



# FEBRUARY

## NEWSLETTER

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HAPPY  
*Valentine's Day*

OUR PLACE COMMUNITY OF HOPE

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## Our Place Birthdays



MaryAnne M. – February 5th

Jose C. – February 5th

Frank G. – February 8<sup>th</sup>

Oliver A. – February 13th

Marcelo O. – February 16th

James M. – February 17<sup>th</sup>

Eric C. – February 23rd

Jessica S. – February 26th

Jennifer S. – February 26<sup>th</sup>

David M. – February 26th

## Famous Birthdays

Christiano Ronaldo – February 5<sup>th</sup>

Jennifer Anniston – February 11th

Neymar – February 5th

Shakira – February 2<sup>nd</sup>



## Special Events in February

**Valentine's Week Events:** We will be showing a Romantic Comedy on **February 14<sup>th</sup>** at 3:15pm, along with a Valentine's Day raffle at 3:00pm! Guess how many chocolates are in the jar and you can win a prize. On Thursday **February 15<sup>th</sup>**, we will be hosting a Valentine's Day Karaoke event, so we can all sing some beautiful songs. 😊

**Valentine's Day Dance with DJ Bobby:** Friday January 26th at 3:30pm. Bring your friends and enjoy some great tunes. Show off your fantastic dance moves.

**Black History Month:** We will be showing a documentary highlighting Black stories to offer a learning experience on slavery, Black power, racism, civil rights and other Black experiences on **February 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00pm**. On the **28<sup>th</sup>**, we will also be visiting the Canadian Opera Company to listen to performances of Black Canadian creatives with the Colour of Joy concert. Meet us there or leave with us at 10:50am!

**Bonus Bingo:** We will be playing an extra couple of rounds of Bingo on Thursday February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00pm. During this week, our surprise program on Wednesday the 21<sup>st</sup> will not include bingo as an option since we will already be hosting it twice in the week. Hope to see you all then! We may even play some new patterns.

## New February Programs

### Anger Management



Mondays at 3:00pm  
In person

### Peer Support Group



Thursdays at 3:00pm  
In Person & Online

### Name that Tune!



Fridays at 12:30pm  
In person

*If interested in joining, connect with a staff.*

*If you have questions, call us at (416) 598-2919 or email at [ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org](mailto:ourplaceinfo@stmichaelshomes.org)*

## 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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**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](mailto: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.

**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.

<b>Metro Hall</b> 55 John St, Toronto Capacity: 45	<b>Mitchell Field Community Centre</b> 89 Church Ave, Toronto Capacity: 50	<b>Scarborough Civic Centre</b> 150 Borough Dr, Scarborough Capacity: 17
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### Pink Shirt Day



Pink Shirt Day is a day annually celebrated in the month of February in Canada and New Zealand. This day aims to combat bullying by spreading awareness of its impact against homophobia, discrimination, transphobia, and cyberbullying. This day celebrates diversity and creates environments where all people can feel

safe, valued and respected. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, try to sport a pink shirt to show your support for the movement! Let's stand united against injustices, raising our voices for those who need them most.

### World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day was created in the year 2000 as a day to recognize and unite against one of the, if not THE largest challenge in our history. This day focuses on raising awareness, pressing for prevention, detection and treatment measures, and advocating and empowering support for those affected by the disease. Each year various events and activities are held around the world such as educational campaigns, workshops, and fundraising initiatives. Further information regarding activities held on World Cancer Day can be found on the World Cancer Day website or by accessing this link, <https://www.worldcancerday.org/map-activities>.



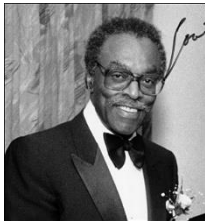
This year World Cancer Day's theme is called, "Close the Care Gap". Which signifies the commitment to prioritize cancer and to demand and challenge those in power. On this day, we recognize and call upon our leaders to invest in resources and eliminate health

injustice by countering and addressing the root causes and by guaranteeing health services for those in need. You can also get involved by joining the World Cancer Day campaign - Take Action. Here you can spread the knowledge of this day through a social media post, taking part in the Join the Call to Action by adding your voice to the effort and requesting your representative to close the care gap, by donating to the World Cancer Day campaign through their website, and by joining the World Cancer Day 5k challenge. Further information can be found on the World Cancer Day website or by accessing this link, <https://www.worldcancerday.org/take-action>.

## Black History Month

Black History was first celebrated in the United States as a week in February (1926) to honor important African Americans and their accomplishments. However, in Canada, Black History was celebrated and officially recognized as the month of February starting in 1995. The theme for this February is “Black Excellence: A Heritage to Celebrate; a Future to Build.” More videos and resources will be provided by the Canadian government this month, so if you’re interested in learning more, please visit the February is Black History Month page on Canada.ca.

We will take this moment to recognize some of the amazing contributions made by Black Canadians in the past. →



**Lincoln Alexander:** Was the first person from a visible minority to take part of the Canadian parliament in 1968! He also pursued his law degree from our local Osgoode Hall and joined the first interracial law firm in Canada in the year 1953.

**Viola Desmond:** Viola was born on the East coast – can you guess which province? Many know Viola from the popular racialized case, where she was removed from and arrested for sitting in a “Whites only” section in a theatre. Many do not know of the amazing work Viola did for Black Women... she opened the Desmond School of Beauty Culture where she trained women and provided them with the tools to become independent business owners.



**Willie O'Ree:** Willie was known to be the first Black hockey player to join the NHL in 1958. Did you know that despite having a severe injury that impaired his vision (95% vision loss in one eye), Willie made it to the

NHL? He kept his vision impairment a secret, since the NHL rules stated players cannot play if they're blind in one eye. His dedication, hard work and sportsmanship is what folks remember him by now.

**Carrie Best:** Was known for publishing Nova Scotia's first black-owned newspaper in 1946! Carrie was versed in poetry, writing, journalism and was an activist. She also shared a passion for radio and hosted The Quiet Corner in 1952. Carrie used her talents to help end discrimination and segregation in Canada by amplifying the stories of Black Canadians discussing inequality and discrimination.



## Fresh from the Our Place Kitchen



### Red Beans and Rice with Sausage

#### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 celery ribs, sliced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 package (14 ounces) smoked turkey sausage, sliced
- 1 carton (32 ounces) reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 can (16 ounces) kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1-1/4 cups uncooked converted rice
- 1/3 cup tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Cajun seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Hot pepper sauce, optional



### Directions

- In a Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add celery, onion and green pepper; cook and stir until crisp-tender, 3-4 minutes. Add sausage; cook until browned, 2-3 minutes.
- Stir in broth, beans, rice, tomato paste, bay leaf, Cajun seasoning and cayenne pepper. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Simmer, uncovered, until rice is tender, and liquid is absorbed, 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Discard bay leaf. If desired, serve with pepper sauce.

## Love Potion

### Ingredients

- Raspberries
- Sugar
- Lemon juice
- Raspberry sherbet
- Sparkling pink lemonade



### Directions

1. Combine fresh (or frozen defrosted) raspberries in a bowl with a bit of lemon juice and sugar.
2. Mash them with a fork until the berries have broken down and you have a sweet-tart raspberry puree.
3. Optional: If you don't like the thought of raspberry seeds in your drink, you can strain the puree through a wire mesh strainer
4. Fill the bottom of your glasses with a generous spoonful of fresh raspberry puree.
5. Next add a scoop of raspberry sherbet. I love the way sherbet melts into this drink and makes it so fun and frothy.
6. Top up the glasses with sparkling berry lemonade or sparkling rose lemonade.
7. Add a garnish of fresh raspberries and enjoy!
8. Optional: add a sprinkling of edible gold hearts on top right before serving if you want to really take things over the top!



## Mental Health Tip of the Month



During the month of February, we typically vocalize our love and support for those around us, whether it be our friends, our peers, or our partners. We shower our loved ones with handmade gifts, cards, boxes or chocolates, or with surprise baked goods or a trip to the movies. But, what about the love and appreciation we deserve to show ourselves? We often overlook our efforts and underappreciate all that we do on a day-to-day basis. It becomes our normal and we forget all that we do!

In this piece, we will highlight different ways you can practice self-care during the loving month of February to ensure you show yourself the love and appreciation you deserve.

- **Know your worth and recognize your personal value** - try to incorporate one positive affirmation per day to acknowledge all that you do and have overcome. Some folks like to say one thing they admire about themselves, or one thing they did well during the day. For example, you could say "I admire my resilience" or "I admire how hard working I am". If you're a visual person, you could write something you like about yourself and put it on a mirror as a daily reminder. *If you'd like, add to our February self-love board! :)*
- **Be as compassionate to yourself as you are to others** - If you're feeling overwhelmed by the worries of the world or your own personal challenges, give yourself the space to feel your emotions and relax. You owe it to yourself to feel better and take life at your own pace. You can treat yourself to a warm cup of coffee while you watch your favorite movie to decompress, or even hangout with your closest friends to give yourself a reset. Something that always puts me in a better mood is putting on a playlist of my favourite songs and just dancing the day away. It helps relieve the tension I hold and allows me to express myself.
- **Try to have a healthy treat to nourish your body** - With the rising costs of food, it can be very expensive and difficult to eat healthy foods that support our mental and physical health. However, if you can - try to take daily vitamins and enjoy fresh fruit and vegetables whenever possible. Try to come to the drop-in in the middle of the week, which is when we hand out extra treats with our meals, so you can have some extra vitamin c during the winter weather. If you require details for food banks or affordable grocery stores, visit our community resources and supports section, or ask a staff for support!

Take some time out this month to do 1-2 activities during the week to support and appreciate yourself. Did you know, people created a challenge to practice self-love? View the attached image and choose whichever activities you would like to do.

 MEDITATE 15 MINUTES A DAY	LIST THREE GOOD THINGS ABOUT YOUR LIFE	 BREATHE IN FRESH AIR	TAKE A NAP	 BAKE COOKIES
 START A JOURNAL	CLEAN OUT YOUR CLOSET & DONATE	 WATCH FIVE FAVORITE MOVIES	HAVE A PICNIC IN YOUR LIVING ROOM	 VOLUNTEER AT LEAST TWICE A MONTH
 DANCE & SING TO FAVORITE SONG	WRITE A POSITIVE REVIEW OF YOUR FAVORITE BUSINESS	 SEND FIVE POSTCARDS	HOST A GAME OF CHARADES	 LIGHT SOME CANDLES AND TAKE A BATH
MAKE A DOCTORS APPOINTMENT	 LOOK AT THE STARS	MAKE AN EFFORT TO BE POLITE TO SOMEONE YOU DONT LIKE	 ABE A SECRET CUPID FOR SOMEONE	LOOK AT THE POSITIVE IN PEOPLE

## Writing Group Submissions

2024 By Kimberly

2024 is here. It feels as though 2023 flew by. At my church we pick a word or a few words that we are believe that God is speaking to us for the year. I have 3 words like I did last year. My words this year are Anchored, Trust and Compassion. I have decided to look up these words and find their meaning, so I know what God is wanting me to do this year.

Anchored is to make something or someone stay in one position by fastening him, her, or it firmly. Spiritually anchored is something that helps keep us grounded, connected to what matters most, and able to cope with the challenges that life brings. An anchor is Christian symbol for hope and steadfastness. So, with these definitions, I believe that God is telling to stay anchored in his word, stay anchored in his church and staying anchored in his presence.

Trust is a word not only for me, but my pastor also chooses this word for the whole church. He picks one word that the church is believing in God. So, what is trust. Many of you already know what it is. Trust is to believe that someone is good and honest and will

not harm you, or that something is safe and reliable. In the Bible, trust means to have confidence in. To trust is to believe in the reliability, truth, ability or strength of something. So, when it comes to trusting God, that means believing in His reliability, His Word, His ability and His strength. The Bible says that God cannot lie. That He always keeps His promises. Proverbs 3:5–6, Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths. Also, in the Bible Jesus taught about trust. In Mark 5:36 Jesus says, "Don't be afraid, just trust me..." Trust for me in believing in God for everything. Believing Him for wisdom, for strength, for his love. The list here could go on for pages. Trust is a very important word.

Compassion. I picked this word because instead of judging and criticizing people I want to show them compassion. I don't have the right to judge others. I don't even have the right to judge myself. The only one that can judge is God. What is compassion? Compassion is a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a wish to help them. In the Bible compassion, is a fundamental and distinctive quality of God, is literally "a feeling with and for others. Scripture tells us God is eternal, holy, just, all-good, wise, powerful, and loving.

### **These Past years by James H aka Gazmyelena**

I am going to writing something about my last few months was very rough for me. During the last few six months I was thinking of moving out from Etobicoke, Ontario area to started a new life somewhere else but I didn't know where about yet.

So ask I speaking I think am going to tell you something that has been happening with me for the past few years that has been up and down with my crazy life. I sometime don't know what to do with my soul and mind but people always says life goes on and life is never to short.

I ask myself this question How do I know that life goes and life is never to short. I have ask someone up in heaven and this is the answer that I got up in the heavens from my angels and my gardians. All you have to do is believe in yourself and when that comes you would know that you have special someone in heart that really loves and care for you a lot.

During this year of 2023 was very strange for me the last 6 months. But when it was August the 2nd 2023 I was started to smell smoke from my living room and it was coming in from that stupid window. So I went down to check it out and so I ran back upstairs and

told my roommate we have to get out because there was big fire inside the bar. When I saw the fire I call red cross right away and they said what do you need help? We need a place we just came homeless because we just had a fire in the building. So it was around 10:00 pm and we were still waiting to find out where we going to stay at. One of the red cross lady and so we are going to put you in a hotel. While we were staying in three different hotel and the first hotel name is Crown Royal for two weeks and it was okay. So now it wasn't a good place to stay at because they wouldn't let us to use nothing of the equipment. The second was at Double tree in

Mississauga and it was the best place we ever went to because they treat us like double kings because there was a swimming pool and weight room and there was three lovely ladies that give us a cute white teddy bear and it was so adorable and how we got the bear was a house warming gift.

I was so happy or so unhappy because it was time for us to leave after three months vacation. The reason why I was very happy is that we finally got to moved into our new place on November the 20th 2023 but we had a some problem when we moved into the place that we didn't have no furniture so we had to sleep on the floor until December14 2023. When the date of December 14 2023 came I had an appointment for the furniture bank to get new stuff for my new place and that is very happy news to hear. So i asked them when can they delivery it to my place and they said How about December 15th 2023 and around 9am. I said cool that was great because that maybe me so happy. But when the stuff came I had to book the elevator on the same. I had do call Jj on his cellphone to book the elevator because my furniture was coming and that made me so happy.

# Valentine's Day Word Search

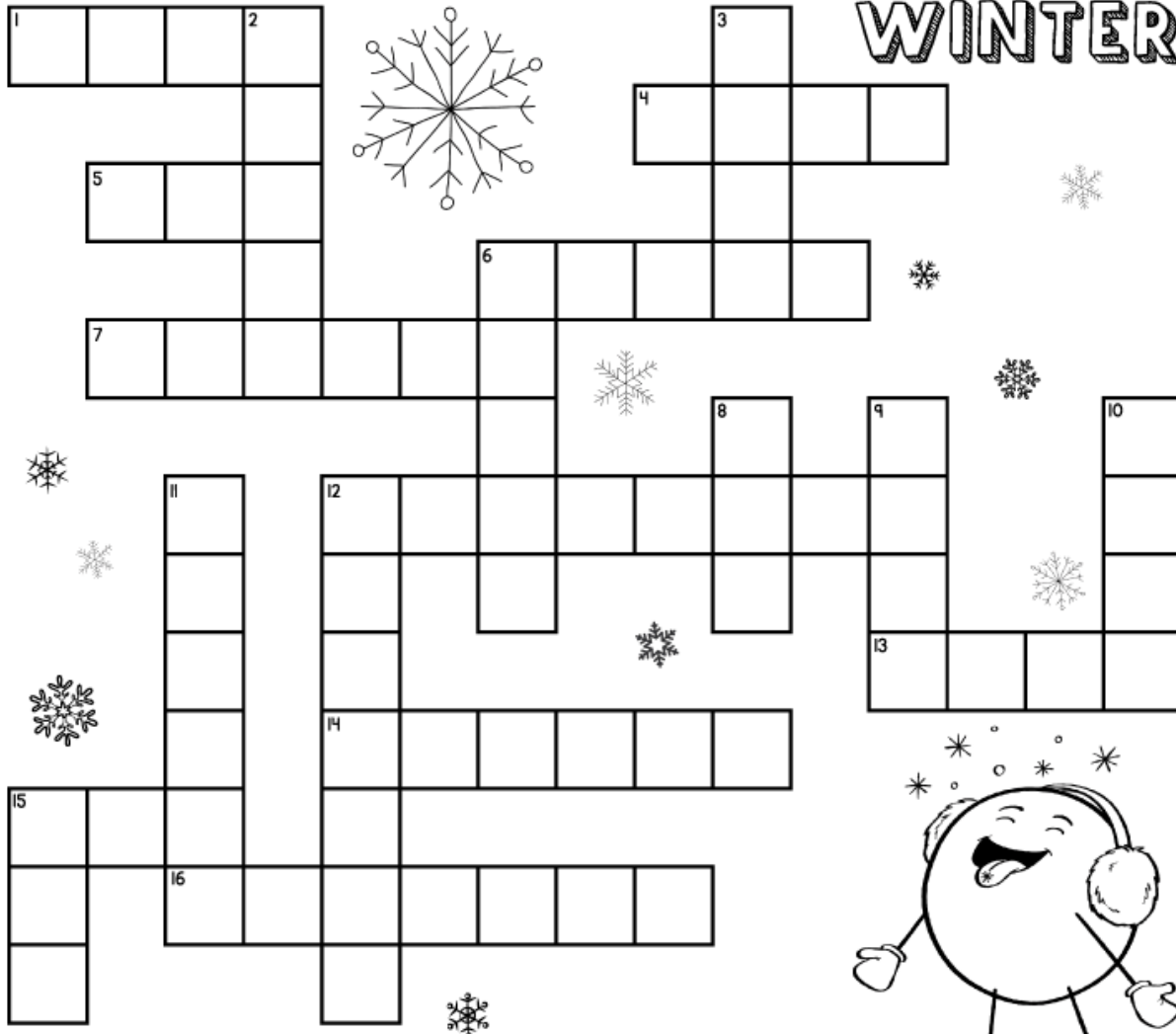
c g f l o w e r s i p  
j s w e e t h e a r t  
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e o s c h o s r o s h  
s w e e r t s f r i e  
v c h o c o l a t e k

valentine  
arrow  
cupid  
hearts  
love

red  
fourteenth  
hugs  
chocolate  
pink

roses  
friend  
flowers  
sweetheart  
kisses

# WINTER



## ACROSS

1. soft, white pieces of frozen water that falls to the ground
4. opposite of hot
5. to move on snow with long narrow strips attached to the feet
6. footwear in the winter
7. Dress warm so you don't \_\_\_\_.
12. children like to throw one of these
13. "The snow is 2 feet \_\_\_\_."
14. the coldest season of the year
15. frozen water
16. "We like to go \_\_\_\_ on the pond in the winter."

## DOWN

2. the color of fresh snow
3. a piece of clothing worn to keep warm
8. "The temperature fell \_\_\_\_ zero last night."
8. a covering to keep the head warm
9. an outdoor winter toy for kids to slide down snowy hills
10. Be careful not to \_\_\_\_ and fall on the ice.
11. special shoes for ice
12. a model of a person made with snow
15. In the winter, the roads can be \_\_\_\_.

♥ *Happy* ♥  
*Valentine's Day!*



*Homemade*  
GIFTS MADE EASY