



# *March*

## **Our Place Newsletter**

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- **Mental Health Tips**
- **Recipes**

**Our Place Community of Hope**

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



**OUR PLACE**  
**Community of Hope**

*Happy  
Birthday!*

Andre B - March 1st



Celebrate with us on  
**Friday March 28th**  
with a sweet treat  
during meal time!

## Free Events Around the City!

### **Lumiere: The Art of Light - Ontario Place**

**Date:** March 10th to April 4th

**Location:** 955 Lake Shore Blvd West, Toronto

**Event:** A free outdoor light exhibit while enjoying the beautiful fire pit. There are 14 unique displays that can be viewed by attendees between 6:00pm-to 11:00pm.

### **Comedy on the HOUSE - Standup Comedy Show**

**Date:** March 3rd, 2025; every Monday in March.

**Location:** 171 College Street; The Smith House Bar from 7:45pm to 9:00pm.

**Ongoing Event:** Enjoy some great local comedians! You must reserve tickets through Eventbrite prior to attending. Visit the following link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/comedy-on-the-house-a-standup-comedy-show-free-entry-tickets-1259224326859?msocid=2a9f3b155cae6b05249e28645d046ad7>

### **Celebrate Toronto (Fireworks!) - Toronto's 191st Anniversary**

**Date:** March 8th, 2025 from 3:00pm to 10:00pm

**Location:** Nathan Philips Square; 100 Queen Street West, Toronto

**Event:** There will be over 150 Canadian vendors to browse, enjoy some delicious food, engage in some outdoor skating, and of course enjoy the beautiful fire works. They will also hold a craft station on the 8th and 16th from 11:00am to 3:30pm for those who want to express themselves.

### **St. Patrick's Parade -**

**Date:** March 16th at 12:00pm sharp

**Location:** corner of St. George and Bloor Street West (near St. George subway station)

**Event:** Connect with the community and take part of this fun parade! There will be live entertainment, and folks to share insight into Irish history, culture, and heritage.

# 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](http://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](mailto:info@dpmchc.ca)



# Get to Know... Helena!

By Li

Li: Tell us your name and a little bit about yourself and your interests– how you like to spend your time, what you do for fun.

H: My name is Helena. At my apartment I have plants, two fish tanks, two cats that I rescued, and I have my dog Sisu. So, I'm busy in my apartment, plus I cook and clean and maintain it. I try to do diamond dot paintings. I walk a lot, from there to Our Place and vice versa. I'm on a healing path and this is where I've found myself. I just paid for my garden, I have a community garden that I've kept for 30 years or so. It's been part of my healing process.

Li: What are your cat's names?

H: Mongoose and Celestine, I had to rescue them, they were abandoned.

Li: Do you have a favourite hobby?

H: In the summertime I like to go swimming in Lake Ontario, or I'm up in Thornberry in the river, I've gone up there 20 years to camp with some friends. It's just like a sleep over; I try to throw myself out there with different people. If I'm bored it's my problem, but it can be a challenge because I do have a trauma brain. I'm reading a book on denial right now, I'm not in denial but I do wish someone would rescue me, that's the codependency in me, but you know we're all codependent. I'm hard on myself so something I'm trying to change right now is my dialogue, my critic. And I'm grieving right now, I'm trying to be Helena but grieving does take away from that, but there's no hurry to grieve and there's no right way to grieve.

Li: Yeah, we all have our own process.

H: I like bugs too, I have like a bug collection.

Li: Alive bugs?

H: Yeah, alive bugs like pill bugs, meal worms in a container. I should bring them!

Li: Haha that's ok.

H: It keeps me in tune with the earth. I used to have tarantulas, a snake, red belly toads, and I used to have crickets all the time.

Li: Do they make good pets?

H: Yeah!

Li: How long have you been a member here at Our Place?

H: This is my 12th year going. It's a commitment I made to myself. I think I did it without even being conscious that I have an issue and that I'm going to stop fighting and running. I learned how to trust and feel safe.

Li: That's awesome that you were able to do that here, what is your favourite thing to do here?

Helena: I used to love gardening, I think I used the garden as an escape here. I had to let it go, but it was hard to let go of it because it was healing me. But I'm good now. I do like karaoke but I'm working on fear and being shy, being visible, but it takes time because I was scared when I first came. I like to learn to be mindful and just sit. I learned to paint here. That was my goal, I always wanted to be a painter when I was a kid, so I'm happy because it's never too late. I do hear a lot of people saying "I can't paint" and I remember that voice in my head, the critic.

***Read the full interview on our bulletin board next to the women's bathroom.***

## National Social Work Month – By Madelyn



In March, Canada celebrates the field of Social Work. National Social Work Month was created in 1963 to honour and celebrate the hard work that social workers do and the way they help individuals, the community, and society as a whole. Social workers engage in a variety of settings, including schools, hospitals, community centers, long-term care homes, and more. The profession of social work came to Canada in the late 1800s, with the first program for social work being established by the University of Toronto in 1914. Today, there are over 50,000 social workers in Canada! Each year, National Social Work Month focuses on different themes and aspects related to social work. This year's slogan is "Wherever You Are, So Are We". Celebrate this month by showing some extra appreciation towards social workers for all that they do!



### Fun Facts:

- There are 25,000+ social workers in Ontario, making it the most of any province in Canada.
- There is also a Social Work Week. This year, it takes place from March 3-9.
- The Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) is one of the leading organizations behind National Social Work Month.
- The Seven Points of Unity, which are core to the social work profession, are a big part of this month. Check them out here! <https://nationalsocialworkmonth.ca/>

More info: <https://nationalsocialworkmonth.ca/>

## Saint Patrick's Day – March 17th – By Fanny



Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated to honor the death of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. This special day is celebrated each year with thousands of individuals and their loved ones. Folks share the importance of music in remembrance of historical events and their heritage. An icon of the Irish holiday is the Leprechaun, the original Irish name in folklore is "lobaircin", meaning "small-bodied fellow". Stemming from the origins of the belief in fairies, tiny men and women who have magical powers.

Saint Patrick's day is traditionally celebrated by wearing green, enjoying parades, feasting on traditional foods, drinking shamrocks & dancing. A traditional meal of corned beef and cabbage is shared among celebrators alongside a shamrock drink. Shamrocks or "seamroy", were once sacred in ancient Ireland symbolizing the rebirth of spring and an emerging Irish nationalism.

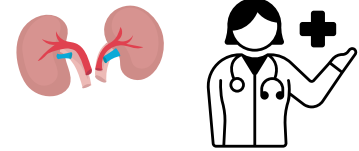
### There are several events occurring throughout March that you can enjoy:

- March 8th, located at Nathan Philips Square, St. Patrick's Day celebration 2025 in Toronto starting at 10:20 am.
- March 15th, located at [Manulife Center, 44 Charles St W #2319, Toronto, ON M4Y 1R7](#) 10:15am, a St. Patrick's Day Race to mark the official start of Toronto's Spring running season.
- March 16th, St Patrick's Day Parade Toronto at Yonge St and Bloor St West, near Bloor station.

# Kidney and Liver Health Month – By Nyoka

Kidney and Liver Health is acknowledged in March in order to raise awareness about the importance of these vital organs. The month is dedicated to educating people on how to maintain kidney and liver health, recognize early signs of disease, and encourage screenings for conditions like chronic kidney disease (CKD), liver disease, hepatitis, and fatty liver disease.

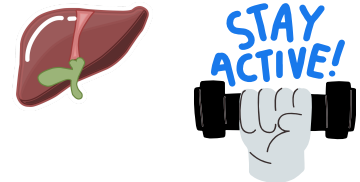
Globally, over 850 million people are estimated to live with kidney disease, comprising more than 10% of the world's population. Chronic kidney disease (CKD) is a serious condition impacting around 35.5 million people. Often overlooked until symptoms appear, CKD is progressive and can put you at risk for serious health complications including heart attack, stroke, and kidney failure. Adopting a healthy lifestyle can help you manage CKD and its complications from progressing. (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, 2025). Kidney disease is a silent epidemic and many people don't realize they have kidney disease until it's in advanced stages. Early detection can prevent complications like kidney failure.



## Tips for taking care of your kidney health:

- Make time for sleep (At least 8 hours a night!).
- Manage blood pressure and monitor blood sugar levels (Visit your pharmacy for support).
- Meet regularly with your doctor (If you need help finding a doctor, let us know!).
- Eat a balanced diet.

The liver is the body's largest internal organ, performing over 500 vital functions. It plays a key role in filtering blood from the heart, stomach, and intestines, converting nutrients into usable substances, metabolizing medications, and breaking down toxins for elimination. Hepatitis B and C are two of the most common threats to liver health. Viral hepatitis affects more than 350 million people worldwide and causes approximately 700,000 deaths every year – more than HIV, tuberculosis or malaria. Hepatitis B and C infections cause progressive damage to the liver, leading to the development of scar tissue – called cirrhosis – that prevents the liver from performing its functions (UHN Foundation, 2022). Once someone has cirrhosis, they are at risk of liver failure and liver cancer.



## To avoid liver failure here are a few tips to follow:

- Avoid Processed Foods & Sugars (limit fast food if you can).
- Stay active (a short walk can help you in the long run!).
- Eat liver friendly foods (this includes apples, garlic, beets, green tea, oatmeal).

More info: <https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/community-health-outreach/national-kidney-month#:~:text=March%20is%20National%20Kidney%20Month,affecting%20around%2035.5%20million%20people.https://uhnfoundation.ca/stories/liver-health-month-what-you-should-know-about-hepatitis-b-and-c/>

# How Eating Well Can Improve Your Mood – By Mohamed

Eating a balanced diet of vegetables, fruits, and healthy foods is important for your body and mind. What you eat affects how you feel, think, and handle stress. Studies show that the food we eat impacts on our mood, energy, and focus. Eating well can help you feel more energized, improve your mood, and stay mentally strong. It's not about being strict with your diet, but about making healthier choices to support your overall mental health; including:

- **Eating Regular Meals:** Skipping meals can make you tired and cranky.
- **Stay Hydrated:** Water helps improve mood and focus.
- **Eat Fruits and Veggies:** They give your body and mind important vitamins and minerals.
- **Balance Fats:** Healthy fats like olive oil, nuts, and avocados help brain function.
- **Get Enough Fiber:** Foods like beans, apples, and broccoli aid digestion and health.

A healthy diet can help you feel better, but it's okay to enjoy your favorite foods sometimes. Cheat days are part of a balanced lifestyle. The goal isn't to be perfect, but to find balance. The key is moderation, so you can enjoy treats without overdoing it. Along with eating well, staying active, getting enough sleep, and spending time with loved ones are all important for our mental health. It's about creating habits that help you feel good both inside and out.

More info: <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/rci/en/news/2101691/what-you-eat-could-be-key-to-improving-your-mental-health-scientists-say#:~:text=Studies%20have%20shown%20that%20following,dairy%2C%20meat%2C%20and%20eggs.>





# Healthier Ways to Cope with Difficult Emotions – By Nate

## ***\*Trigger Warning: Discussion of Self-Harm\****

March 1st is Self-Injury Awareness Day, a time to recognize and support those struggling with self-harm. If you or someone you know is engaging in self-harm, know that you are not alone, and help is available. Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness. Let's work together to reduce stigma around self-harm and mental health. We encourage open conversations where everyone can feel safe to share their experiences and seek help without fear of judgment.

Here are some healthier ways to cope with challenging emotions:

- **Grounding techniques:** Use the 5-4-3-2-1 method ...Name five things you see, four things you touch, three things you hear, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.
- **Creative outlets:** Try journaling, painting, or playing music to express emotions safely.
- **Physical release:** Engage in exercise, dance, or deep breathing to help manage overwhelming feelings.
- **Sensory alternatives:** Hold ice cubes, use fidget toys, or textured objects to create a safe physical sensation.
- **Reach out:** Talking to a trusted friend, support group, or therapist can make a big difference.

***Please know, that you are not alone in this!***

**Distress Centre of Greater Toronto - Multilingual Helplines 24/7 Support**

<https://www.dcoqt.com/>

Call: 416 408 4357

**Gerstein Crisis Centre - 24/7 crisis services:**

<https://gersteincentre.org/>

Call: 416-929-5200

**Suicide Crisis Helpline 24/7**

Connect any time: Call 9-8-8 or Text 9-8-8



# Holiday Recipes from the Our Place Kitchen

## Delicious Berry Yogurt (recipe from Rachl Mansfield)

### Ingredients:

- 1.5 Cups Yogurt (Greek)
- 4 Eggs
- 2 Tablespoons Almond Flour
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
- 1 Cup of Berries (whatever you like)
- Maple Syrup, or Honey to your liking

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees and grease an 8 by 8 inch dish.
2. Mix together the yogurt, eggs, almond flour, and vanilla.
3. Gently fold in berries to the mixture.
4. Add into baking dish and bake for 35-38 minutes, or until it stops jiggling.
5. Allow yogurt to cool for at least 20 minutes before you slice and enjoy it!
6. Add maple syrup or honey to the top to add some sweetness.

## Quick and Easy Banana Yogurt Bites (recipe from Rachl Mansfield)

### Ingredients:

- 1 Ripe Banana
- 1 Cup Yogurt (whatever you like)
- 1/4 Cup Melted Chocolate
- 1/4 Cup Creamy Peanut Butter
- Granola, or cereal, if you want something crunchy!

### Directions:

1. Peel a banana and mash into a small bowl.
2. Mix in the yogurt and place on a lined sheet in multiple small circles.
3. Drizzle on some chocolate and peanut butter.
4. If you want a crunchy bite, add some granola or cereal on top.
5. Let set in the freezer for 1 hour and then enjoy!

