

A FREE
MAGAZINE

THE MOM & CAREGIVER™

JULY 2026
VOLUME 28 ISSUE 07

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TRUE North,
Strong AND
Sweet!

THE MENTAL
TOLL OF THE
SANDWICH
GENERATION ...

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ASK THE
MAYOR!.....

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WHAT IS
PSYCHO-
THERAPY
ANYWAY?.....

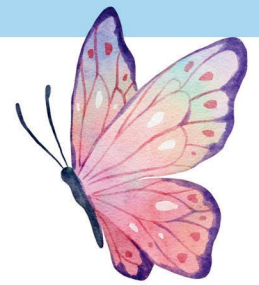
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PREGNANCY - BABY - TODDLER



PRESCHOOL - SCHOOL AGE - FAMILY

New Season, New Routine



Summer brings a welcome change of pace for families. The alarm clocks are turned off, school lunches take a break, and days feel a little less structured. While children enjoy the freedom of summer, the shift away from routine can sometimes leave them feeling unsettled.

Children thrive on predictability. Routines help them feel safe, secure, and confident because they know what to expect. Summer doesn't need to mirror the school year, but a simple daily rhythm can provide balance and stability.

Keeping regular wake-up and bedtime schedules, planning outdoor play, or setting aside time for reading, crafts, or family activities can help children feel grounded while still enjoying summer's freedom.

Summer camps are often an important part of that routine. They provide opportunities to learn new skills, make friends, stay active, and enjoy a sense of structure in a fun environment. Whether it's a sports, art, or dance camp,

having something to look forward to each week helps children stay engaged and connected.

Dance camps offer a wonderful balance of creativity, movement, and social interaction. Children stay active while building confidence and creating lasting memories.

Most importantly, routines don't have to be rigid. Some of the best summer traditions are the simplest ones: evening walks, backyard games, family movie nights, or ice cream after dinner. These small moments often become the memories children carry with them long after summer ends.

A little structure, flexibility, and plenty of fun can help make summer a season of growth, connection, and joy for the whole family.

REGISTER NOW AT DANCE EXTREME

Let's Dance!



Dance extreme

725 Notre Dame Dr #1, London, ON
519.657.3262



A CANADIAN KIND OF FAMILY

We're so proud to be celebrating the red and white this month – happy 159th birthday to our beautiful country! Whether you're picnicking with family, setting off some fireworks with friends, or attending the London Major's famous Canada Day game, we hope you have the most Canadiana kind of time!

Our July issue is bursting with ideas and information for the whole family. Whatever role you play in your clan, you'll find something of interest in this month's Mom & Caregiver magazine:

MOMS

Momprenuer Life - Beautiful, Purposeful (page 20) will walk you through the ups and downs of life as a mom and entrepreneur. Behind every one is a "woman carrying a life most will never see."

Running on Empty is chock full of tips for much-needed self-care this summer: regular meals, staying hydrated, protein-rich foods and realistic expectations are on the docket. Explore more on page 22.

DADS

Let Your Kids Be Bored (page 18) encourages you to let go of the reigns this season. Let your kids "figure things out for themselves...use their

imagination...create games, solve boredom." They'll come out of the summer more independent, resourceful and creative.

Know Your Numbers with Dr. Bhayana touches on the topics we often like to forget. Reduce your risk of diabetes and heart attack on page 8.

KIDS

Summer Senses (page 10) is a delightful look at summer's sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings through the eyes of our youngest writers. Have some fun with your kiddos by asking "How does summer taste, feel, sound?"

Money Doesn't Grow On Trees might just inspire your teen or pre-teen to get their first summer job. Are they yearning for the newest shoes or latest Sephora drop? It's time to learn how to get it on page 11.

As summer hits full-swing mode, we are thrilled to play such a vital role in your family's good times and tough lessons.

Head out into that hot and humid, beautiful and boisterous world to celebrate, play and learn!

PUBLISHER/CHIEF EDITOR

Sabrina



25+ YEARS



EVENTS

J U L Y 2 0 2 6

Happy
CANADA DAY!

01ST

East London Canada Day,
East Lions Community Centre,
www.canadalifeplace.com

01ST

Canada Celebrates
FIFA World Cup, Victoria Park,
www.inside.fifa.com/organisation/media-releases/canada-celebrates-world-cup-2026-countrywide-route-official-partners

04TH

Springbank Garden
Concert Series,
Guy Lombardo Pavillion,
www.springbankgarden.com

05TH

Sunfest,
Victoria Park,
www.sunfest.on.ca

09TH

Rock the Park:
The Lumineers and more,
Harris Park,
www.rockthepark.ca

15TH

Columbian Gastronomy Festival,
Dundas Place,
www.stereocaliente.com/festivals

17TH

Pride Parade,
London,
www.pridelondon.ca/parade

19TH

Family Movie Time,
Sherwood Library,
www.lpl.ca

21ST

Island Fest, Covent Garden
Market Rotary Square,
www.islandfestlondon.org

24TH

MS Bike Grand Bend to London,
Grand Bend Motorplex,
www.msspbike.donordrive.com/events/1348

25TH

STEAM Play Lab
(ages 2-5), Jalna Library,
www.lpl.ca

28TH

Culture Walk: Murals of
Downtown, Museum London,
www.museumlondon.ca/art-culture-walks

30TH



MEMORIES OVER MACROS

Summer arrives and so does an uninvited guest — food guilt. You find yourself calculating calories in potato salad, stressing over a burger bun or feeling like you “failed” because you had a second drink.

Here’s the truth your fitness tracker won’t tell you: enjoying summer food with the people you love is a vital part of a healthy life.

- Protein first. Fill your plate with grilled chicken, steak or burgers before anything else. Protein stabilizes blood sugar and keeps you full.
- Pick your treat intentionally. Choose the one thing you actually want — a cocktail, ice cream, your friend’s pasta salad. Enjoy it fully. Move on without guilt.
- Hydrate between drinks. Heat plus alcohol equals fatigue that mimics hunger. Aim for a 1:1 water ratio with adult beverages.

Ditch all-or-nothing thinking. One afternoon on a patio doesn’t erase months of consistency. Your body runs on patterns — not perfect days.

Your family won’t remember your macros this summer. They’ll remember your laughter. Fill your plate. Enjoy the sunshine.

Kevin Cope |
Founder, The Cope Effect |
[@thecopeeffect](https://www.instagram.com/thecopeeffect)

Next Month: Simple outdoor movement that counts as a real workout — no gym required.

“ *Canada is more than a place on a map.
It’s a feeling of warmth, belonging and pride.* ”

Unknown

GET TESTED! PROTECT YOU AND YOUR BABY

When we are 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 and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) are rarely discussed; however, they are on the rise in Canada. The most common bacterial STIs in Canada are chlamydia and gonorrhoea. Syphilis rates have also spiked across Canada over the last ten years, including within the Middlesex-London community.

Anyone who is sexually active, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, can be affected by STBBIs, including women in their reproductive years. It is possible to have an STBBI without knowing it, as symptoms can be mild, absent or mistaken for another infection. If left untreated, STBBIs can cause serious health

issues, and during pregnancy, can increase the risk of complications for babies. For example, congenital syphilis occurs when the infection is passed from a pregnant person to their fetus during pregnancy or to their baby during childbirth. If not detected or treated, it can lead to fetal loss, birth defects, developmental delays and other serious long term health problems.

The good news is that STBBIs are largely preventable and treatable. Testing for sexually transmitted infections and prenatal care are key to maintaining good health, and may involve either a urine sample, swab or a small blood draw. All pregnant women should be screened for STBBIs, starting early in pregnancy. Talk to your healthcare provider honestly about your risk to determine whether further testing is needed. More frequent testing may be recommended if there is an ongoing risk of infection. Treatment may involve antibiotics or antiviral medicine, baby as well as additional measures

to protect your.

One of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of STBBI transmission is to use protection during sex (such as condoms or dental dams). However, some STBBIs, such as syphilis, can also spread through contact with other areas of the body not covered by a condom. Anyone diagnosed with syphilis should inform their sexual partners so they can be tested.

Testing – and, if necessary, treatment – is advised during every pregnancy to stay protected from sexually transmitted infections and to help maintain overall good health. For more information, visit www.healthunit.com/sexual-health/sexually-transmitted-infections/.

Book a free STBBI Test today! Contact:

- your healthcare provider,
- the Sexual Health Clinic at MLHU 519-663-5317 or visit 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. <https://cps.ca/en/documents/position/congenital-syphilis>.

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World Health Organization. (2025, May 29). Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). World Health Organization; World Health Organization: WHO. [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-\(stis\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/sexually-transmitted-infections-(stis))

Submitted by **Jessica Wijesundera, Health Promotion Specialist** and **Sarah Neil, RN, Public Health Nurse, from 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



KNOW YOUR NUMBERS | PART 3



This is part three of a four part series on the numbers you should know that are barometers of your health.

The numbers we have spoken about so far in this series have been numbers that you need to see your primary care practitioner to access through bloodwork. The number representing body mass index and waist to hip circumference are measures that you can do on your own.

In addition to diabetes, hypertension, elevated lipids and smoking, obesity and overweight are important risk factors for the development of heart disease. BMI uses weight and height to determine if your weight is appropriate to height. It is your weight in kg divided by your height in metres squared.

There are a number of BMI calculators available online. It can be an inaccurate reflection of health because it does not take into consideration body composition. Someone who is heavier due to increased muscle mass might have the same BMI as someone whose mass is largely fat. A normal BMI is between 18 and 25. Although it is an imperfect offering.

Another measurement is the waist circumference. Weight that gathers in the middle of the body is associated with greater risk. To measure waist circumference, choose the spot in line with your belly button, halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hip bone, roughly. Wear only one light layer of clothing or place the measuring tape on your skin. Your waist circumference should be less than 80 cm if you are female and 94 cm if you are male. If your background is South Asian, Latin American or Southeast Asian, heart disease risk occurs at a lower threshold so normal measures are less (90 cm for men and 80 cm for women).

Once you know your numbers, lifestyle change to bring those as close to normal as possible may greatly lower your risk for diabetes and heart disease!

THE RISE OF THE “TRADES MOM”

One of the fastest-growing and most influential roles in today’s skilled trades industry is something many people affectionately call the “Trades Mom.” While the title may sound lighthearted, the impact these women have on businesses, families and communities is anything but small.

You know her immediately when you meet her. She is the calm voice answering the phone

during a hectic Monday morning. She is the one making sure appointments are booked correctly, technicians are where they need to be, invoices are sent out on time, and customers feel cared for from the very first call. She remembers clients by name, asks about their children, and somehow always knows which technician works best for each situation.

But her role goes far beyond office administration. The Trades Mom often becomes the emotional heartbeat of the company. She handles payroll, memberships, scheduling, customer concerns, marketing, social media, supplier calls and team

communication — all while balancing the responsibilities of motherhood and caregiving at home. Somehow, between organizing service calls and managing emergencies, she still remembers spirit week at school, grocery lists, doctor appointments and bedtime routines.

In many family-run businesses, including growing community-focused companies like Jayden’s Mechanical, women working behind the scenes are often the reason the company continues to thrive year after year. They help create the culture customers remember. They keep morale high during stressful seasons. They bring compassion, organization and stability into an industry built around helping people.

And increasingly, these women are no longer simply supporting the business behind the scenes — they are helping lead the future of the entire trades industry.

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COMPARING YOURSELF TO OTHERS?



You're at work and notice that your coworker is glowing from her vacation to the Bahamas. You hurried out the door because you had to choose between putting on makeup after a shower, or feeding the baby before you rushed to

daycare. You're on time for work but you ask yourself, "Why does she look flawless? I look terrible!"

My story: I have been doing Crossfit for over eight years. I was lean until I was 47 years old. At 50 I was working so hard but started gaining fat. No matter how hard I tried doing what I have always done, something was wrong. I compared myself to a woman in her 30s. I started getting a fat bulge around my mid section while she became more fit. I was becoming jealous. The dialogue in my head was, "I will work harder. I can get back to where I was. I can be just as good as her." I was comparing myself to her in the gym, as well as on social media. It turns out that I am in menopause. Fat in women in our 50s accumulates around the belly due to reduced estrogen and progesterone which increases cortisol. I hired my coach who gently told me that it's ridiculous to compare myself to a woman in

her 30s while I am 51. Kevin Cope is a new writer in this magazine so check him out! He is teaching me how to exercise differently at my age. I was starting to feel defeated because no matter how hard I try, the fat isn't going away. Thankfully, I have Coach to keep me grounded. I have hope again.

Your perception of others is a fantasy because you don't see them behind closed doors. Stop telling yourself stories about how others are doing life better than you. Ask yourself what you're good at! You're talented in ways that other people aren't. Don't waste any more time that you could have been working on the God-given gifts that you have to share with the world! That's the key to joy.

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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.



SUMMER SENSES

**I think summer
TASTES like...**

Adi - a hot tub

**Lander - warmth
and sunshine**

**I think summer
SMELLS like...**

Adi - flowers

Lander - flowers

**I think summer
SOUNDS like...**

Adi - chirping birds

Lander - happiness

**I think summer
FEELS like...**

Adi - HOT!

Lander - freedom!

**I think summer
LOOKS like...**

Adi - happiness

Lander - relaxation



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.



MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES

There's a moment every teenager experiences that no parent can fully prepare them for, but has secretly been pining for their entire speaking life. Their first pay cheque.

Not the excitement of it, that part comes naturally. And it's not even about the freedom from paying for your child's every whim. (Seriously, I didn't think this day would ever come.) No, it's the shock that follows.

My daughter recently got her first job, and like most teens, she had big plans. Hoodies. Shoes. The occasional power-up on a video game that costs more than my first hourly wage. And then she opened her pay stub.

"Wait... where did the rest go?"
(Is it wrong that I'm still laughing hysterically in my head?)

Ah yes. Welcome to adulthood, buttercup. What do you think of Mr. Carney now? Because nothing humbles a teenager faster than realizing the number you earn and the number you get are as far apart as expectations and reality. That hoodie? That's eight hours of work... before taxes. Those shoes? A full weekend... minus deductions. And suddenly that "quick shift" feels significantly less.

What's been even more eye-opening is the trade-off. She's balancing work with sports, and for the first time, she's realizing that

taking time off to play almost feels like losing money. Missing a shift isn't just inconvenient — it's expensive. And just like that, something clicks. Money isn't just something you have. It's something you exchange. Time. Energy. Effort. And occasionally, your will to live during a closing shift.

My daughter has always been a saver. She always paused before buying "things." But now, she's weighing choices. Doing mental math. Asking, "Do I really want this?" Which, as a parent, feels like a small miracle. Because we can talk about budgeting all day long, but nothing teaches the value of money like earning it yourself... and then watching a chunk of it disappear into the void.

But now she knows something she couldn't understand before.

Now she gets it.

Money doesn't
grow on trees.



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

THE MENTAL TOLL OF BEING IN THE SANDWICH GENERATION

Imagine day in and day out, year after year, caring for your children and at the same time caring for your aging parents. The constant lack of time for your employment and self-care, constant needs from a parent or child or both, as well as the financial strain to provide for everyone, leads to very high rates of burnout.

Approximately 50% of adults considered in the “sandwich generation” report feeling overwhelmed, depressed, anxious and experience a steady decline in their mental health. At the same time, 67% of caregivers find it extremely difficult to manage full-time employment, reducing their hours of work or leaving the workforce entirely.

What Can We Do to Improve Mental Health?

1 Ask for Help – Ask your employer to see if they have any benefits for caregivers or if there is an option for hybrid work. Set up a time to meet with your parents’ family doctor to see if they have any local respite care for aging adults, which tends to be not-for-profit and adds no cost to you. Ask for help within your support system by asking about carpooling to and from school and after school activities.

2 Meet a Financial Advisor - If you don’t have one, go to your bank and meet their financial advisor to discuss future financial planning which includes long-term care, long-term care insurance and a wealth plan. These steps can bring down the stress associated with the financial strain.

3 Self-Care – I say it time and time again, if we do not take care of ourselves, we cannot provide quality care to our loved ones and we will burnout and worsen our mental health quicker. Take an extra shower or bath, have green tea with honey (regulates your blood sugar) and go for a short walk alone. Consider some somatic exercises like belly breathing – four times a day, one minute each, or if your frustrated and short tempered, Wall Push – push on any wall for 60 seconds, like you want to push right through it.

In order to meet the needs of your loved ones, plan ahead (if you can), ask for help (this is why we have a support system) and take care of you.



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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MEET MAYOR, JOSH MORGAN!

Thank you for welcoming me into the pages of The Mom & Caregiver Magazine. This is my first column, and I'm grateful for the chance to connect directly with the parents and caregivers who have helped form London's reputation as a strong, compassionate city. You are the foundation that helps community thrive, and your love, sacrifices and everyday wisdom shape the character of our neighbourhoods in ways that cannot be overstated. As a father of four, I know how busy life can be, and I appreciate being able to share a little about who I am and why I care deeply about the city we share.

For the past three years it has been my honour to serve as Mayor of London, my home for almost thirty years. I first arrived in 1998 to study economics at Western. Like many students who flock to our city, I found myself falling in love with this place. I knew London was where I wanted to build my life, raise my family and give back to a community that had given me so much.

Family plays a defining role in my life. I'm fortunate to be close with my mom, whose

strength and kindness shaped who I am as a parent and as a leader. I count on her advice every day. Raising my children in London also gives me a daily reminder of what matters most to families. We experience the same hopes and challenges, from finding safe routes to school to making sure our kids have places to play, learn and grow.

That guides my work as Mayor. Parents want safe neighbourhoods, streets they can navigate, modern parks and recreation facilities, and community spaces that feel welcoming. They want a London that helps build a stable future for their children. That's the core principle behind our decisions, from building affordable housing to improving road safety, investing in emergency and

public services, and enhancing community centres and parks.

London is a place where families lift one another up. Like any family, London City Council may not always agree, but I am dedicated to working together to make life better for you and your loved ones. I look forward to staying connected. See you soon!

Do you have questions for the mayor? Email them to us at info@themomandcaregiver.com.





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MELANIE WALLIS COACHING



Melanie Wallis
COACHING

Helping Families Find Calm

Supporting parents raising neurodivergent and higher-needs children



**Certified Parent Coach
Autism/ADHD Mom**




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melaniewalliscoaching.com



melanie@melaniewalliscoaching.com

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

Helping Families Find Calm

Parenting is one of life's greatest joys - but it can also be one of its greatest challenges. Parents often wonder if they're doing enough, saying the right things, or making the best decisions in the moment. When you are raising a neurodivergent or higher-needs child, those questions can feel even bigger.

"I know because I've lived it. As the parent of a teenaged son with autism and ADHD, I've spent years learning, advocating and navigating the overwhelming challenges that come with raising a child who experiences the world differently. This journey taught me that parenting a neurodivergent child takes more than love alone. It requires understanding, support, a different set of coping tools and reminders that you are not failing. You need strategies that fit your unique child," says Melanie Wallis.

For over 20 years, Melanie Wallis has supported children and families professionally. Through that experience, she has seen the incredible difference that the right support can make. This led her to become a Certified Parent Coach and create Melanie Wallis Coaching.

Unlike therapy, which often focuses on healing the past, Parent Coaching is about helping families move forward. Melanie works alongside parents providing guidance, practical strategies, encouragement and a safe space to problem-solve everyday parenting challenges. "Together, we work toward stronger parent-child relationships, greater confidence, and calmer, happier homes."

Change begins when parents feel calm, confident and supported. Calm parenting doesn't mean permissive parenting. It means leading with connection while maintaining clear expectations and healthy boundaries. While we can't always control our children's emotions or behaviours, we can learn how to regulate our own nervous systems. When parents are calmer, they can better support their children, respond instead of react, and model the emotional regulation skills they hope to see in their kids.

Today, Melanie Wallis specializes in supporting parents raising neurodivergent and higher needs children through one-on-one coaching, online programs and her CALM Parenting Community.





THE PARALLEL PATIENT: CARING FOR THE CAREGIVER

Sound therapy is an increasingly popular practice that invites us to slow down, tune in and reconnect with ourselves through the power of vibration and sound. Rooted in ancient traditions yet supported by modern research, sound therapy uses instruments such as singing bowls, gongs, chimes and voice to create immersive soundscapes that gently guide the body and mind into a state of deep relaxation.

One of the most immediate and noticeable benefits of sound therapy is its ability to calm anxiety. As soothing tones wash over the body, the brain begins to shift from a heightened, alert state into slower brainwave patterns associated with rest and restoration. This shift can help quiet racing thoughts, reduce feelings of overwhelm and create a sense of inner stillness that many people find difficult to access in their daily lives.

Beyond calming the mind, sound therapy has a profound effect on the nervous system. The vibrations produced by sound

instruments can help regulate the body's stress response, encouraging a move from "fight or flight" into "rest and digest." This gentle recalibration supports improved sleep, reduced tension and an overall sense of balance. Many participants report feeling lighter, more grounded and deeply nourished after a session.

Sound therapy also opens the door to creativity. When the mind is quiet and the body is relaxed, space is created for new ideas, insights and inspiration to emerge. In this receptive state, individuals often experience a deeper connection to their inner voice, making it easier to access creativity, intuition and emotional expression.

At the Eir Centre, we are excited to offer individual and group sessions, as well as Listening Within: A Sound & Story Workshop Series—a gentle, supportive experience designed to help you slow down, reconnect and listen inward. This unique series blends sound meditation with reflective writing,



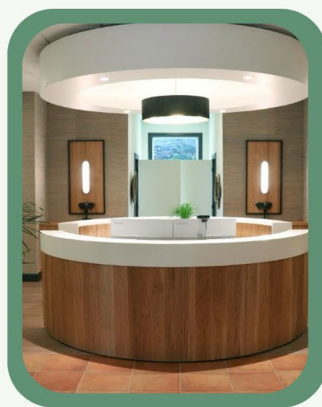
creating a nurturing space where participants can explore their inner landscape with curiosity and compassion. Whether you are seeking calm, clarity or creative renewal, we invite you to pause, listen and rediscover the wisdom within.

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



Care. Compassion. Healing.

At Eir Centre our vision is to transform the conventional model of care by embracing a holistic approach that nurtures the mind, body, and spirit. We aim to empower every individual facing health challenges with the knowledge, skills, support, and courage to discover their strength and live fully.

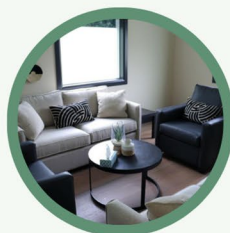


What We offer:

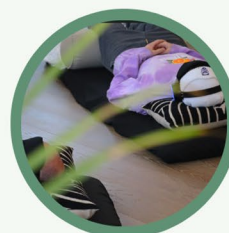
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- ✓ Yoga Therapy



 www.eirhealing.ca



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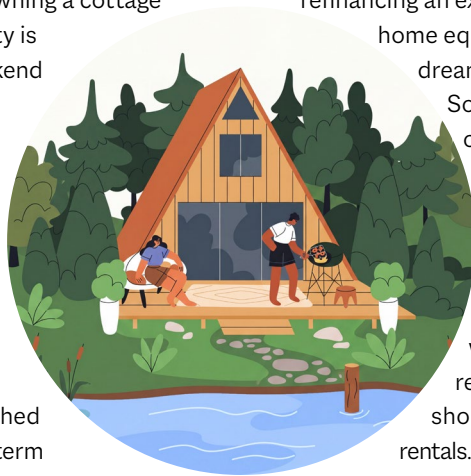
 info@eirhealing.ca



COTTAGE AND VACATION PROPERTY DREAMS

For many families, owning a cottage or vacation property is about more than weekend escapes. It's an opportunity to create lifelong traditions, enjoy quality time together and invest in a property that can grow in value over time. A family cottage can become both a place for cherished memories and a long-term financial asset.

Many people assume owning a vacation property is out of reach financially, but that's not always the case. With the right mortgage strategy and financing plan, cottage ownership may be more achievable than buyers think. I help clients explore options for second homes and investment properties, including traditional mortgages,



refinancing an existing home or using home equity to make their dream a reality. Some buyers also offset ownership costs by renting the property seasonally when not in use. However, there are important lender considerations when it comes to rental income and short-term vacation rentals. Understanding how lenders view these properties, and the income generated from them, is key, and I can help explain what buyers need to know before purchasing.

When searching for the ideal cottage or getaway property, buyers often prioritize a few key features. Waterfront access usually tops the wish list, followed closely by privacy, a comfortable outdoor living

space, and year-round accessibility. Reliable internet service has become increasingly important for remote work flexibility, while updated kitchens and multiple bedrooms appeal to families planning extended stays. Proximity to hiking trails, golf courses, ski hills, nearby towns, and having food and other product delivery options available in their area, can also add both enjoyment and resale value.

Beyond the financial benefits, a vacation property creates opportunities for meaningful family experiences. Summer mornings fishing off the dock, evenings around the campfire, holiday weekends with barbecues and board games, or teaching children to swim, canoe, or appreciate and learn about nature and our forest friends, often become traditions passed down through generations.

A cottage or vacation property represents more than real estate. It's an investment in both family equity and family life, ultimately a place where memories are built while value grows over time.

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

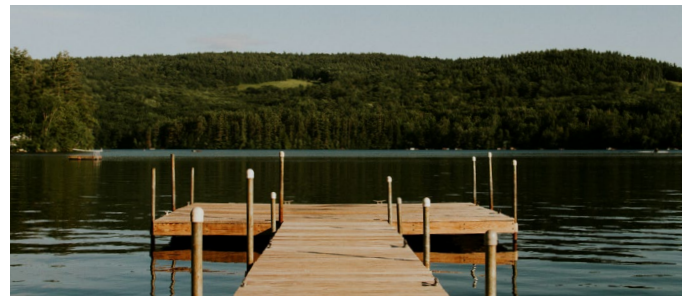
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From summer weekends to lifelong traditions, a cottage can be more attainable than you think.

Whether you're purchasing a vacation property, refinancing to access equity, or exploring a second mortgage to fund your getaway, there may be more options available than you realize.

RHONDA STARK
MORTGAGE AGENT

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WHAT IS PSYCHOTHERAPY ANYWAY?



Psychotherapy is a space to pause, reflect and come back to the self. Talking is helpful in and of itself and as people tell their story, we explore emotions, thoughts and behaviours with curiosity. It can also support the foundations of mental health, including sleep, exercise, nutrition and social connection. At the core, psychotherapy helps us to identify patterns, notice our reactions and develop greater clarity and choice in how we respond to life.

Depending on someone's goals, therapy may involve working through stress, burnout, trauma, relationship challenges or anything else that makes life feel difficult. We may reframe unhelpful thoughts, recognize behavioural patterns and understand how emotions show up in the body. Along the way, we build coping skills, strengthen boundaries, communicate more effectively and learn how to move through difficult feelings rather than avoid them.

As a therapist who also sees a therapist, psychotherapy is also a space to support what is going well and process life as it happens so things do not build up to a breaking point. It is simply another way to care for myself well and live with greater presence and joy. Therapy is not about becoming someone new but reconnecting with our true self.



When we are busy looking after others, we do not always consider how we are looking after ourselves. Many power through the day responding to the needs of children, work and family, influenced by the past, or thoughts of how we should be living. Over time we might be going through the motions on autopilot, reacting or pushing through, but something feels off. We may feel overwhelmed, disconnected, irritable, anxious or simply unlike ourselves.

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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LET YOUR KIDS BE BORED

Hello and happy summer, loyal Mom & Caregiver readers!

In the past, I have championed all the fun things you can do with your kids in Southwestern Ontario during the summer. For those who don't keep a carefully organized collection of Mom & Caregiver magazines on hand like I do, you can recreate that list by following London's Pretty Cool on Instagram and subscribing to Tourism London's monthly newsletter.

This summer, however, I'm flipping the script. When my kids were younger, my wife and I spent every available minute entertaining them whenever they weren't in camp or daycare. We did tons of fun things. Beaches, hikes, road trips, splash pads, festivals and picking every local crop known to humanity while paying three times retail for the privilege of doing farm labour for free.

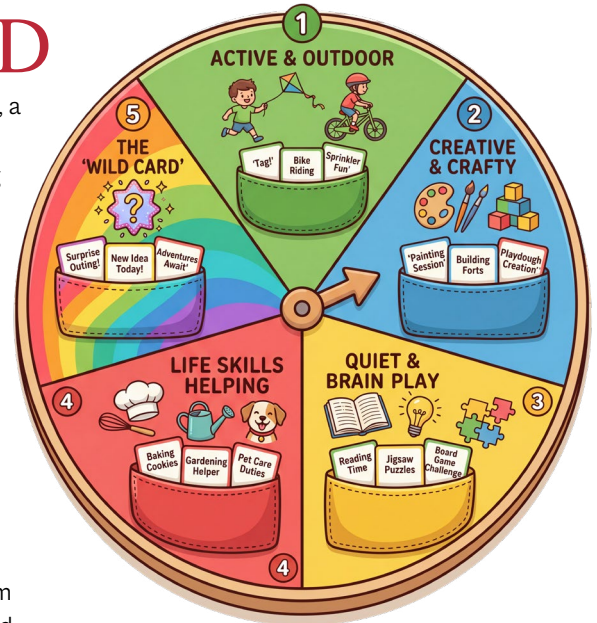
Looking back, it was wonderful. It also may have created a problem. Now that our kids are 9, 11 and 13, we've realized they have very little idea how to entertain

themselves if it doesn't involve a friend, a screen or one of us.

This summer, we're trying something different. We're taking it old school and intentionally giving our kids more opportunities to figure things out for themselves. To use their imaginations. To create games, solve boredom and make plans once we've fired their devices directly into the sun.

So far, the results have been surprisingly encouraging. Last weekend they spent an afternoon kicking a ball around and inventing games and competitions. The next day, we bought them bags of marbles from Canadian Tire, and they spent over an hour outside playing together. They touched actual dirt instead of watching someone else touch dirt in a YouTube Short.

Our goal is simple: make 2026 feel a little more like 1996. If you're willing to tolerate a bit of whining at the beginning, you might be surprised by what happens when boredom is allowed to do its job.



Your kids may become more creative, more independent and more resourceful.

And if you need recommendations on the best earplugs for that first hour or two, feel free to message me on Instagram.

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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WHAT YOUR AESTHETIC PROVIDERS WISH YOU KNEW

Summer in Ontario means sunshine, patios, beach days and cottage weekends — but it's also the season when your skin faces its biggest challenges.

At London Plastic Surgery & Advanced Aesthetics, one thing we wish every patient understood is this: sun damage happens faster than you think — and often before you can even see it.

UV exposure is one of the leading causes of premature aging, pigmentation, redness and collagen breakdown. Even on cloudy days, UV rays penetrate the skin, contributing to long-term damage that can show up years later as wrinkles, brown spots and uneven texture.

That's why daily SPF isn't optional — it's essential. We recommend broad-spectrum SPF 30 or higher every single day, along with hats, sunglasses, and reapplication when outdoors.

Want to know what's really happening beneath your skin? Our VISIA® Skin Analysis

system allows us to see sun damage, pigmentation, vascular redness, pores and skin age before it becomes visible on the surface. Many patients are shocked to discover hidden UV damage they didn't know existed.

The good news? Summer can still be skin-friendly with the right treatments.

HydraFacial® is one of our favourite summer treatments because it deeply cleanses, exfoliates, hydrates and refreshes the skin with no downtime. It's perfect before weddings, vacations or special events when you want that healthy summer glow.

For patients wanting prevention and correction, MOXI® laser treatments are another summer favourite. MOXI is a gentle laser designed to improve early sun damage, pigmentation, texture and overall skin tone with minimal downtime, making it ideal for maintaining healthy skin year-round.

This summer, don't forget about your skin while enjoying the season. Healthy skin isn't just about looking good — it's about protecting

your skin for the future.

Your future skin will thank you.



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MOMPREENEUR LIFE - BEAUTIFUL, PURPOSEFUL

"The hardest part of being a Mompreneur is that behind every order packed, every social media post, and every smiling vendor booth is a woman carrying a life most people never see"

The life nobody sees behind a mompreneur is not aesthetic morning routines, spotless homes and perfectly balanced schedules. It is caregiving while answering customer messages sometimes at 2AM. It is packing orders between appointments. It is making dinner while mentally calculating inventory. It is smiling through exhaustion because your household still needs you. It is carrying the emotional weight of a palliative child while still trying to show up for your teenager, your spouse, your business, your family and yourself.

People see the finished products. They see the business page. They see the hustle and grind.

What they often do not see is the invisible mental load behind it all: the remembering, the organizing, the worrying, the anticipating,

the caregiving, the emotional labor and the constant pressure of holding everything together. The plans A,B,C,D and E to ensure there is always a backup. They don't see family and friends stepping in when those carefully made plans fall apart despite your best efforts. They don't see hours spent researching to ensure the products are the best quality possible. They don't see the scramble of harvest time to make enough stock for the year.

Some days success is not measured in sales or accomplishments. Sometimes success is simply making it through the day while keeping everyone cared for and loved.

This life is heavy. It is beautiful. It is exhausting. It is meaningful. And most of it happens quietly behind the scenes. There is beauty in this life too, deep purpose, resilience, fierce love, passion and a kind of strength that cannot be taught. This is something we choose and there is a certain peace in that also.



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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PHOTOGRAPHY



FLAT HEAD SYNDROME: WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW

If you read last month's article on side preference and neck tightness, you may already have an idea of how positioning can affect your baby's development. One of the most common things parents begin to notice is a flattening on one side of their baby's head, often referred to as flat head syndrome, or plagiocephaly.

Plagiocephaly is very common, especially since babies are placed on their backs to sleep. You might notice a flat spot on the back or side of your baby's head, or that their head shape looks slightly uneven from above. While this can be concerning to see, it's important to know that in many cases, it can improve with early intervention.

The first step is often simple, consistent repositioning throughout the day:

- Increase supervised tummy time to reduce pressure on the back of the head
- Alternate the direction your baby lies in the crib

*The Custom Orthotics team (519) 850-4721 |
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- Encourage your baby to turn toward their non-preferred side
- Limit extended time in car seats, swings or bouncers when possible

It may be worth checking in with your healthcare provider if you notice:

- A flat spot that is becoming more noticeable over time
- Facial asymmetry (such as one ear or forehead appearing more forward)
- A strong preference for turning the head one way
- Little improvement despite repositioning efforts

Your pediatrician or family doctor can help guide next steps. In many cases, babies are first referred to a pediatric physiotherapist to address underlying movement or neck

concerns, such as limited range of motion or side preference.

As your baby grows, the head shape can continue to change. If flattening persists, worsens or is more significant, particularly around 5–6 months of age, helmet therapy (a type of orthotic treatment) may be recommended to help guide head growth into a more symmetrical shape.

While many cases of plagiocephaly are mild and improve over time, more significant asymmetry has been associated with challenges such as jaw alignment, visual tracking, ear positioning and other developmental considerations. Early awareness and appropriate support can help reduce these risks and support the best possible outcomes.



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RUNNING ON EMPTY?

Between school concerts, graduations, year-end celebrations, summer camp registrations and trying to keep up with everyday life, many moms find themselves limping toward summer completely exhausted. If you're also navigating perimenopause, hormonal changes can contribute to fatigue, disrupted sleep, brain fog, mood changes and increased stress. The good news? Nutrition won't eliminate every stressor in your life, but it can help support your energy, mood and resilience during one of the busiest times of the year.

DON'T SKIP MEALS

When life gets hectic, meals are often the first thing to fall off the to-do list. Under-fueling can worsen fatigue, increase cravings and leave you feeling irritable and drained. Aim to eat regularly throughout the day, even if meals aren't perfect. A quick breakfast with protein, a packed lunch, and a simple afternoon snack can go a long way.

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

PRIORITIZE PROTEIN

Protein is one of the most important nutrients for maintaining muscle mass, supporting satiety and helping stabilize energy levels. Try including a source of protein at each meal and snack. Greek yogurt, eggs, cottage cheese, milk, tofu, edamame, fish, poultry, lean meats, nuts and seeds are all great options.

KEEP EASY SNACKS WITHIN REACH

When your schedule is packed, convenience matters. Keep a few nutritious grab-and-go options on hand like cheese and whole grain crackers, Greek yogurt cups, hard-boiled eggs, trail mix, roasted chickpeas or apple slices with peanut butter.

STAY HYDRATED

Fatigue, headaches and difficulty concentrating can be linked to mild dehydration. Sip from a reusable water bottle regularly throughout the day. If plain water isn't appealing, add fruit slices, sparkling water, or drink herbal tea instead.



GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO SIMPLIFY

Perhaps the most important nutrition tip this month is to let go of perfection. June is not the season for elaborate meal plans or complicated recipes. A rotisserie chicken, bagged salad or frozen vegetables, and whole grain bread can create a balanced meal in minutes.

THE BOTTOM LINE

You spend so much of your time caring for everyone else. This July, make room for some basic self-care: regular meals, staying hydrated, protein-rich foods and realistic expectations. Wishing all of our moms, caregivers and teachers a happy and healthy summer!

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July
18 Ultimutts Dog Show

July
12 London Salvadorian
Festival

July
24-26 Island Fest



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