

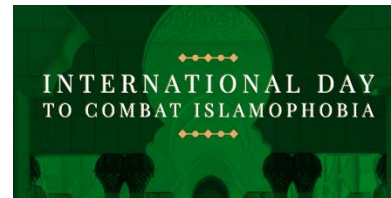


NEWSLETTER



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INTERNATIONAL
TRANSGENDER
DAY OF VISIBILITY
MARCH 31

OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919

ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Our Place Birthdays

Andre B. – March 1st



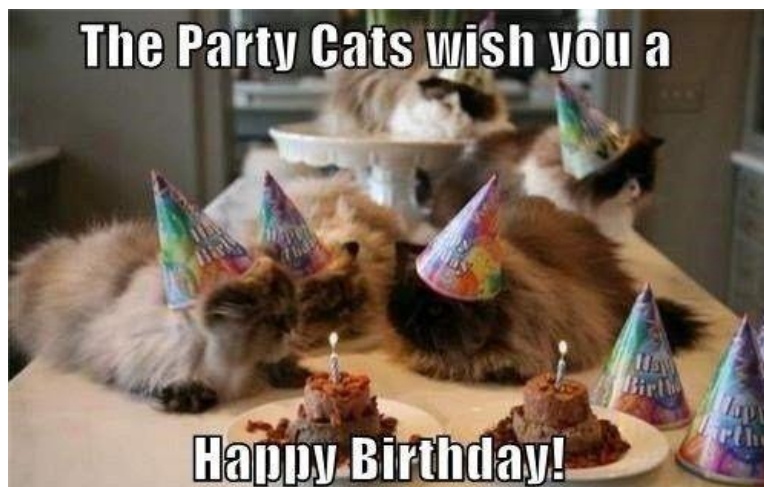
Famous Birthdays

Justin Bieber – March 1st

Stephen Curry – March 14th

Elton John – March 25th

Lady Gaga – March 28th



Special Events in March

Community Meeting: Join us on **Wednesday March 13th** at **1:00pm** for our first community meeting since the start of the pandemic! We will be discussing everything about Our Place and ideas we have for the upcoming season. Hope to see you all then.

Bonus Bingo! Join us on **Thursday March 14th** at **4:00pm** for an extra day of bingo for another chance to win great prizes.

St. Patrick's Week Events: Join us for themed **Trivia on the 19th** at **3:30 pm** where we will test your Irish knowledge! We will be hosting a **St. Patty's Dance on the 22nd** at **3:30 pm**, so get your dance moves ready! Hope you all come out in some **green** gear.

Bonus Karaoke! We will be hosting an additional **karaoke** on **Thursday the 21st** at **4:00pm**. We hope to hear your beautiful voices and see your breathtaking performances!

Easter Dinner: Join us on **Wednesday March 27th** between **2:30-4:50pm** to enjoy a special meal among friends. Meals and seating are limited and available on a first come first serve basis. 😊

Upcoming Programs



Starting at the end of March, we will be having a new Art Therapy Program on Fridays at

3:00pm until 5:00pm. Our wonderful students, Theresa and Anna will be facilitating Art Therapy and will be using various materials including watercolours, oil pastel, markers, and maybe even clay!

The purpose of art therapy is to express one's emotions and experience through non-verbal means. Engaging in such work can increase one's feelings of self-worth and self-esteem, as the environment will be positive and empowering. We hope to foster a safe, open space for community members to join and connect with one another through art. Future art projects will include the following – "Resilient Landscapes; an activity in which participants design a landscape to symbolize overcoming challenges and growth.

If interested in joining, please contact Manisha either in person or through email at ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org. You'll be provided with more information and paperwork for the art therapy group. We hope to see you all join!

Community Programs & Supports

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.

<i>Narcotics Anonymous</i> Toronto – call 1-888-811-3887	<i>KeepSIX Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS)– 955 Queen Street East) – 416-461-1925 ext 2264</i>	<i>Evangel Hall Mission – 552 Adelaide Street West – 416-504-8056</i>
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Community Fridges Toronto is a mutual aid organization made up of community members and volunteers working to provide food for those in need. They have several fridges and pantries across the city (locations listed below) and they operate on a “take what you need, leave what you don’t” basis. Feel free to visit any fridge to pick up or drop off food.

214 Wright Street	782 Adelaide Street West	250 Westlake Avenue	499 Parliament Street
1132 College Street	870 Dundas Street West	348 Pape Avenue (Pantry)	

Allan Gardens Food Bank 353 Sherbourne Street: You can visit and collect food from the bank once a week either on Thursday or Friday from 12:30pm to 3:00pm. Everyone who is interested must register and complete the intake process if it is your first time visiting. Please remember to bring your own bag.

Bloor West Food Bank 2305 Bloor St. West at the St. Pius X Catholic Church: They provide Prepacked bags for those who have made an appointment to visit. To make an appointment, email at appointments.foodbank@gmail.com. The food bank is open every Friday from 12:30pm to 3:00pm.

Feed it Forward Grocery Store 2770 Dundas Street West, Unit A: They’re open every day of the week; Monday to Sunday 11:00am to 6:00pm. The grocery store has items from vegetables, fruits, hot and ready to serve food, canned foods and cupboard items. The pay what you can system works with points (each \$0.50 cents is equivalent to 1 point). Different items cost different amount of points/dollars (ex. Bread \$1 or 2 points, Salad \$1 or 2 points, Peppers \$0.50 or 1 point). They accept cash payments happily. J

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Community Health Centre 1900 Davenport Rd: Provides free harm reduction kits and other support. Contact (416) 656-8025 for more information. They offer short term, one-on-one crisis support and information on OW,

ODSP, shelter and housing, and health-related supports. Contact their CSCI worker to book an appointment → Ingrid Moreno (416) 656-8025 ext. 401.

Shelter Beds and Respite Centres: If you need a place to stay you can access 24-hour respite sites and shelters by calling at (416) 338-4766 or toll-free at 1-877-338-3398.

Gerstein Crisis Centre: Provides 24/7 telephone support, community support referrals, substance use crisis management, follow-up and access to short-term crisis beds. They also have an in-person mobile crisis team. Call (416) 929-5200 to access support.

Warming Centres: Warming Centres around the city are open when an extreme cold weather alert is announced (temperatures of -15°C or colder, or a wind chill of -20°C or colder). Warming Centres provide resting spaces, snacks, access to washroom facilities, and referrals to emergency shelters.

Metro Hall 55 John St, Toronto Capacity: 45	Mitchell Field Community Centre 89 Church Ave, Toronto Capacity: 50	Scarborough Civic Centre 150 Borough Dr, Scarborough Capacity: 17
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International Women's Day

Created in 1975, International Women's Day is celebrated annually on March the 8th. On this day we recognize and celebrate women's and girl's social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. This day is aimed to create a world free of bias, discrimination, and stereotypes. A world where we celebrate equality, inclusivity, and diversity.



In 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding attention towards inequality and oppression. Raising awareness towards the widening gender gap and fighting for better pay and voting rights. This topic introduced in 1910, at the second international conference of Working Women, leader of the 'Women Office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany, Clara Zetkin proposed the idea of an annual International Women's Day to be celebrated by every country to press for demands and to raise awareness.

Each year international Women's Day events are held globally by women's network companies, charities, government bodies, and educational institutions. Events include

festivals, community gatherings, , exhibitions, and concert performances. For example, Moveworks is hosting international Women’s Day event dedicated to fostering diversity, equality, and inclusion at Valeria, Hotel X in Toronto. For further information please check out the following link. <https://www.internationalwomensday.com/EventSearch>

International Day to Combat Islamophobia



The International Day to Combat Islamophobia is celebrated by 140 countries every March 15th. This day aims to recognize the fear, prejudice and hatred that Muslims around the world experience based on their religion, their lived experience, and the collective and system-wide prejudices they face as a religious

group. This day was chosen by the UN to honour those who died in the religiously motivated New Zealand Christchurch shootings, when 51 Muslims were killed while attending prayer services at two mosques on March 15, 2019, and announced as a day of international observance in 2022. In a 2021 census, nearly 10% of Toronto residents identified as Muslim, and a recent report suggests that 1 in 4 Canadians do not trust Muslims (CBC, Senate report on Islamophobia says urgent action needed to reverse rising tide of hate, Nov. 2, 2023).

What Can We Do? →

- Learn Your History - Muslim history is vast and around you everywhere you go, from mathematics to science to literature to every aspect of our world, there is much more to see than some of the stereotypes that the Muslim peoples and cultures in western media cultures usually portray!
- Educate Yourself - Islamophobia is unfortunately more common than you might think, and sadly is not just a thing of the past. Ever since the conflict in Palestine, for instance, anti-Muslim incidents and hate crimes in Toronto have drastically increased.
- Tell Others - Once you know what you know, don't keep it to yourself! Many are not aware how common Islamophobia is, and how much those feeling hurt the people and committees it's aimed at.

Community Resources →

Islamophobia Support Hotline: 416-613-8729 A free, supportive hotline for Muslim youth and those who identify as women who have experienced incidents of hate crimes.

Naseeha Mental Health: 866-627-3342 A confidential Muslim mental health hotline and web support service.

Khalil Center Toronto: 1-855-5KHALIL A free counselling and mental health support service for Muslims of all ages.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination



The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination takes place on March 21st for a very specific reason. Many years ago, on the 21st, police opened fire during a peaceful demonstration against apartheid “pass laws” and ended up taking the lives of 69 individuals. In 1979, it was decided by the General Assembly that the dedicated day would become a weeklong event to stand in solidarity with those experiencing hardships with racism and racial discrimination. Although much work has been done to change and adapt international frameworks, there are many communities that face injustice and stigma for simply being themselves.

What can we do to help fight against racism, discrimination, and xenophobia in Canada?

1. Educate ourselves and others about the history and ongoing issues in Canada to create conversation and understand the depth of these issues.
2. Speak out when we encounter racist events in everyday life. This could be through larger scale acts, or by understanding and speaking up when hearing microaggressions being said. It can be tough to speak out against aggressors, but the action can be lifechanging for yourself or the other individual(s) involved.
3. Support BIPOC communities by listening to and amplifying their voices. Try to support more organizations and initiatives that work towards racial equality.
4. Encourage anti-racism and racial equality in all areas of your life and speak up when you notice unfair treatment or discriminatory policies.

International Transgender Day of Visibility

International Transgender Day of Visibility is an annual celebration that takes place on March 31st. This day is dedicated to honoring transgender people and raising awareness of the significant barriers and discrimination the community faces in society today. The day was founded in 2009 by Rachel Crandall, an activist from the United States, to fill the

gap in recognition of transgender people. This day was meant to acknowledge and celebrate living members of the community, rather than mourning those that passed tragically as Transgender Day of Remembrance does.

Here are some well known and celebrated members of the Canadian Transgender Community →

Jessica Platt: She plays for the Toronto Furies and was the first transgender woman to play in the Canadian Women's Hockey League. It's beautiful to see her dedication to the sport and hope she inspires other trans children to continue their sports dreams and aspirations.



Ravyn Wngz: Ravyn has used her adverse experiences with racism and transphobia to create safe, encouraging spaces for BIPOC people that also identify as belonging to the 2SLGBTQ+ community. She also assisted with the development of Wildseed – an art space to host events for the Black 2SLGBTQ+ community!

Alexandre Baril: Alexandre was the first trans person in Canada to become and work as a professor. They specialized in trans studies to teach about sexual and gender diversity in French. Baril also helped organize the first trans protest in Quebec (2010) and is very well known for his published works on transgender issues from their unique perspective and in French.



Fresh from the Our Place Kitchen



St. Patrick's Day Fried Cabbage

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 4 slices of bacon
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- ½ large head of green cabbage, sliced
- Salt and black pepper to taste
- 2 teaspoons sriracha or any sauce of your choice



Directions

1. Place the butter and the bacon in a large Dutch oven or pot with a lid over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until bacon is lightly browned and crisp, 7 to 8 minutes (lower the heat if the bacon begins to get too dark).
2. Using a slotted spoon, remove the bacon to a paper-towel-lined plate and reserve (do not wipe out pot).
3. Add the onion, garlic, and 1/2 teaspoon salt to the pot, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon and scraping up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Cook until the onion is very soft, about 8 minutes.
4. With the heat at medium-high, add the cabbage, 1 teaspoon salt, and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. Stir until the cabbage starts to soften, 5 minutes.
5. Reduce heat to medium-low or low and cook, covered, until the cabbage is very tender, with a little bit of texture remaining in the thicker rib pieces, 12 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure the bottom isn't getting too dark.
6. Uncover the pot and increase heat to high. Add the Sriracha or any sauce of your choice and stir for about a minute. There should be almost no liquid in the pot. Add more salt and pepper, if necessary, transfer to a serving bowl and top with the reserved bacon bits.
7. Enjoy!

Traditional Colcannon

Ingredients

- 2 sticks of butter
- 1 ¼ cups of hot milk
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 head of cabbage, cored and finely shredded
- 1 (1 pound) piece of ham or bacon, cooked the day before
- 4 scallions/green onions, finely chopped
- Parsley leaves, for garnish
- 3 pounds of potatoes, scrubbed clean but not peeled



Directions

1. Steam the potatoes in their skins for 30 minutes. Peel them using a knife and fork. Chop with a knife before mashing. Mash thoroughly to remove all the lumps. Add 1 stick of butter in pieces. Gradually add hot milk, stirring all the time. Season with a few grinds of black pepper.
2. Boil the cabbage in unsalted water until it turns a darker color. Add 2 tablespoons butter to tenderize it. Cover with lid for 2 minutes. Drain thoroughly before returning it to the pan. Chop into small pieces.
3. Put the ham in a large saucepan and cover with water. Bring to the boil and simmer for 45 minutes until tender. Drain. Remove any fat and chop into small pieces.
4. Add cabbage, scallions, and ham to mashed potatoes, stirring them in gently.
5. Serve in individual soup plates. Make an indentation on the top by swirling a wooden spoon. Put 1 tablespoon of butter into each indentation. Sprinkle with parsley.

Irish Coddle

Ingredients

- 1 pound of bacon, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 pound mild pork sausage, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 large white onions, halves and thinly sliced
- Salt and pepper to taste



- 1 cup of fresh parsley leaves, finely chopped
- 3 pounds of russet potatoes, peeled and quartered

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Add the bacon to a large pot and set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the fat melts out (about 10 minutes).
3. Add the sausage and increase the heat to medium high. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until the bacon and sausage are nicely browned, about 10 more minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and use a slotted spoon to transfer the bacon and sausage to a plate.
4. Drain the fat from the pot and return it to medium heat. Add the onions, a pinch of salt and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Use a wooden spoon to scrape the brown bits from the bottom and sides of the pot, then sprinkle the onions with 1 tablespoon of the parsley and plenty of black pepper.
5. Layer the bacon and sausage over the onions and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon parsley and more black pepper. Layer the potatoes over the meat and add enough water to submerge everything but the potatoes, about 2 cups. Season the potato layer with a pinch of salt and plenty of black pepper and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon parsley.
6. Bring the liquid to a boil (don't stir!), then cover and transfer to the oven. Bake, checking halfway to add more water if needed, until the onions are very tender and caramelized and the liquid has reduced slightly, about 2 hours.
7. Serve with some warm bread and enjoy!

Mental Health Tips of the Month

Morning Mirror Salutations

By Li



Looking in the mirror is a powerful thing. It can stir up strong emotions inside and can be a major influence on how we view ourselves, both positively and negatively. Mirrors have the potential to elicit great benefits to our mental health if we utilize them properly. For example, some might suffer from feelings of inadequacy or insecurity when looking in the mirror. Improving your relationship with your reflection can help to shift your

perspective on yourself for the better and foster more self-compassion and emotional resilience.

It is an innate human desire to be seen and reflected in the world around us, and psychologists have found that face-to-face contact is an essential component in our emotional and social development as children. Learning to use the mirror mindfully, and taking advantage of this face-to-face contact with ourselves can help us stay present with ourselves. Developing self awareness that is kind can help release you from your inner critic.

Many use the mirror to monitor their appearance and might find reasons what they see doesn't meet societal expectations of the world or within themselves. Spending some time noticing yourself, the emotions you feel and the reflection of them in the mirror, and meeting those emotions by acknowledging them and showing yourself gratitude and compassion for having them can improve your self-compassion. This practice may also improve your relationships with others. Instead of seeking to be validated and "reflected" back by those around you, you may find that you seek to know and appreciate those around you for who truly are.

Next time you wake up in the morning and look at yourself in the mirror, try saying to yourself out loud: "Good morning! It's nice to see you again. I look forward to spending time with you and working with you today". Try treating the person you see in the mirror like a friend or a partner. Sometimes we can feel almost as though we are in an abusive relationship with ourselves or feel that we are getting in our own way of what we hope to achieve. You may not even fully realize how much



your inner critic is hurting you until you are looking at them in the eyes. Remember that no one is perfect and try to have empathy and gratitude for yourself by acknowledging all the effort the person in the mirror makes to get you through the day.

Embrace Your Passions

By Sim

Finding a hobby is a helpful and fun way to improve our mental health. When we engage in activities we enjoy, it gives us something to look forward to, and brings excitement to our usual routine. Hobbies can give us feelings of accomplishment and pride that will combat any feelings of sadness, and break cycles of negative thoughts. These activities can also be a great way to make new social connections and find others with similar

interests. Socializing, sharing progress, and overcoming challenges with others can be incredibly uplifting and healing.

Take a minute to experiment with different activities to find out what it is you like most. Some of the best hobbies are ones that are hands-on and immersive. When something requires focus, it helps us be more present in the moment and clear our minds. Hobbies can be anything from sports, learning an instrument, cooking, gardening, writing, painting, knitting, photography, biking, and so much more!



Life is busy for most of us, and trying to find extra time to engage in hobbies may feel like a challenge and we may be unmotivated to do so. One thing that we can do is remind ourselves that the long-term benefits will outweigh the challenge of getting started. As you explore new hobbies, remind yourself that it doesn't matter if you're good at it, what matters is that you like it. New things take time to learn. No one is grading or timing you, so enjoy the challenge, the free time, and the learning process.

Writing Group Submissions

Saturday Night

By James

The time has come and gone because February the 17th was my awesome night was my 52nd birthday party at one of my favourite karaoke bars. I had some of my favourite friends and family. The names are Suzanne, Shirley, Jess, Jessica, Karster, David, Gemma, Chad, Melissa W, Andrew W, Roman, Ryan and two of the bartenders but I forgot their names.

Before I tell you more of what happened on February 17th, 2024. I went to meet a caring lady named Suzanne at the Bathurst Station to bring her back to my place for the first time and I also call David is he wanted also came back to my place. David said, "sure". So while we were at my place I took them for a tour of my apartment. When we walk into my apartment they saw my living room, before we took off our shoes. Then I put a pot of coffee on, while that was boiling, I started showing Suzanna, David my apartment of the different areas we walk down a small hallway. I showed them 4 closet door, 1 door for the coats, door 2 was a closet of my stuff where I keep the towels, toilet

paper, my different games and a small box of pens. The third door was Adam (my roommate) things and the fourth door was a walk-in closet door.

Then I show them 1 of 2 bedrooms, Suzanne said, "wow what a big room?" And then I said my roommate's room is the same size as my room. Once we came out of the bedroom I showed them the bathroom, walked back towards the living room and show them the kitchen, the dining room, and then finally the balcony and both of them said, "it is big size."

We all listening to music and play monopoly and of course it was my birthday. I lost and David win the second game, at least I came in second place and Suzanne game it third place then we all start to pack up the game and start to listened more different music. It was almost time to get ready for to take the wheel trans for all of us to go to the bar that is called, "The Bull & Grill" is the bar where I was having my 52nd Karaoke Birthday party.

It was so great night until one of my friend Guy was so rude to the host Jess. All was Jess doing letting some of the people that hasn't sing yet. So during that time he got upset and moved down from 4 to 8 people for the people that hasn't sang yet for example say I went to sing a song that a person hasn't sing a song yet that what Jess was doing and my friend got upset and in embarrassed me will all of my friend and family was there.

But I didn't let that happen because it was my night. So the next day I got a message from Jess's boyfriend that he and Jess wasn't happy of what Guy did so I wrote back to them and said, "Please leave it to me I will deal with this problem and that what I did." So I said I wrote to Guy of what I was told my the host Jess that he was so rude and that they don't want you back to the bar again even the bartender said the same thing.

So now it is time to stop writing because I had the wonderful 52 year old karaoke night for my birthday with all my friends and family.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY WORD SEARCH

P L E P R E C H A U N E P R I C H A M N
U S H G R E E N N D S H A P T R E S A U
S S E S O L M K Y A E Y L E B C I O R C
M A G I C L O S N T S L A H K I S S C R
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C O I N S T L E W C O U S H R D W C T Y
X T Z S H A M R O C K G E E N A D C R T

Clover

Leprechaun

Celtic

Irish

Pinch

Gold

Rainbow

Green

Magic

Blessing

Coins

Shamrock

Lucky

March

Kiss

Blarney

Ireland

Mischief

Bog

Dance



MAY the
LUCK
of the Irish
be yours
today
and
ALWAYS