

FEBRUARY

2021

NEWSLETTER

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OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

1183 Davenport Road | 416-598-2919

info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com

February Birthdays

Our Place Birthdays

MaryAnne G. – Feb. 5
Jose C. – Feb. 5
Frank G. – Feb. 8
Oliver A. – Feb. 13
Marcelo O. – Feb. 16
James M. – Feb.17
Jessica S. – Feb. 26
Jennifer S. – Feb. 26
David M. – Feb.26

Famous People Born in February

Farah Fawcett – Feb.2, 1947
Norman Rockwell – Feb.3, 1894
Rosa Parks – Feb. 4, 1913
Charles Dickens – Feb. 7, 1812
Jennifer Aniston – Feb. 11, 1969
John Travolta – Feb. 18, 1954
George Harrison – Feb. 25, 1932
Johnny Cash- Feb.26, 1932
Elizabeth Taylor – Feb. 27, 1932



Meals

Meals to-go are served Monday-Friday between 2:00pm and 5:00pm.

Reminders:

- To make sure that everyone gets a meal, we are not able to give more than one meal per person. Seconds will only be given between 4:45pm and 5:00pm, *if we have enough. They are not guaranteed.*
- If you have a dietary restriction, please let us know before 12pm on the day you are coming so that we can do our best to accommodate you.
- Please be patient with us as we grab your meal, snacks and drink... we are going as fast as we can!

In light of the increase in COVID-19 numbers, we are asking for your cooperation with the following:

- * Practice social distancing (maintain a 6ft distance from others) while waiting in line for your meal. We also strongly encourage you to wear a mask while waiting to protect yourself and those around you.
- * Please do not approach the table until the person in front of you has left.
- * *Masks are now mandatory while picking up your meal.* Need a mask?? No problem! Just ask us for one.
- * If you are not able to wear a mask due to a medical condition, please wait on the "x" in front of the table. Your meal will be placed on the table. Once staff are back inside and the door is closed, please take your meal and step away from the table so that others can safely get theirs.

We *really* appreciate your patience and understanding during these strange times. We know that wearing a mask is not fun and is more difficult for some than others. Please be mindful of the fact that people around you may be more vulnerable to the virus than you are, and so by wearing a mask and keeping your distance, you are helping to keep them safe.

We want to do everything we can to stay open to continue to offer meals and support, which is why we have these policies in place.

Computers, WiFi and/or Phone Use

These services are currently *unavailable* until further notice.

Weekly Check-Ins

Let us know if you are interested in receiving a weekly supportive phone call from staff to check in and see how you're doing.

FEBRUARY 2021 PROGRAM CALENDAR



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Virtual Programs & Appointments to Use Computers/Phone/Wifi * Appointments to use Computer/Phone/Wifi are <i>Currently Unavailable</i> * There is an option to <i>phone in</i> to all Zoom groups.				
1 NEW! SOCIAL GROUP 3:30-4:30 Women's Discussion Groups 2:30	2 Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30 	3 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30 	4 NEW! Online Card Games 12:30 Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30	5 Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30- 2:30
8 NEW! SOCIAL GROUP 3:30-4:30 Women's Discussion Groups 2:30 	9 Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30 	10 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30 	11 NEW! Online Card Games 12:30 Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30	12 Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30- 2:30 Chinese New Year Dinner
15 FAMILY DAY CENTRE CLOSED 	16 Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30 	17 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30 	18 NEW! Online Card Games 12:30 Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30	19 Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30- 2:30
22 NEW! SOCIAL GROUP 3:30-4:30 Women's Discussion Groups 2:30 	23 Virtual TRIVIA! 3:30-4:30 Questions and Queer-ies with June! 2:00	24 Online Peer Support 3:30-4:30 	25 NEW! Online Card Games 12:30 Virtual Anger Management Women: 2:30 Men: 3:30	26 Online Writing Group w/Peter 1:30- 2:30

NOTE: Programs and hours may change without notice in response to Public Health's COVID-19 safety recommendations.

Our Place Weekly Online Programs

Monday Groups

Women's - 2:30pm

This group is an open discussion group for all female-identifying people. We will discuss all topics including depression, anxiety, body image, health/wellness, addictions, victimization/survivor issues and more.

Link to join Women's Discussion Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93541305742?pwd=TUVzWkhCNHdTVEN5aE5rTEQ3UjROdz09>

To join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 935 4130 5742 and Passcode: 969998

NEW! SOCIAL GROUP - 3:30pm

This hour is a time to chat and socialize. We can talk about your interests, your life, current events in the world, or anything that's on your mind.

Link to join the Social Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/92357132760?pwd=ZWltaXlsK3dQaXpnTTgydnNaWUd4Zz09>

To join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 923 5713 2760 and Passcode: 075601

Online Trivia – Tuesdays at 3:30pm

A casual, fun online space for trivia with friends!

Link to join Online Trivia via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93121462646?pwd=dJlxM2R1eEdSMehIL3VTa0x2b0tBUT09>

To join by phone, dial: 647-558-0588

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 931 2146 2646 and Passcode: 945094

Peer Support Group – Wednesdays at 3:30pm

These meetings are a time to connect with others for support, encouragement, and hope. We'll learn from each other's experiences in conversations. We'll talk about relaxation, managing emotions, self-compassion, and self-acceptance. We'll look at positive steps that you could try to have a better life. There will be a different topic each week. Input on future topics is more than welcome.

Link to join Peer Support Group via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/94221242340>

To join by phone, dial: **647-374-4685**

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 942 2124 2340 and Passcode: 211350

New! Online Card Games- Thursday at 12:30

A place for people to gather and chat over Zoom while playing online cards together. Games will be decided by consensus on the day of, with a focus on Euchre and Crazy Eights. Hosted by June!
Link to join Online Card Games via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/91756608312>

Anger Management – Thursdays at 2:30 (Women’s) and 3:30 (Men’s)

This virtual Anger Management course is for anyone who is interested in getting a handle on their anger and strong emotions.

The training utilizes Cognitive-Behavioural tools and techniques to help individuals navigate tough situations. With topics such as Communication, The Cycle of Violence, and Learning from Mistakes, participants can dive deeper into the root of their anger and learn more about themselves in the process.

There are also many opportunities for individuals to connect the lessons with their past and/or current experiences, as open discussion is encouraged. This group operates from a trauma-informed perspective, and aims to provide a safe, open, and non-judgmental space for individuals to explore their emotions and find new ways to grow.

To Sign Up: Email info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com or call the Our Place office: (416) 598-2919. To complete your registration, Tia or Clarence will call you to introduce themselves and have a quick chat with you.

Writing Group – Fridays at 1:30pm

Writing Group with Peter (a professional journalist!) is a time to connect with others, build friendships and get creative together.

Everyone is welcome to join in and no experience is necessary!

Link to join Writing Group via Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/93536287038?pwd=RVpzR1pMSGcxQ01UQXZ6YVBHTlI0UT09>

Join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685

When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 935 3628 7038 and Passcode: 812561

Other Programs & Supports

New! Questions & Queer-ies Workshop – Tuesday, February 23 from 2:00pm – 3:00pm

Join Our Place placement student and facilitator June as we look into the different identities that exist under the 2SLGBTQ+ umbrella! Bring your questions and your curiosity!

Link to join Questions & Queer-ies: <https://zoom.us/j/99912590734>

Join by phone, dial: **647-374-4685**. Meeting ID: 999 1259 0734

Nicotine Replacement Therapy

Thinking of quitting smoking?? Talk to staff about how you can access support and free Nicotine Replacement Therapy with no wait.

Free Rapid-Access Psychotherapy

St. Michael's Homes is temporarily expanding their existing Psychotherapy program. They will be working with ten Student Therapists through to March 31, 2021 and are looking for clients ages 18 and up. Sessions can be done by phone, tablet, or computer and in-person sessions will begin when conditions permit. This is an amazing opportunity to access **free** one-to-one psychotherapy (up to 16 sessions per person). Please let the staff at Our Place know if you would like to register.

Workman Arts courses

Workman Arts offers arts courses for people who have been supported by mental health and/or addiction services. Courses this winter cover topics such as collage, printmaking, drawing, filmmaking, lyric writing, acting, and music.

All courses are *free* to members. The programs are online during the pandemic -- mostly over Zoom. The current list of courses is online at <https://workmanarts.com/artist-training/>

The application to join this program is online at <https://workmanarts.com/become-member/> Registration for the program may take 2-3 months. After registering, members also have access to studio space, onsite gear and equipment, exhibition opportunities and professional support. All programs are free of charge to members.

Workman Arts promotes a greater understanding of mental health and addiction issues through creation and presentation. They support artists with lived experience through peer-to-peer arts education, public presentations and partnerships with the broader arts community.

Workman Arts is best suited to artists that have an existing art practice and goals to further develop, professionalize and share their practice.

Food Banks and Take-Away meals

FOOD BANKS IN THE AREA:

- *Oasis Dufferin* - weekly (either on Tuesday or Wednesday)
Wednesday line-up, 9:30am to 12:30pm
Tuesday by appointment, 3pm to 5pm
1219 Dufferin St (a block south of Dupont) - line up on Dufferin
* For a Tuesday appointment, Call 416-536-4431 on Monday before noon *
* New clients can register at dailybread.link2feed.ca and bring their Client ID Number *
- *Salvation Army Bloor Central* - once per month
Wednesday and Thursday, 9:30am to 3pm * Call 416-532-4511, extension 100, to book an appointment *
789 Dovercourt Rd (a block north of Bloor)
- *The Stop* - twice per month
Monday and Friday, 12pm-3pm
1884 Davenport (near Symington) - at the back of the building

TAKE-AWAY MEALS IN THE AREA:

- *Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre*
Monday and Wednesday, 5:00pm
1900 Davenport Rd (west of Symington)
- *Oasis Dufferin*
Tuesday, 5:30pm to 6:00pm
1219 Dufferin St (a block south of Dupont)
- *Salvation Army Bloor Central*
Saturday, 4pm to 6pm
789 Dovercourt Rd (a block north of Bloor)
- *Sistering*
Every day, 12pm to 1pm * For women and trans-identified people *
962 Bloor St. W. (east of Dovercourt)
- *The Stop - Davenport*
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday - 9am to 10am and 12pm to 1pm
1884 Davenport (near Symington) - at the back of the building
- *The Stop - Wychwood's Open Door*
Wednesday, 9 to 10am, 12 to 1pm; and Thursday, 4 to 5pm
729 St. Clair W. (a block west of Christie)

An Important Note About Lockdown

We know that the COVID lockdown may be a very difficult time for a lot of people.

It may appear as though everyone but you is doing well. However, many people are mentally, emotionally and physically struggling. So if you are feeling this way, **you are not alone.**

Mental health experts want everyone to know that **it is OK to not be OK** during the COVID-19 lockdown.

If you are struggling, **please reach out** to us at Our Place, to friends, or to any of the supports listed in this newsletter.

info@ourplacecommunityofhope.com | (416) 598-2919

You
are
♥
not
alone

Peer Support Lines

Need someone to talk to who has lived-experience with mental health issues?

Check out a Peer Support Line. A volunteer will listen to you talk about your day or what's happening in your life. These are not crisis lines so you can call if you're doing OK and just want to talk.

Krasman Centre: 1-888-777-0979

Available any time every day, 20 mins/call

Mood Disorders Association: 1-866-363-6663

Available 9:30am to 5pm. 30 mins/call

Progress Place:

416-323-3721 - 12pm to 8pm

416-960-9276 - 8pm to midnight. 30 mins/call



4 Ways to Ward off the Winter Blues

Sourced from: <https://www.medbroadcast.com/channel/mental-health/depression/5-ways-to-ward-off-the-winter-blues>

- 1. Exercise.** Exercise is known to increase your levels of serotonin and endorphins, leading to a happier mood. You can walk inside or outside, or listen to music and dance in your home. You can also do yoga online. Yoga with Adriene is the world's most popular, easy, free, online yoga program: <https://yogawithadriene.com/free-yoga-videos/>
- 2. Socialize.** Building and maintaining social networks is an important way to keep a positive outlook. During COVID, you can still call friends and family and set times to regularly talk to each other.
- 3. Keep a regular sleep schedule.** Research has shown that lack of sleep may lead to anxiety and depression. To keep a regular sleep-wake cycle, make sure you go to sleep and wake up at the same time every day, even on weekends. It's important to avoid naps throughout the day as they can throw off your sleep schedule.
- 4. Eat well.** When you're feeling down, it's natural to want to turn to comfort foods that are loaded with fats and sugars. Stick to healthier foods. This will keep you healthy while giving you the energy you need to stay active and social until a brighter season comes along.



Mental Health & Crisis Resources

1. Call **911** if you are in immediate danger or need urgent medical support.
2. Canada Suicide Prevention Helpline: **1-833-456-4566**
3. Text **WELLNESS** to 741741 to access the Crisis Text Line. Provides immediate support.
4. Wellness Together: **1-866-0445** (24/7). Provides free counseling and support.
5. Gerstein Crisis Centre: **(416) 929-5200** (24/7). This is a community-based crisis service for adults age 16+ in Toronto who are dealing with mental health issues and/or substance use issues and are currently in crisis. Also offers online face-to-face support, wellness groups, short term follow-up support, and referrals to other services.
6. Crisis Services Canada: **1-833-456-4566** (24/7) or text **START to 45645** (4pm-midnight). This is support for people who are thinking about suicide.
7. Distress Centre of Greater Toronto: **(416)-408-4357** (42/7). They provide emotional and crisis support.
8. St. Michael's Homes: **(416) 926-8267 ext. 110**. Addictions Services for men.
9. Assaulted Women's Hotline: **(416) 863-0511 or 1-866-863-0511** (24/7 crisis line)

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call **911.**



IT'S OK
TO ASK
FOR HELP.

Overdose Prevention

At Our Place...

- Staff are trained to administer and dispense Naloxone!
- Naloxone kits are now located in each bathroom stall in case someone ever needs it.
- See staff if you would like a Naloxone kit – we would be happy to give you one!
- All assistance is confidential.

What is Naloxone? Naloxone is an antidote which can be used to temporarily reverse an opioid overdose. It is very safe and has no effect on non-opioid users (for someone who has taken stimulants, alcohol, etc.).

What is an Overdose? An overdose occurs when a drug or combination of substances overwhelm the body, making it unable to control basic life functions such as breathing, heart rate, body temperature and consciousness.

Signs of Overdose:

- Deep snoring, gurgling or wheezing
- Change in skin tone: grey, white, or blue tinge to skin (usually lips and fingertips show first)
- Pale, clammy skin
- Won't respond to stimulation (yelling or sternum rub) or won't wake up
- Breathing is very slow, irregular or has stopped

What is Harm Reduction? Harm reduction is an approach that tries to reduce the harmful effects of substance use. It involves working with the person using substances so that they use more safely (e.g., needle and syringe exchange programs and supervised injection sites).

If you or someone you know is looking for harm reduction support, talk to Our Place staff or call 211.

Warming Centres

Out of the Cold Update: The Out of the Cold (OOTC) program previously offered meals and overnight spaces for individuals experiencing homelessness to sleep, delivered by a network of inter-denominational faith-based organizations. Due to the program model, rotation of locations each night and use of volunteers, the city feels the model is not feasible to operate during the pandemic within Ministry of Health guidelines for congregate settings.

For winter 2020/2021, new hotel spaces will be offered to replace the overnight capacity previously provided by the OOTC program. The rooms will be available between mid-November and April, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will be run by Dixon Hall.

Information on how to access a space has not yet been released.

Warming Centres: The City will activate 4 Warming Centres if an Extreme Cold Weather Alert (ECWA) is issued by Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health based on information from Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Space will be offered at the following:

- * 129 Peter Street (15 spaces)
- * 5800 Yonge Street (35 spaces)
- * Exhibition Place, Better Living Centre (50 spaces)
- * Scarborough Civic Centre (30 spaces)

From the Our Place Kitchen

Alanna’s Creamy Ricotta Pasta with Broccoli

Ingredients:

- Kosher Salt
- 1 large head broccoli
- 1 medium lemon
- 1 pound dry, short pasta
- 1 cup whole-milk ricotta cheese
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Red pepper flakes
- Parmesan Cheese



Instructions

1. Bring a large pot of heavily salted water to a boil over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, cut 1 large broccoli into small florets. Finely grate the zest of 1 lemon, then juice the lemon until you have 3 tablespoons.
2. Add the pasta to the boiling water and cook 2 minutes less than al dente according to package instructions. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce.
3. Place the lemon zest, lemon juice, and 1 cup ricotta cheese in a food processor fitted with the blade attachment. Season with kosher salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes, if using. Process until airy and smooth, stopping and scraping down the sides as needed, about 20 seconds.
4. When the pasta reaches 2 minutes less than al dente, add the broccoli florets, and cook for the remaining 2 minutes. Reserve 1 cup of the pasta water, then drain the pasta and broccoli.
5. Return the pasta and broccoli to the pot. Add the ricotta mixture and ¼ cup pasta water. Stir, adding more pasta water as needed, until the sauce coats and clings to the pasta. Taste and season with black pepper and Parmesan cheese, if desired.

Toban's Aloo Gobi

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 red chili, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. minced ginger
- 1 tsp. garam masala
- 1/2 tsp. dried turmeric
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 3 russets, peeled and chopped into 1" pieces
- 1 medium head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1 cup low-sodium vegetable broth
- Salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- (Optional) Freshly chopped cilantro, for serving



DIRECTIONS

- In a large pan over medium-high heat, heat oil. Add chili, garlic, and ginger and cook for 1 minute. Add garam masala, turmeric, and cayenne and cook for 1 minute more.
- Add potatoes, cauliflower, and vegetable broth and season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat and cook, covered, until potatoes and cauliflower are tender for 15 minutes. Optional: Garnish with cilantro to serve.

Garam masala is an Indian blend of ground spices that can be found at many grocery stores

Manisha's Chocolate Cheesecake Cookies

(makes 36 large cookies)

Ingredient List

- ½ Cup Salted Butter, softened
- 8 Ounces of Cream Cheese, softened
- 1 Cup Brown Sugar, lightly packed in measuring cup
- 2 Whole Eggs
- 2 Teaspoons Vanilla Extract
- 1 Cup All Purpose Flour
- ½ Teaspoon Baking Powder
- ½ Teaspoon Baking Soda
- ½ Cup Cocoa Powder



Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 350 degrees. Line your cookie sheets with parchment paper and set aside.
2. Sift your flour into a large bowl and add your cocoa powder, baking powder, and baking soda. Now, set to the side.
3. Cream the butter and cream cheese together. Add the sugar and mix until it is fluffy!
4. Beat in the eggs and vanilla until completely combined in your mixture.
5. Now add your flour to your wet mixture slowly. Make sure you don't have clumps in your batter.
6. Use a scoop or a spoon to drop batter on your lined cookie sheets.
7. Bake in your preheated oven for 15 to 18 minutes and then cool the cookies. Remember that your cookies will continue to cook when they are resting outside the oven, so don't overdo them!
8. ENJOY 😊

Mental Health Tip of the Month

By Kathryn Dorrell

Self-compassion

It's the month of Valentine's Day, which symbolizes love—and we are stuck in mid-winter, waiting for spring. February is the ideal month to start a new wellness habit: self-compassion.

Christopher Germer, psychologist and author of *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*, and other experts, propose four ways you can foster self-compassion.

1. **Comfort your body.** Eat something healthy. Rest. Massage your neck, feet, or hands. Take a walk. Anything that improves how you feel gives you a dose of self-compassion.
2. **Write a letter to yourself.** Think of a situation that caused you to feel pain. Write a letter to yourself describing the situation without blaming anyone. Acknowledge your feelings.
3. **Give yourself encouragement.** If something painful happens, think of what you would say to a good friend if the same thing happened to them.
4. **Practice mindfulness.** This is the nonjudgmental observation of your thoughts, feelings, and actions, without trying to suppress or deny them.

Source: [edited from Harvard Health Publishing](#)

You can also watch these videos on self-compassion:

[What is self compassion?](#) | [Two-Minute Tips: How to Practice Self-Compassion](#) | <https://self-compassion.org/>

Writing Group Submissions

Word Cake

By Lisa, Josh, Kimberley, Kathryn, Page, Peter, Rodney, Teresa, and Toban

On January 22, the writing group whipped up its first “word cake”—and a few more “writing desserts” (see below). The idea began with Rodney Frost, who said something sounded like a word cake. Lisa encouraged us to create the cake. Kathryn wrote down the words that poured and dripped and dropped out of writing group participants’ mouths and minds. Here are the lovely word treats we baked.

Word Cake

Compassion, kindness, love, peace.
Sensitive, energetic, caring, happy.
Kindred.
Overcome, overwhelming.
Overwhelmingly beautiful.
Joy, Amusement.
A list of the 10 prettiest words.
What is a pretty word?
Serendipity.
The earthy scent produced when rain falls on
the ground.
Supine. Solitude. Loneliness.
A dog waiting for its belly scratch.
Rest. Peace.
Rest in peace.
Happy with themselves.

Word Pie

Inventory.
Aurora.
Dawn of the early morning.
First morning light.
Idyllic
The rain in Spain.
Falls mainly on the plane.
Working class.
How now.
Brown cow.
Carotene. Carotin.
Typesetting.
Spacing.
Thinking in words and about their shapes.
The shapes made with our mouths.



Word tart

Mercury. Lucky.
The names of two cats.
Clinomania.
What does that mean?
The obsessive desire to stay in bed.
Pluviophile.
Walking in the rain.
Singing, laughing, relaxing.
In the rain.
Rain-drenched flowers and rainbows.
Words that are illnesses but sound sweet.
Rosacea. Melanoma.
We can't hear you. We can't hear you.
Can you hear us?
Come closer to your screen again.
Speak up.
Wait.
Pause.
Using my mouth to make sounds.
We can't hear you.



Word cupcakes

(No. 1)

I was watching a baseball game.
Didn't know what was going on.
I just watched the television.
And I wrote and I wrote.
Describe what you see.
Not what you know.
A bloody stupid game.

Word pastry

Miniscule. Transitional.
Absolutely.
Words.
Enjoy them just as if you were eating them.
And they were delicious things.
Colour.
Honour.
English vs. American.
What's Canadian?
Your mouth goes up with the "u".
Celadon.
Where did you get that name?
The glaze on pottery.
I thought it was a dinosaur.
30 years ago, I found out.
It was one of the prettiest words.

(No. 2)

My dog.
His name is Finn.
He drags me rather than me walk him.
Lowercase. Uppercase.
Capitalize. Capitol-ize.
Inauguration Day.
Acting and reading like a child.
As I get old.
I see the beginning of a word.
Then I imagine the rest.
Always Capitalize.
Nouns.
Important Words.

(No. 3)

Meme.

My sister's nick name.

My oldest granddaughter years ago.

With her on the ferry.

Float.

It's the word, meme.

M-E-M-E.

Nothing like it's become.

Surrender.

Surrender.

Time's up.

I've got to go.

Bye. Bye. Bye.

See you.

See you.

Next week.

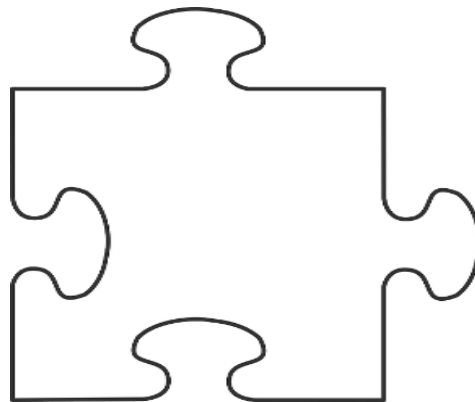
Jigsaw puzzles

By Kimberly Acevedo

Jigsaw puzzles are amazing to do. For me, it is relaxing. It is my go-to when I am stressed out or frustrated. When I am upset, I do one. I have been doing puzzles since I was 12 years old; so, it has been over 20 years. Wow! I just realized that is a long time.

The pictures are so amazing. The time of finishing one depends on how many pieces and the picture. The most pieces were in one puzzle of 2,000. I can do 1,000 pieces in just under 24 hours. It can be time consuming but it is worth it. It can be expensive, too. When I finish mine, I glue them on a board, then I hang them up. That is how I decorated my apartment.

Recently I found an App on my phone to do puzzles; plus it is free. It is an amazing app. I wish I knew about this sooner. I can save the pictures after I am done and can print them later. Jigsaw puzzles are a God-sent.



Who said what? A skipping rope game

By Rodney Frost

Note from Rodney: I have been repeating my 'poem' and have decided that it is not blues; it is a skipping rope game/chant. I have changed the last verse to incorporate a more typical sound and name in such repeated rituals.

Went to the doctor
Doctor said
If you don't lay down
you're gonna end up Dead
[repeat]

Went to the nurse
Nurse she said
Take this pill or you'll end up ill
Take this pill or you'll end up ill.
[repeat]

Went to my Mum
My Mum said
You don't need drugs
what you need is
Hugs.
You don't need drugs
what you need is
hugs
*You don't need drugs
what you need is
hugs
Hugs, hugs hugs....

End note from Rodney: This poem is repeated getting faster and faster until you can almost not go on more. At that point the skipper repeats, "Hugs" over and over while all the other girls count. Highest count of hugs wins.

EPIDEMIC

By Patricia

March 2020 | Covid 19

I hold my breath. My life stops.
My empty arms no longer enfolds loved ones.
They struggle and slowly hug me.
I am so isolated.
My smile hides behind my mask. Behind my black mask.
Ordered not to give out free friendly encouragement ever again.
Don't you look. Don't see me.
I walk alone. Don't come near me.
Stay away. My soul shrivels up.
I cringe at the sight of a naked face, smiling at me and flee.
The pain. Will it ever go away?
Will I ever see a naked smile without my body
curling up in pain and running away?
When will it be my turn for the golden Jab?
And
Will my body remember to touch others lovingly again?
I Want the Golden Jab.
And I Want My Life Back Again.

Cliffside Castle by Dorothy Daniels: A summary

By Teresa Carducci

There had been sudden-mysterious deaths which had left Nancy Furnivall orphaned and alone. So then she had to find a killer who was hiding before he would come back again. The murder won't wait because Aunty Tang, momma and poppa were dead. Nancy Furnivall had been alone, orphaned and also afraid. Nancy faced a new life because the bright joyous days had disappeared. Her new life was a life of darkness, strangers and also included shadows. The life was that it seemed to be the certainty of one of those strangers. They were a killer and ready to strike again anytime. She did not know if she was to be the next victim or not. She did not know that she was on the killer's list. She was the only one who possessed the only clue to the killer's identity. She did not know what the clue was and even that she had possessed it.

Chinese New Year: The Year of the Ox

February 12, 2021



Origins of the Chinese Zodiac

The Chinese zodiac, or Sheng Xiao (生肖), is a repeating cycle of animal signs and their attributes, based on the lunar calendar. The zodiac animals are: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig. The animal that represents who you are is based on your birth year.

It is believed the origins of the Chinese zodiac are rooted in zoolatry, or animal worship, with the system dating back more than 2,000 years ago. The Chinese zodiac remains popular throughout China and much of Asia. It's used to determine your fortune for the year, marriage compatibility, career path, best times to have a baby, and so much more.

Source: chinesenewyear.net

Valentine's Day



Valentine's Day occurs every February 14th. Candy, flowers and gifts are exchanged between loved ones, all in the name of St. Valentine.

The Legend of St. Valentine

February has long been celebrated as a month of romance. The Catholic Church recognizes at least three different saints named Valentine or Valentinus, all of whom were martyred. According to one legend, an imprisoned Valentine actually sent the first "valentine" greeting himself after he fell in love with a young girl—possibly his jailor's daughter—who visited him during his confinement. Before his death, he wrote her a letter signed "From your Valentine," an expression that is still in use today.

The oldest known valentine was a poem written in 1415 by Charles, Duke of Orleans, to his wife while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. Today, according to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated 145 million Valentine's Day cards are sent each year, making Valentine's Day the second largest card-sending holiday of the year, after Christmas.

Source: history.com/valentine

Images: All images in this newsletter are free, downloadable files from <https://pixabay.com/>

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