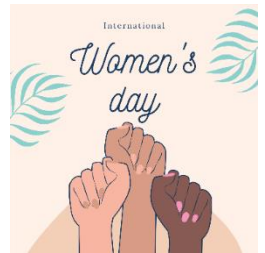


MARCH

NEWSLETTER

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- Something fun!



OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

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ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org | www.ourplacecommunityofhope.com





March Birthdays

Our Place Birthdays

Andre B. – March 1st

Famous Birthdays

Justin Bieber – March 1st

Lupita Nyong'o – March 1st

Jon Bon Jovi – March 2nd

Shaquille O'Neal – March 6th

Eva Longoria – March 15th

Queen Latifah – March 18th

Elton John – March 25th

Diana Ross – March 26th

Mariah Carey – March 27th

Lady Gaga – March 28th

Celine Dion – March 30th



If you want to celebrate your birthday with us, let us know!



Special Events in March



Thursdays: We will be hosting bingo and karaoke every Thursday (switch each week) as our students are here! Hope to see you all joining in on the fun. 😊

March 17th: We will be having special St. Patty's day milkshakes on Thursday the 17th to enjoy during meal time. *Milkshakes will be limited and are available on a first-come-first-serve basis.*

March 18th: This will be the date of our special St. Patrick's day meal – all credit to our wonderful cook, Jeanne! 😊

March 23rd: We will be hosting a clothing drive on Thursday the 23rd during drop-in. For more information, please check out our social media for the poster!

Our Place Weekly Programs

Pool Table – Everyday! (*in-person*)

Enjoy a game of pool during our open pool hour! Grab a friend and come join us. If you have any questions, or want to sign up, please use the signup sheet or let staff know.

Gaming Tournaments – Mondays at 1:30 pm (*in-person*)

Come and join us as we play fun games every week! Games include: Trivia, Name that Tune, and.... CARD GAMES! **Limited capacity.**

Bingo – Tuesdays at 1:30 pm (*in-person*)

Enjoy a game with us as there are great prizes to be won! *Please remember that bingo is meant to be enjoyable and fun for all!*

Karaoke – Wednesday at 1:30 pm (*in-person*)

Yay! Karaoke is making a comeback, but with a few changes. The program will run for one hour on Wednesdays where you can have your moment to shine with a mic! Hope to see and hear you all then. 😊 **Limited capacity.**

Peer Support Group – Wednesdays at 3:30 (*virtual*)

Peer support meetings are a time to connect with others for support, encouragement, and hope. We will 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 towards having a better life.

Link to join: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87674798802>

Join by phone: (647)-374-4685. When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 876 7479 8802

Art & Crafts Group – Thursday at 1:30pm (in-person)

Art & Crafts is a time to explore your creative side and connect with others. It will include drawing and coloring, painting, sketching and many more fun activities. Suggestions are welcome! 😊

Writing Group – Fridays at 1:30pm (virtual)

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://us06web.zoom.us/j/93536287038>

Join by phone, dial: 647-374-4685. When prompted, enter in the Meeting ID: 935 3628 7038

Community Programs & Supports

Please ask one of the Our Place Staff if you need access to a phone or computer

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>	<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.

New Toronto Street Food Bank 191 New Toronto St: Meals provided Tue 1:30 pm-6:30 pm. Wed-Thu 12:30 pm-5:30 pm, Fri-Sat 10 am-11:30 am, 1 pm-3:30 pm. You must register to access any food bank supported by Daily Bread. To register, call 416-203-0050.

Fort York Food Bank 380 College St: FYFB's Food Program provides low-income individuals and families with a three-day supply of groceries and hot meals on multiple days every week. Meals are provided Tues – Sat from 12pm-2pm.

Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre (PARC) 1499 Queen Street West: A drop-in space running daily to support those who do not have stable housing (in shelter, respite). Meal Programming runs from Monday – Thursday from 9:30am to 12:30pm, Fridays from 1:00pm to 4:00pm, Saturday and Sunday from 11:00am to 3:00pm.

Evangel Hall Mission 552 Adelaide Street West: Clothing bank and various drop-in services are available Monday – Friday from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm. If you are in need of a shower, need access to laundry facilities, they provide services on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Registration for these specific services starts at 9 am.

Margaret's Drop-In 323 Dundas St E: A drop-in center that offers support to individuals who are living with mental health challenges, homeless, under-housed, or at risk of becoming homeless. Meals are provided daily. Breakfast 7:00 am – 8:30 am, Lunch 10:30 am -12:00 pm, Snack 3:30 pm – 4:30 pm, Dinner 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm.

Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre Drop-In 854 Bloor St. W: Short term emergency shelters, drop-in and community meal programs. Drop-in centre includes case management, workshops, and recreational activities. Lunch: Mon-Sat 12pm-1 pm.

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.

New Circle: If you are in need of warmer clothing for the winter season, please connect with one of the Our Place staff and we will start the online referral process with you.

International Women's Day

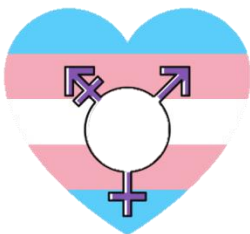
March 8th is International Women's Day, a celebration that honours the historical, cultural, and political achievements of women. This day also supports taking action against gender inequality around the world, and takes a moment to appreciate past, present, and future achievements of women. Many organizations come together on this day show women how valuable they are in today's society.



The theme for International Women's Day 2023 is *DigitALL: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality*. This theme focuses on how technology and education in the digital age can help the empowerment of women across the world. This theme will also explore how to protect the rights of women in digital spaces and how to deal with online gender-based violence.

For over 40 years, Toronto has held the largest International Women's Day event in North America. This year, IWB – Immigrant Women in Business has organized a rally and march to celebrate women's achievements and empowerment. You can join the celebration in person on **March 8th at Metro Hall (55 John Street) from 4:00pm – 9:30pm.**

Transgender Day of Visibility



March 31st marks Transgender Day of Visibility, a day dedicated to recognizing the resilience and accomplishments of the transgender, non-binary, and two-spirit people in our families, communities, and workplaces. The aim is to celebrate the trans population around us, raise awareness about the struggles that they face, and advocate for

better rights for them. This is also a time for trans individuals to share their own stories, show their strength in being visible, and celebrate the beauty of being transgender.

As we focus on making the lives and contributions of trans people visible, we also need to continue to raise awareness of the discrimination and violence faced by many trans people every day, especially trans women of colour. Trans people are over four times more likely than cisgender people to be victims of violent crime, more likely to have contemplated suicide in their lifetimes, and are more likely to have been diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder. This day reminds us that we can all be allies in many ways and work together to stand up for the protection of the human rights of trans people around us. On this day, members of the trans community, allies, and advocates come together to participate in rallies, marches, discussions, and other activities to honor those who are still fighting for respect and basic human rights.



Fresh from the Our Place Kitchen



Beef and Broccoli Stir-Fry

Ingredients:

- 1/3 c. chicken stock
- 1/4 c. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. plus 1 teaspoon pure honey
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1 tbsp. plus 1 teaspoon cornstarch
- 12 oz. flank steak, thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 12 oz. broccoli florets, halved if large
- 1 one-inch pieces fresh ginger, peeled and minced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Hot cooked rice, toasted sesame seeds, sliced scallions, and lime wedges, for serving



Directions:

1. Whisk together stock, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, and cornstarch in a bowl until cornstarch is dissolved.
2. Season steak with salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large skillet over high heat. Add steak and cook, stirring occasionally, until almost cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes;

transfer to a plate using tongs. Reduce heat to medium-high. Add broccoli and season with salt. Cook, stirring often, until broccoli is crisp-tender, 2 to 3 minutes (you can add a few tablespoons of water if pan starts to get too dark). Add ginger and garlic. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, 30 seconds to 1 minute.

3. Whisk sauce and add to pan with steak and any accumulated juices. Cook, stirring, until sauce is thickened and steak is warm, about 1 minute.
4. Serve over rice topped with sesame seeds and scallions with lime wedges alongside.

Spring Pasta with Salmon, Peas, and Dill

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 12 oz. salmon fillets, skin removed
- 1 tsp. whole coriander, crushed Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 lb. cavatappi or other short pasta
- 8 oz. fresh or frozen English peas
- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped
- 1/2 c. dry white wine
- 3 tbsp. fresh dill, torn



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly grease a small baking sheet. Season salmon with coriander, salt, and pepper. Roast on prepared baking sheet until cooked through, 13 to 15 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Cool completely, then flake into large pieces.
2. Meanwhile, cook pasta according to package directions, adding peas during last 1 (if using frozen) to 4 (if using fresh) minutes. Reserve 1 cup cooking water; drain. Return pasta to pot.
3. Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Add wine and cook until syrupy, 3 to 4 minutes. Add pasta and 1/2 cup reserve cooking water. Bring to a simmer. Remove from heat and stir in remaining 2 tablespoons butter (adding additional cooking water if needed to create a sauce). Gently fold in dill and salmon.

Stuffed Peppers

Ingredients:

- 1/2 c. uncooked rice
- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp. tomato paste
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can diced tomatoes
- 1 1/2 tsp. dried oregano
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 bell peppers, tops and cores removed
- 1 c. shredded Monterey jack
- Freshly chopped parsley, for garnish



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. In a small saucepan, prepare rice according to package instructions. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Cook onion until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in tomato paste and garlic and cook until fragrant, about 1 minute more. Add ground beef and cook, breaking up meat with a wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 6 minutes. Drain fat.
2. Return beef mixture to skillet, then stir in cooked rice and diced tomatoes. Season with oregano, salt, and pepper. Let simmer until liquid has reduced slightly, about 5 minutes.
3. Place peppers cut side-up in a 9"-x-13" baking dish and drizzle with oil. Spoon beef mixture into each pepper and top with Monterey jack, then cover baking dish with foil.
4. Bake until peppers are tender, about 35 minutes. Uncover and bake until cheese is bubbly, 10 minutes more.
5. Garnish with parsley before serving



Mental Health Tips of the Month

Mindfulness Exercise for Gratitude – By Sim

Taking the time to express gratitude can improve our mental health and overall wellbeing. Below is an exercise that can help you ground yourself during challenging times. Pause on each finger for at least 20 seconds and reflect on the five topics below. You can even create a visual representation by tracing your hand and drawing what you're grateful for on each finger.

1. Hold your pinky finger. Think about someone in your everyday life who you appreciate. Imagine that person and why you are grateful for them.
2. Hold your ring finger, bring something “big” to mind that you appreciate like your family, your strong body, or a warm home. Think about why you appreciate this big thing.
3. Hold your middle finger, bring to mind something “small” that you appreciate like a sunny day, your favorite outfit, or a lick from your dog. Think about why you are thankful for this small thing.
4. Holding your index finger. Think of an activity you enjoy. Think of why you enjoy this activity.
5. Hold your thumb. Think of a possession you are grateful. Think of what makes this possession special to you.

Dealing with Difficult Emotions Through Mindfulness – By Manisha

Emotions can be extremely unpredictable, especially when life gets challenging for us. We all have different triggers that lead to emotional outburst that may not always be the best for ourselves and others near us. It is important to recognize our triggers and to find the best way to address these difficult emotions, so we can thrive. Through mindfulness we can learn to soothe ourselves when our emotions start bubbling!



Step 1: Accept your emotions.

Feel your emotions and do not shame yourself for feeling this way. We are only human and it is natural to have reactions to our environment. Instead of shutting your emotions out, figure out *where* you're holding them in your body. For some this could be through a clenched fist, a stomach-ache, or the tightening of your chest. If we shut out our emotions, they get bottled up and lead to outbursts that can hurt yourself and others.

Step 2: Identify and label your emotions.

Figure out what the emotion is apart from you as a being – “this is anger/anxiety” rather than, “I am angry/anxious”. You are more than how you feel in that moment.

Step 3: Accept your emotions (again).

Know that the emotions you're feeling are real and present at the moment – remind yourself that you are doing your best with your feelings.

Step 4: Remember that you won't feel this way forever.

Sometimes our emotions can feel so big that we forget these feelings are temporary. When you feel the bubbles brewing inside, ask yourself– what's this feeling? How can I help myself? Is there support nearby to help me with this? These questions can help calm those brewing bubbles while helping us seek support from those we are close with.

Step 5: Figure out why you're feeling this way.

So now that the bubbles are slowly simmering away, it's time to find out what led to the difficult emotions – what do I think caused this; is it my reaction to the world, or is it a reaction to something that was said or done; is there a pattern? Getting these answers will help you understand your emotions. If a pattern is recognized, you can build and follow a plan to manage your emotions before they escalate to physical/verbal outbursts.

Step 6: Try out different methods to deal with your difficult emotions.

This could be through writing down your feelings in a diary to express yourself. Others find it helpful to take a walk in nature to get some fresh air in – we all know that any type of physical activity can help your brain produce serotonin! If you can't seem to shake these emotions, reach out to someone you feel safe with to help you figure out what supports would benefit you the most. *Please note that if you're ever feeling this way at Our Place, reach out to a staff so we can support you before things go too far. You deserve to feel better! ☺*

Acts of Kindness

Over the last few weeks, we have observed several acts of kindness from many of our members. None of this goes unnoticed, and we appreciate all that you do!

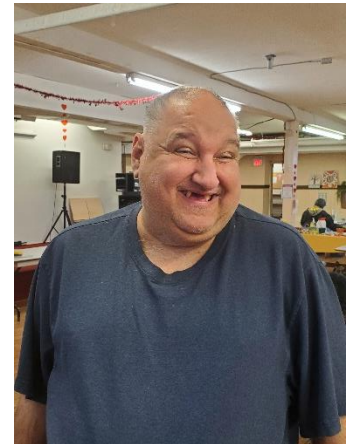
- Thank you to Dave B. for clearing our snowy driveway and walkway during the storm without being asked. We appreciate your hard work!
- Thank you to Don H. for being so generous and passing along your special bingo prize to another member without thinking twice. Your giving nature is appreciated.



Many Thanks to Our Valentine's Day Volunteers!

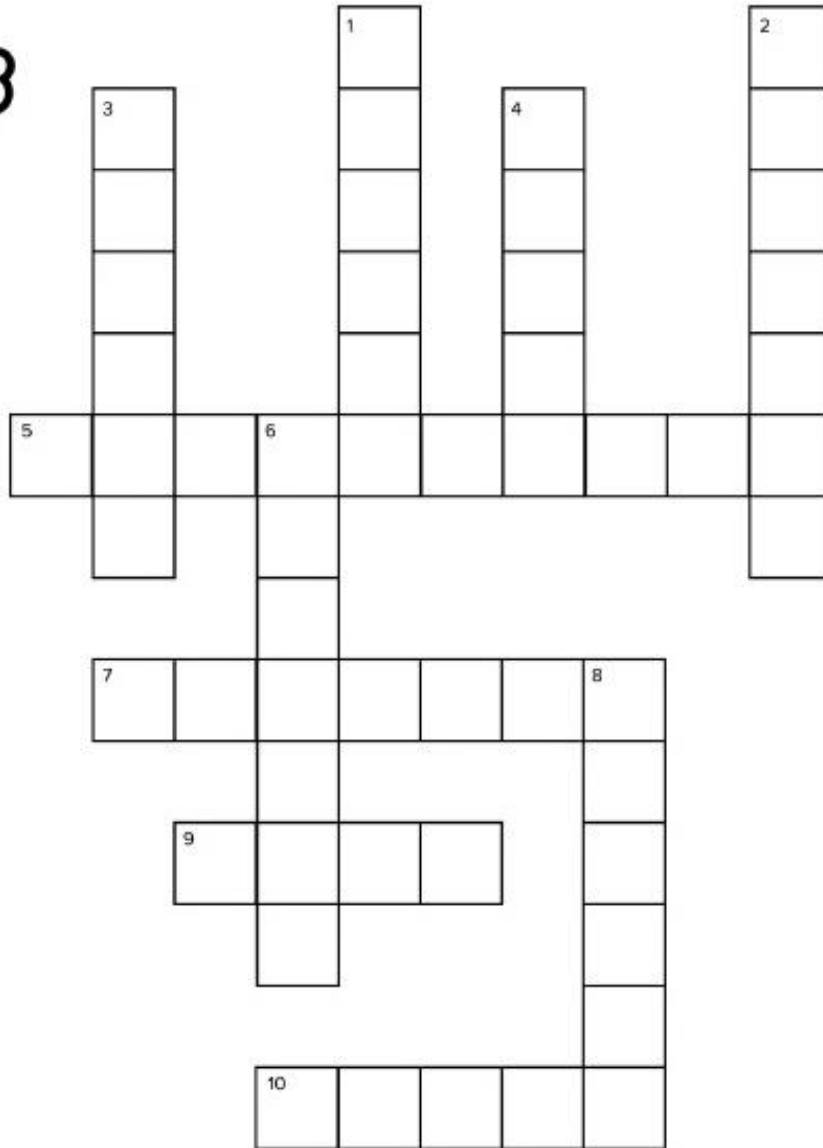
Hello everyone!

We wanted to mention the wonderful event that was hosted by our talented volunteers last month. They came on Valentine's Day to bring some light into all our lives through self-care. We were able to enjoy facials, manicures, hair styling, trims and makeovers thanks to their generosity. Below are some photos of our awesome crew before, during and after getting their makeovers done! All of us at Our Place hope to see your smiles and hear your laughter, since that is what makes Our Place special. We hope to see you all at the next event! 😊



ST. PATRICK'S DAY CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Read the clues below and fill in the crossword puzzle with the correct answers.



DOWN:

1. The Irish flag is green, white and _____.
2. St. Patrick's Day originated in this country.
3. A four leaf _____ will bring you good luck.
4. The month St. Patrick's Day is celebrated in.
6. This appears in the sky after it rains.
8. The capital of Ireland.

ACROSS:

5. This bearded man wears a green suit and hat.
7. If you do not wear green on St. Patrick's Day you might get _____.
9. At the end of a rainbow, you might find a pot _____.
10. The color usually worn on St. Patrick's Day.



St. Patrick's Day Word Search



CLOVER	IRELAND	PARADE
COINS	IRISH	PATRICK
CORNERED BEEF	LEPRECHAUN	POT OF GOLD
TRADITION	LUCK	RAINBOW
GREEN	MARCH	SHAMROCK



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY

