

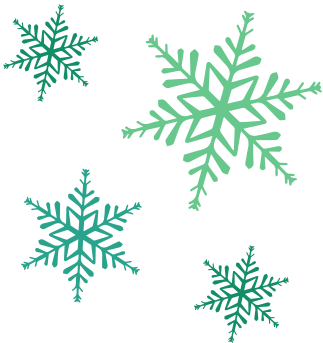
December

Our Place Newsletter

























This Issue:

- Calendar
- December Birthdays
- Free Events
- Community Resources
- Community Member Interview! *NEW*
- Mental Health Tips
- Important Days of the Month
- Recipes



Our Place Community of Hope
1183 Davenport Road, M6H 2G7
ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org / (416) 598-2919

DECEMBER 2024

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<p>2 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Karaoke: 12:30-2:15 Anger Management w/ Li (W): 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>3 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Bingo: 1:00 Crazy Fights! 3:00</p>  	<p>4 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Movie: 12:15 Community Meeting: 3:00 Christmas Tree Decorating: 4:00</p>	<p>5 <i>Drop-in closes at 3:00pm</i> Meals: 1:00-2:30 Peer Support w/ Sim: 2:00-3:00 OUTING – Queen Street Winter Windows: Leave OP at 3:30pm as a group!</p> 	<p>6 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Writing Group w/Peter: 1:30 Art Therapy w/ Sandy & Yasmine: 3:00</p> 
<p>9 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Karaoke: 12:30-2:15 Anger Management w/ Li (M): 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>10 <i>Drop-in closes at 2:00pm</i> Meals: 1:00-2:00 Bingo: 12:00-1:00 OUTING – High Park Holiday Tree Trail: Leave OP at 2:30 as a group!</p>  	<p>11 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Movie: 12:15 Surprise Program: 3:30</p> 	<p>12 Christmas Dinner! Play: 1:00pm Christmas Music & Singalong: 2:30-3:30 Dinner: 4:00-5:00</p> 	<p>13 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Writing Group w/Peter: 1:30 Art Therapy w/ Sandy & Yasmine: 3:00</p> 
<p>16 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Karaoke: 12:30-2:15 Anger Management w/ Li (W): 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>17 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Bingo: 1:00 Live Music w/ Kevin & Chas: 2:30</p>  	<p>18 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Wellness Workshop (men and women haircuts, nails): 12:00-4:30</p> 	<p>19 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Peer Support w/ Sim: 3:00-4:00 Gingerbread House Decorating: 1:00</p> 	<p>20 Birthday Celebration! Meals: 2:30-4:30 Writing Group w/Peter: 1:30 Karaoke: 3:00</p> 
<p>23 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Karaoke: 12:30-2:15 Anger Management w/ Li (M): 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>24 Christmas Eve Brunch Meals: 1:00-2:30 Bingo: 12:00 <i>Drop-in will close at 3:30pm!</i></p>	<p>25 Merry Christmas! CLOSED</p> 	<p>26 Happy Boxing Day! CLOSED</p>	<p>27 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Writing Group w/Peter: 1:30 Karaoke: 3:00</p> 
<p>30 Meals: 2:30-4:30 Karaoke: 12:30-2:15 Anger Management w/ Li (W): 3:30-4:30</p> 	<p>31 New Years Eve Brunch! Meals: 1:00-2:30 Bingo: 12:00 <i>Drop-in will close at 3:30pm!</i></p> 	<p>Location: 1183 Davenport Road, Toronto, ON Get here by taking the 63 N bus from Ossington station and get off at the Oakwood and Davenport bus stop!</p>	<p>Monday-Friday Drop-in: 12:00-5:00pm Meals: 2:30-4:30pm <i>If interested in takeout meals, please bring a CLEAN plastic container.</i></p>	<p>If you have any questions, give us a call at 416-598-2919 or email us at: ourplaceinfo@stnicholasshomes.org</p>

All images are from freepix.com

Happy Birthday!

Frank S - December 7th
Diane A - December 17th
Khal B - December 19th



Celebrate with us
on **Friday**
December 20th
with a sweet treat
during meal time!

Free Events Around the City!

Christmas Community Celebration: Enjoy some Christmas festivities and get in that amazing Holiday mood!

Date and time - Saturday, December 7 · 6pm - 9pm

Location - 3159 Lawrence Ave E

Christmas Popup Market: Take part in the market and support local creatives. Enjoy some treats and maybe pick up a gift for yourself!

Date and time - Saturday, December 7 · 10am - 4pm

Location - 20 Canadian Rd

OSAAAC Holiday Market: Take part in the market and support local creatives. Enjoy some treats and maybe pick up a gift for yourself!

Date and time - Saturday, December 14 · 10:30am- 3pm

Location - 1870 Birchmount Rd

Christmas in Islington Concert

Date and time - Sunday, December 15 · 7pm - 9pm

Location - Islington United Church



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



Marijuana Anonymous at Our Lady of Sorrows Church

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

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

Daily Bread Food Bank

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

Oasis Dufferin Community Centre

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



Feed it Forward Grocery Store

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

Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre

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

Community Resources

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

Reconnect Community Health Services

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

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

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

Unity Health Toronto

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

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

Victim Services Toronto

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

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

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Community Health Centre

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

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



Get to Know... James!

By Li



The full interview will be posted on our bulletin board!

Li: Tell us your name and about yourself and your interests.

J: My name is James McMahon. I was adopted when I was two and a half years old, but my birth name is actually James Andrew Moore. So, I was brought up by the McMahon family. I'm 52 years old, the middle child of five. I have two other brothers, me, then my two sisters. I was raised in Peterborough, Ontario near a graveyard and the funny thing is I was born on a rock in the wintertime.

Li: What do you mean you were born on a rock?

J: My mom gave birth on a rock near the graveyard, she slipped and gave birth right away, her water broke.

Li: What is your favourite hobby?

J: My hobbies are I like to knit, I also do plastic canvas and I love doing different art. And I love watching different movies because it gives you different cultures, how to learn their language and how they were brought up in their world. And every Thursday, Friday and Saturday, Suzanne and I, we go out to karaoke, so we enjoy doing that with each other because she's a good friend and friends help each other out. And I like coming here because I enjoy meeting new people and learning their cultures as well. I'm also writing a novel.

Li: How long have you been a member here at Our Place? What is your favourite thing to do here?

J: To be specific, between the other two places of Our Place I've been involved with one down on Jarvis and the one down Elm Street, it's been a total of 24 years, since 2000. When I was at the old Our Place down on Elm Street I helped DJ down there a few times. I love doing bingo, playing games, enjoy different activities here, especially the new game that Sim calls Wizard, that's one of my favourite games, reminds me of playing Uno, Crazy 8's, Euchre and all different kinds of tournaments that goes on here. And playing pool, you know, you get to play different people, some are better than you and some are worse than you but at least you try and have fun, that's all that matters.

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

J: By watching the different kinds of movies, especially with Dr. Doolittle, it's probably talking to animals because you know, God created the animals and it would be nice to talk to them and get to know them as well, so probably talking to animals would be my favourite superpower to have.

Li: What about Our Place keeps you coming back? How do you think we can get people more engaged here with the programs and activities we run? What helps you stay engaged?

J: Probably socializing with a lot of different people, cultures, good people here, good staff, because we always get new staff in, and new volunteers and also when they join us in our group meetings, like our men's group and our women's group, it's nice to have them with us. Probably having our newsletter to go out to different areas, and have posters that we can hand out to different drop ins, that would help us to get more people to understand what our program is all about.

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

J: One piece of wisdom is to keep everything peaceful and calm, we don't want no fighting here. Have a good sense of humor. God has created all of us equal, he, she, them, all the different pronouns. We have to learn all the pronouns as best as we can.

Coping with Loneliness During the Holiday Season

By Sim

Coping with loneliness during the holiday season can be challenging as the holidays can bring up feelings of isolation due to the loss of loved ones, distance, or mental health challenges. To manage these emotions, it is important to acknowledge our feelings and take the proper steps to care for our mental health. Engaging in festive activities, creative projects, or volunteer work can help you shift your focus to something positive. Reminding yourself that it is normal to feel lonely at times, and taking time for self-care can also help regulate mood. Creating new traditions that feel meaningful to you can create a sense of connection during a time that may feel lonely.

It can also be helpful to ensure that we're not creating any unrealistic expectations during the holiday season. Even though many people associate the holidays with large gatherings and celebrations, it is important to recognize that it is okay to experience the season differently. Setting small, manageable goals like creating a festive atmosphere in your own space or connecting with a community group can provide a sense of accomplishment and connection. If you feel like connecting with others, join us at Our Place or visit one of the free market events going on in the GTA!

Coping with Stress During the Holidays



By Li

The holidays can be a difficult time of year for many. Isolation, high expectations, or challenging relationships with loved ones are all things you might be struggling with this time of year. Below are some ways you can cope with stress during this holiday season.

- **Take your time.** You may have many errands ahead of you to get ready for the holidays. Don't put added pressure on yourself to get everything done at once, and make sure to slow down. Don't over work yourself, your wellbeing comes first.
- **Pick your battles.** The holidays can put added stress on family relationships and friendships, which can be extra challenging during a time you are expected to spend quality time with loved ones. Set aside your differences, and try to let the small things go. Do your best to focus on enjoying your time with them.
- **Practice gratitude.** Whether its for any good fortune that's come your way this year, or being lucky to wake up to see another day, intentionally reflect on all the good things in life. This time of the year is a great time to start!
- **Accept your feelings.** Feeling stressed during the holidays is normal. It's okay to feel sad or stressed, and it's a common challenge for many. If you need to cry, don't shut those feelings down, and allow yourself space to feel. Reach out to someone if you need support, whether it be a close friend or a staff here at Our Place! You are not alone, and there is always someone out there to support you.

More info: <https://mcpres.mayoclinic.org/mental-health/tips-for-taking-control-of-the-holidays-so-they-dont-take-control-of-you/>



National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women



By Michael

Every December 6, Canadians observe the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. This day honors the memory of the 14 female engineering students who were victims of femicide at École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1989 and acknowledges the ongoing violence faced by women and femme-presenting individuals. While wearing a white ribbon as a call to end violence towards women is the most common gesture done around this day, others may attend a vigil or have a moment of silence.

Despite the progress Canada and many Western countries have made with women's rights, the statistics remain troubling. From 2011 to 2021, an average of 102 women and girls in Canada were victims of gender-related homicide each year, with 93% of these crimes committed by a male partner or family member. The risks are even higher for marginalized groups—61% of Indigenous women report experiencing intimate partner violence, and 59% of gender-diverse individuals face violence. While these numbers can feel overwhelming, especially in a world that seems to be celebrating openly misogynistic men. It's days like this that can be a reminder of the importance of hope and resilience. By raising awareness, advocating for systemic reform, and sharing resources to support those facing these situations, we can take meaningful steps toward reducing gender-based violence and building a safer, more equitable society.

More info: <https://www.canada.ca/en/women-gender-equality/gender-based-violence/facts-stats.html>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

By Manisha

The International Day of Persons with Disabilities was established in 1992 by the United Nations and continues to be celebrated while focusing on a theme for the year. We celebrate this day to acknowledge and uplift the voices and wellbeing of those impacted by various disabilities. For 2024, the theme is to amplify leadership for people with disabilities to have an inclusive future.

A common misconception is that disabilities must be visible, to be real. This is not the case as disabilities impact individuals regardless of whether they are seen – like mental illnesses, learning challenges, and chronic pain. These conditions aren't visible to the human eye, but they impact one's livelihood in many ways, including the ability to work and engage with others. In 2022, it was reported that **eight million** Canadians aged 15+ have one or more disabilities that impact their daily life. It is unfair for us to overlook invisible disabilities as we never know what others are encountering in their daily life. Everyone deserves a chance to connect and take part in society, which is why we must work together to tackle barriers that are harmful to the community. This can be done in workplaces by having important discussions with our leadership teams, by connecting with government officials to advocate for better policies, and by supporting our peers.

More info: <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/5120-international-day-persons-disabilities-removing-visible-and-invisible-barriers>



Holiday Celebrations in December

By Zain

Hanukkah:

This Jewish celebration lasts eight days and translates from Hebrew to dedication. It is a time of celebration of religious freedom, the miracle of oil, and the perseverance of the Jewish community. Many folks refer to it as the holiday of light, as it symbolizes hope and the triumph of good over adversity.

Hanukkah is celebrated through various traditions, but always by lighting the menorah nightly. The menorah is the menorah is a seven branched candle, each of which represents a different night of the holiday. Families gather and play dreidel, which is a game played by spinning tops with four sides that each have a different Hebrew letter. Families also connect over food, which we know is a delicious and fun way to engage with others and celebrate! A popular Jewish dish served during this time is known as a Latke, which is a potato pancake! The deep frying of them in oil also symbolizes the miracle oil. They taste even better with sour cream, or even apple sauce if you want to try something sweeter!



Christmas:

As we know, Christmas is the global celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, which is celebrated by many people, even those who are not Christian. This holiday is typically spent by connecting with our community and loved ones through gift giving, decorating, enjoying a traditional meal, and by going to Church to enjoy special mass and services. Did you know that the tradition of gift giving is believed to have originated from the gifts given to Jesus Christ by the wise men when he was born?

We encourage you to take part in the Christmas festivities we have planned at Our Place, so you too can connect with the community and feel the holiday spirit. Come by on December 4th to engage in some Christmas decorating, which includes our beautiful trees with ornaments, ribbons and lights! Remember to join us on December 12th to enjoy the a beautiful Christmas play, a chance to sing fun Christmas songs, and a delicious Turkey dinner with a present to end the night off. This time of year can be challenging, especially for those that are alone or experiencing hardship. But, we encourage you to join the community at Our Place as we are here to be a supportive, safe space for all.



Holiday Recipes from the Our Place Kitchen



No-Bake Christmas Tree Cookies (recipe from Recipe Rebel)

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 cups of powdered icing sugar
- 2 tablespoons milk
- 3 cups shredded coconut
- 1 teaspoon mint extract
- green food coloring
- 3/4 cups of white chocolate chips
- 2 tablespoons cream
- 1 teaspoon butter
- Mini M&Ms

Directions:

1. Melt the butter in a bowl. Microwaving is fine.
2. Stir in the powdered sugar and milk. Add the coconut, vanilla, mint, and some food coloring!
3. Grab a bit of the mixture and start forming small triangle, tree shapes.
4. Place the cookies on a baking sheet and place in the freezer for an hour.
5. In a small pot, melt the chocolate and add a tablespoon of butter. Make sure you use a low heat.
6. Dip the cookies in the melted topping to make the trees have snow! Add M&Ms as ornaments.

Easy Fudge (recipe from BBC Food)

Ingredients:

- 397 gram can of condensed milk
- 450 gram light brown sugar
- 120 gram butter, cubed
- 125 milliliters of milk
- A pinch of salt

Directions:

1. Line a tin with baking paper and put a glass of cold water in the freezer (or in the fridge with ice).
2. Place all the ingredients, except for the salt, into a saucepan over low heat. This will melt and mix everything together. Make sure you stir.
3. Once it boils, let it simmer over medium heat for 10 minutes. Stir a lot!
4. When the mixture is darker, dip a teaspoon into the mixture and drizzle it into the glass of water from before. If the mixture become soft and can be shaped, it is done! If it sticks, then you have to cook and cool it for a bit longer.
5. Then mix the fudge up and add salt, so each piece has a bit! Use a whisk and mix until it is no longer shiny.
6. Pour into a tin for the fudge to set and refrigerate for 3 hours. Then enjoy!

