



April

Our Place Newsletter

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ST. MICHAEL'S HOMES
Substance Use
Mental Health
Services Toronto



OUR PLACE
Community of Hope

Happy Birthday

Liz G – April 14th
Chris W – April 15th
Pedro V – April 17th
Phillip B – April 20th
Hope S – April 25th



Celebrate with us on
Friday April 25th with
a sweet treat during
meal time!

Free Events Around the City!

EnchantedLights2025 | Yonge North York

Date: Every Thursday from March 29th to April 13th

Location: Mel Lastman Square; 5100 Yonge Street, North York

Event: Nature and fantasy come alive in a stunning springtime display. Mel Lastman Square will transform into a magical wonderland, featuring interactive art installations, glowing lights, and whimsical sounds.

Sunrise, Sunset Art Exhibition

Date: Every Friday April 2nd to May 8th

Location: Assembly Hall 1 -Colonel Samuel Smith Park Drive, Toronto

Ongoing Event: Journey through an inspiring collection of paintings reflecting on the sun's rising and setting that mirror the life cycles of sorrows and joys. Based on a 2,900km trip from Toronto to North Carolina by artist Young Hee Sung.

Beaches Easter Parade

Date: Sunday April 20th at 2:00pm

Location: Queen Street East, Toronto

Event: Join the annual Beaches Lions Club Easter Parade to enjoy the lively music, bright colours and fun that comes with Easter!

Built Environment: An Alternative Guide to Japan

Date: March 13th to July 15th

Location: The Japan Foundation, Toronto 2 Bloor Street East #300

Event: The exhibition features 80 examples of buildings, civil engineering works and landscapes, etc., from all the prefectures in Japan, which are introduced through photographs, text and video images.



Community Resources

Addiction Support Groups - If you are on a journey with addictions and are seeking support from the community, feel free to contact any of these communal resources.



Cocaine Anonymous

12 Step Recovery program from drug and/or alcohol use.
360A Bloor Street West; 1-866-4636
Monday-Sunday: 9:00am-11:00pm

Peer Support Groups with Across Boundaries

A 7-week peer-led wellness program for those navigating addictions challenges.
51 Clarkson Avenue; 416-787-3007
Tuesdays: 11:00am-12:00pm



Marijuana Anonymous at Our Lady of Sorrows Church

A group to support folks recovering from marijuana addiction.
3055 Bloor Street West; 416-231-6016
Wednesdays: 7:30pm-8:30pm

Food - If you require food support beyond our meal programs, please do not hesitate to register with the following agencies. *Some may require Identification and may follow an intake process.*

Daily Bread Food Bank

DBFB helps you find a food bank local to you. Visit dailybread.ca to find instructions on how to register.

Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

They provide emergency food supplies. Require additional information to register.
1219 Dufferin Street; 416-536-4431
Tuesday: 4:00pm-6:00pm; Wednesday: 9:30am-1:00pm



Feed it Forward Grocery Store

A free or pay what you can grocery store option.
2770 Dundas Street West, Unit A; 647-879-2433
Monday-Saturday: 11:00am-6:00pm
Sundays: 11:00am-3:00pm

Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre

Provide meals, snacks, showers, laundry facilities, access to a phone, fax and internet..
850 and 854 Bloor Street West; 416-792-8941
Monday-Saturday: 12:00pm-1:00pm

Community Resources

Crisis Support Centres – If you require immediate support during a mental health or safety crisis.

Reconnect Community Health Services

Crisis outreach services for seniors. Provides assessment, treatment and consultation by a Geriatric Addiction Specialist for substance use and concurrent disorders.

1281 St. Clair Avenue West; 416-217-2077

Monday-Friday: 9:00am-5:00pm

Unity Health Toronto

24/7 mental health crisis intervention over the phone. Mobile mental health crisis intervention team providing assessment, intervention, and referrals for individuals experiencing mental health crises (they have trained police officers and a mental-health registered nurse); you can call 416-530-6486 for this service.

111 Sunnyside Avenue, 3rd floor; 416-530-6000

Victim Services Toronto

24/7 crisis intervention. Various services including case management for victims of violence or assault. Provides emotional support and advocacy, safety planning and emergency accommodation/shelter, education workshops, and a therapy dog program.

40 College Street, ground floor: 416-808-7066

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Community Health Centre

Offers short-term crisis support and information on ODSP, OW, shelter and housing, health topics, and recreational activities.

1900 Davenport Road; 416-656-8025, or email info@dpmchc.ca



Get to Know... Ed!



Tell us your name and a little bit about yourself and your interests!

My name is Ed. The first time I came to Our Place was in 1994 at the old location on Yonge St. At that time, I was with another boss and had a DJ license. I started volunteering there and then got into music pretty quickly. I also volunteered doing a bunch of other things like hydro, tech, and general stuff. I try to be very active in the community. I took leadership training many years ago at Waterloo, and ran my own drop-in in North York in the mid 90s. I feel like this kind of professional training helps me with de-escalation techniques at Our Place. I also have a lot of certificates for camping. I have a lot of experience with outdoor stuff and survival skills.

What is your favourite hobby?

Music, figuring out things, and problem solving. I don't have time for sports or anything. Most of my time is focused on making things work and putting things together. And I like to do DJ stuff outside of this place. Years ago, I did cross country skiing downhill, building igloos, ice fishing, and starting a fire with one match.

What about Our Place keeps you coming back?

It gives the opportunity to do volunteer work here. At first, I wasn't sure how things were going to work. I face roadblocks with things, but I found that I have many opportunities to work hard here, especially with the garden, and it keeps me coming back. There's always something different each year - good variety.

What is your favourite meal here?

I don't think I have one. I enjoy most of the food here unless it's spicy. My stomach can't handle that kind of food.

What is your favourite season?

I don't have one. I've had too many ups and downs in each season. Christmas is nice, but I've had too many scary moments in the where I didn't know if I would make it home or not. I like Halloween.

Do you have any special talents?

The first time I sang karaoke here nobody knew I could sing. I've been on and off over the years. In 2010 took a break, and I came back 2017. I decided to go up and do a song, I went up with Kevin and Chas and sang with them. I was pretty proficient.

Do you have any words of wisdom or advice for other members of the community?

Try to participate and find something to do. I like that everyone has their hobby, it's either art, pool, or whatever. There's always a variety of activities going on here. But I find that people get enthusiastic at first and then it teeters out. It would be nice to see people consistently involved.

If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?

I don't think of that very often. My life is based on reality, and I don't put that through my mind. I just focus on coming here and finding ways to make things work.

Find Ed's full interview posted on the bulletin board near the women's bathroom!

International Day of Pink (April 9th)- By Fanny

The International Day of Pink celebrated annually on April 9th, it is a global event where individuals wear pink in support of anti-bullying and anti-homophobia. This day started in 2007 by David Shepherd and Travis Price after witnessing a peer being bullied for wearing a pink shirt. Both Shepherd and Price convinced their peers to wear pink in solidarity to send a message against bullying and homophobia.

To celebrate The International Day of Pink, we are honoring those who have paved the way of diversity, respect, opportunity, and inclusion. This year marks significant milestones for the 2SLGBTQIA+ of historical anniversaries of events that have shaped the community. The LGBT Purge marks 35 years where Michelle Douglas in 1990 challenged the Canadian military's discriminatory policies. The Two-Spirit Communities marks also 35 years since the terms "Two-Spirit" was adopted by indigenous leaders.



How can you celebrate this day?

- Wear a Pink Shirt for the Day - Showing the significance of allyship and support.
- Education - Educate yourselves in what bullying is and what it may look like. Stand up to those who are in need or cannot support themselves.

More info: <https://www.dayofpink.org/en/home-2023>.

Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation and Prevention Month By Zuhair

Reader's beware, the following material is sensitive and contains references to themes of genocide, death, and violence which some individuals may find distressing. If this material upsets you, we recommend not continuing further.

In 2015, the Government established April as Genocide Remembrance, Condemnation, and Prevention Month. The purpose of this month is to help us become more aware of ongoing and past genocides, to honour the victims, and bear witness to their resilience, courage and experiences.

It is an opportunity to learn about what allows genocide to take place: the historical, social, and geographical factors that influence a genocide. When we understand these things, we can work towards recognizing their development and preventing it in the future. So, what is genocide? The United Nations describes genocide as the systematic and deliberate elimination and removal of people due to their national, ethnical, racial, or religious identity. This can take form in many ways, such as making a group's quality of life significantly worse to the point that they must leave a designated area, or imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group. Some recent examples of genocide include Uyghur Muslims in China, Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the conflict in Myanmar and Rohingya. The conflict in Gaza is an example of how an initial war can turn into a genocide when the power between the two sides is imbalance.

Call to Action:

The call to action for this month is to educate yourself on current and past genocides. The best way to do so is consulting physical and online resources. Some books on Genocide include

- **Messengers of Disaster: Raphael Lemkin, Jan Karski, and Twentieth-Century Genocides**
By Annette Becker
- **The Ukrainian Intelligentsia and Genocide: The Struggle for History, Language, and Culture in the 1920s and 1930s** By Victoria A. Malko
- **It Can Happen Here: White Power and the Rising Threat of Genocide in the U.S.** By Alexander Laban Hinton



World Autism Awareness Day (April 2nd) – By Nyoka

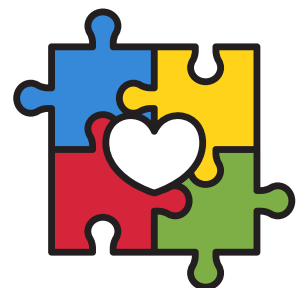
World Autism Awareness Day is an international observance dedicated to raising awareness about autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and promoting acceptance, inclusion, and support for individuals with autism. Autism Awareness Day is recognized every year on April 2nd. This day is an opportunity to educate the public about the challenges and strengths of those on the spectrum, to celebrate their contributions, and to advocate for greater understanding and acceptance within society.

Did you know that children with disabilities are two to three times more likely to be bullied than their non-disabled peers? According to a study by the Interactive Autism Network (IAN), 63% of children with autism have been bullied at some point in their lives. This statistic underscores the importance of raising awareness and fostering environments where understanding, kindness and support are prioritized.

The theme for this year is “Advancing Neurodiversity and the UN Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) which highlights the intersections between neurodiversity and global sustainability efforts. This work will reveal how policies and practices can promote positive change for individuals living with autism globally and how this contributes to Sustainable Development Goals.

It is important to recognize this day as it helps to break down stereotypes, reduce stigma and foster a more inclusive and supportive society. Together, we can all highlight and embrace this day to create a world where everyone, regardless of their differences, is embraced and accepted

More info: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/autism-day>



Stress and Mental Health – By Madelyn and Mohamed

April has been coined as Stress Awareness Month. While some amount of stress is normal, excessive amounts of stress can be problematic. When people are stressed they may be more irritable, aggressive, and/or emotional. When stress becomes chronic (long term) it can turn into a mental health issue. Stress can also escalate already existing mental health challenges, making things feel more difficult to manage. Knowing how to properly cope with stress when it arises helps us better manage stressful situations and take care of our mental health.

Here are some tips to take care of your mental health when you're feeling stressed:

- Take some deep breaths.
- Go for a walk.
- Talk to someone in your support system.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Take a cold shower.
- Listen to calming music.
- Do some mindful journaling.
- Do 15 minutes of yoga or light exercise.
- Read a book, paint a picture, or watch a movie.



If you're feeling stressed, overwhelmed, or anxious and need external support, there are many resources you can turn to.

- Call or text 9-8-8 to connect with a trained responder who will support you without judgement. Support through this line is available 24/7!
- If you are experiencing distress, you can call 416-408-HELP (4357) to connect with a distress center in Toronto.

Check out these resources to learn more!:

[Stress Awareness Month 2025 Resource Page - The Stress Management Society](#)

[The impact of stress on your mental health - Canadian Red Cross](#)

[How Does Stress Affect Mental Health? | Psych Central](#)



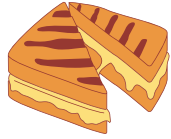
Affordable Spring Recipes from the Our Place Kitchen

Egg Tartines (recipe from The View From Great Island)

It's springtime, which means it is time to start growing green onions, garlic, chives, or onion scapes to garnish your breakfast!

Ingredients:

- 4 eggs
- 4 Tbsp butter
- 4 slices of bread
- 2-3 chopped chives, spring onions, or garlic/onion scapes of your choice!



Directions:

1. Toast and butter your bread.
2. Whisk your eggs with 4 teaspoons of water.
3. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter over medium high heat in a pan and pour in your eggs.
4. Use a spatula to gently push the eggs towards the center of your pan. When you see them start to cook along the edges, lower the heat and cook to your liking.
5. Divide the eggs evenly between your slices of bread.
6. Top with your chives or scapes and sprinkle with salt and pepper.

Pro tip from Li: garlic and onion scapes are easily grown by throwing an onion or a couple of garlic cloves in some soil, or even in a dish of shallow water and placed on your windowsill. They grow so fast you will be eating scapes every week well into summer time!

Strawberry Granola Parfaits (recipe from Eating Well)

Strawberries are finally back in season! Springtime is the most affordable season to enjoy some delicious strawberries!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries
- 1/2 cup yogurt of your choice
- 1/4 cup granola
- 1-3 glasses or mason jars (depending on their size)



Directions:

1. Using half of your yogurt, create the bottom layer of your parfait with a dollop of yogurt in each glass or jar.
2. Create the second layer by distributing half of your strawberries between the glasses on top of the yogurt.
3. Top the first two layers of your parfait with half of your granola.
4. Repeat these steps in order, layering the rest of your yogurt, strawberries, and granola to fill the jars.

Enjoy