important times to stay consistent with your aesthetic wellness routine. Think of your treatments as part of your seasonal maintenance—not something to pause, but something to adapt.

With more time in lighter clothing and swimwear, body confidence often comes into focus. Treatments like Emsculpt Neo are ideal during the summer months because they require no downtime and can easily fit into a busy, ever-changing schedule. Whether you're heading to the cottage or juggling camps and activities, it's a simple way to continue building strength and supporting your goals.

When it comes to skin, consistency is key. While certain deeper laser treatments

are best reserved for fall and winter, summer-friendly options can safely maintain your glow, target pigment and keep skin healthy with minimal interruption to your plans. The goal isn't to do everything—it's to stay on track so you're not starting over in September.

And let's not forget: summer is wedding season. Whether you're a bride, part of the bridal party or attending multiple events, planning ahead for treatments can make all the difference. Subtle, strategic treatments

now—like skin-refreshing lasers or body contouring—help you feel confident, radiant and camera-ready when those special moments arrive.

The biggest mindset shift? Your aesthetic wellness routine doesn't need to be all-or-nothing. Summer is about balance—enjoying the spontaneity while still investing in yourself in ways that feel manageable and sustainable.

Because when you feel good in your skin, it shows—no matter the season.



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IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU



MEET MEDA!

I'd like to introduce myself as your new monthly column writer for The Mom & Caregiver.

I am a mother of four children, ranging in age from 16 to 32, and each of them has shaped the woman I have become. My oldest daughter and oldest son are building happy, vibrant lives of their own, while my youngest son is a busy, ambitious teenager who keeps our home full of energy and laughter. My 26-year-old son is complex care and palliative, and being his caregiver has profoundly changed my perspective on life, family, resilience and the importance of finding joy in even the smallest moments.

Alongside motherhood and caregiving, I am also the owner of two local businesses: Country Girl Catering and Preserves, and Country Girl Body Products. Both businesses were built around the values closest to my heart — supporting local farmers, small businesses, sustainability, and creating

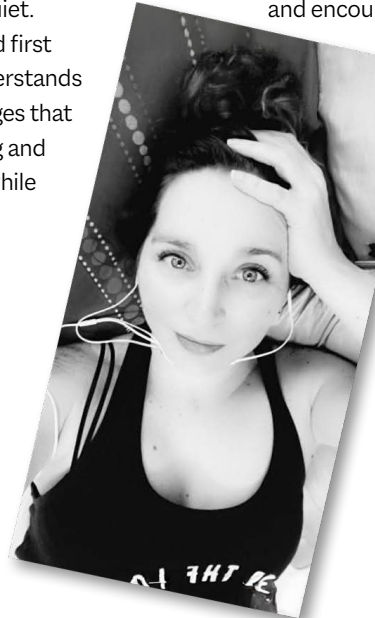
products with purpose and care. One focuses on “Farm to Pantry,” preserving local food traditions and quality homemade products, while the other embraces “Farm to Skin,” offering small-batch natural body products made with thoughtfully sourced ingredients. Supporting local is so important to our family.

Life in our home is rarely quiet. My partner is a firefighter and first responder, so our family understands both the beauty and challenges that come with service, caregiving and balancing demanding roles while

trying to remain connected as a family.

In my monthly column, readers can expect honest conversations about motherhood, caregiving for special needs youth, entrepreneurship, community, resilience, and finding balance in real life — not perfection. I am open and often raw. I hope to share stories, experiences, lessons and encouragement for women and

caregivers who are navigating busy, complicated and meaningful lives of their own.



Meda Riley is a Mother, Palliative Complex Caregiver and Founder of Country Girl Body Products and Country Girl Catering and Preserves.

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WHY DOES BABY ALWAYS LOOK ONE WAY? UNDERSTANDING TORTICOLLIS



If you read last month's article on tummy time, you may have noticed your baby strongly prefers looking to one side, or that tummy time feels especially challenging. In many cases, there's a simple and very treatable reason behind it: neck tightness, also known as torticollis.

Torticollis occurs when the muscles on one side of a baby's neck are tighter than the other, making it easier for them to turn their head in one direction. You might notice your baby consistently looks the same way

when lying down, feeding or being held. Some babies may also tilt their head slightly or have difficulty turning fully in both directions.

Babies explore the world by moving and looking around, so when movement is limited, it can make activities like tummy time more frustrating. Over time, a strong side preference can also lead to increased pressure on one area of the head. The good news is that early support is very effective. There are simple things you can start at home:

- Position toys, faces and stimulation on your baby's non-preferred side
- Alternate the direction your baby lies in the crib
- Switch arms when feeding to encourage turning both ways
- Continue with tummy time, using support if needed

When should you seek support? It's worth checking in with your healthcare provider

if your baby consistently prefers one side, has difficulty turning their head both ways, shows frustration with tummy time or develops any flattening on one side of their head.

A pediatric physiotherapist can assess and guide stretches. Your pediatrician or family doctor can also guide you and provide referrals if needed. Orthotic treatment isn't used to treat neck tightness directly but may be considered if these patterns persist and begin to affect head shape. In next month's article, we'll take a closer look at how head shape can be affected, what to watch for, and when to take action.

The most important thing to remember is that this is common, and it's not something you caused. With early guidance and a few simple strategies, most babies make excellent progress.

.....
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FUELLING YOUR FAMILY FOR SUMMER

June is a beautiful, in-between month. School routines are winding down, summer schedules haven't quite ramped up yet, and suddenly we're all trying to figure out what "normal" looks like.

It also brings Father's Day, longer days and more time spent outside. Meals become less structured, more spontaneous and sometimes... a little more stressful. If you're feeling that shift, you're not alone.

The good news? Summer doesn't require a complete overhaul of how you feed your family. In fact, this time of year is a great opportunity to simplify. Instead of aiming for "perfect" meals, think in terms of balanced building blocks:

- A source of protein (e.g., chicken, eggs, yogurt, beans)
- A carbohydrate (e.g., bread, rice, pasta, fruit)
- Some colour (vegetables or fruit)
- A healthy fat (e.g., nuts, seeds, cheese, avocado, olive oil)

MAKE THE MOST OF WHAT'S IN SEASON

One of the best parts of early summer is the fresh, local produce becoming available - berries, leafy greens, cucumbers, tomatoes. Keep it simple:

- Add berries to breakfast or snacks
- Slice cucumbers and peppers for easy grab-and-go options
- Toss together quick salads with minimal ingredients

RETHINK SNACKS

(because there will be more of them)

With kids home, snack requests increase. Rather than constantly feeling like you're saying "no," try offering snacks that include:

- Protein + fibre (e.g., apple + peanut butter, yogurt + granola, cheese + crackers) to keep energy levels steady and prevent the "endless grazing"

KEEP MEALS EASY

June is a great time to lean into simple, shared meals:

- BBQs

- Picnic-style dinners
- Build-your-own meals (tacos, grain bowls, sandwiches)

A NOTE FOR FATHER'S DAY

Father's Day can sometimes revolve around indulgent meals, and that's part of the celebration. Food is meant to be enjoyed.

If you're planning something special, consider keeping the focus on connection over perfection:

- A family breakfast
- Cooking together
- A favourite meal shared outside

If there's one takeaway for June, it's this: Less pressure. Less perfection. More flexibility. More enjoyment. Because when nutrition feels manageable, it becomes sustainable... not just for June, but for the whole summer ahead.

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



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