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JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

SIKH FLAG RAISING: Sikh Heritage Month was marked in Orangeville on April 15 with a flag-raising ceremony recognizing the history, culture and contributions of Sikh Canadians. Municipal leaders joined members of the local Sikh community for the events, which included national and cultural anthems, remarks on the community's legacy in Canada, and official proclamations encouraging residents to learn about and celebrate Sikh heritage throughout April. In addition to Orangeville, flag raisings were held at municipal buildings throughout the region on April 15. Read a full story on Page A6.

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Orangeville Fire Department to host immersive female firefighting camp, exploring careers

Written By **JOSHUA DRAKES**
 LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Camp Molly is set to bring an intensive, hands-on firefighting experience to girls and non-binary individuals aged 15 to 18, offering a rare inside look at the modern fire service and the many careers within it.

Hosted by Orangeville Fire in partnership with the provincial Camp Molly program, the four-day camp is designed to build skills, confidence, and awareness of first responder roles, while helping young women envision themselves in positions traditionally dominated by men.

Firefighter Emily Marfleet, who is coordinating the camp, said it will serve as an introductory experience for attendees.

"We're hosting firefighting education for girls 15 to 18 years old, just to kind of give them an idea of what the fire service is like," she said. "They'll meet and see mentors that are already in the fire service, in a way that helps them see themselves in the service as well. They'll get a front row seat to see what being a first responder is like."

Continued on Page A3



SOFIA MINGRAM PHOTO

HANDS-ON TRAINING: Camp Molly is coming to Orangeville and will provide girls aged 15 to 18 with immersive firefighter training this summer. The program is being hosted by the Orangeville Fire Department and will help girls explore potential careers within fire services, in an inclusive and encouraging environment.

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Orangeville Fire Department to host Camp Molly for female youth

Continued from FRONT

The camp's mission is twofold. First, it aims to expose participants to the full breadth of the fire and emergency services world, far beyond the stereotypical Hollywood image of riding a fire truck to a blaze. Second, it is intended to develop leadership, teamwork, and personal resilience that will serve the girls whether or not they ultimately choose a career in emergency services.

"We're going to take them through all different kinds of firefighting skills, and they can kind of learn on that, do some team building, some networking, and really get a chance to grow themselves," Marfleet said. "They get to try out all the different avenues that are available to them."

Attendees can expect a diverse and packed schedule.

Planned activities include CPR and medical training with paramedics, an introduction to ambulance operations, and exposure to dispatch and communications in emergency response. Participants will explore fire prevention and investigation, including examining burn cells to see how fires start, spread, and are analyzed after the fact.

Marfleet said they will also tackle core firefighting skills, including auto extrication, search and rescue, nozzle handling, and technical demonstrations.

"We're setting up and demonstrating burn cells so that they can see what a fire looks like and what they're looking for during the investigation after," she said. "Physical demonstrations like that can really help teach them what to look for and just how



SOPIA MINGRAM PHOTO

YOUTH INVITED: Camp Molly is coming to Orangeville this summer and girls aged 15 to 18 are invited to register to learn more about careers within fire services. The camp helps its participants develop leadership skills, work as a team and build confidence.

quickly a fire can spread."

Public education is part of the curriculum as well, with campers collaborating on a presentation, reinforcing both communication skills and fire safety knowledge.

Camp Molly in Orangeville is being delivered free of charge, with capacity for 35 participants. Interest has been strong, drawing applicants from Orangeville, Dufferin County, and beyond, with local sponsors helping cover meals and operational costs to keep the program accessible.

The camp has strong local recognition from the Town of Orangeville itself, with Mayor Lisa Post expressing her excitement in seeing young females and non-binary youths getting the opportunity to explore career paths previously not as easily open to them.

"It's inspiring to see young females and non-binary youths given the opportunity to step into a space where they can build skills, confidence, and leadership," she said. "Camp Molly is not just about exploring a career in firefighting – it's about helping participants see their own strength and potential and I am so excited we are offering it in Orangeville this year."

For those who attend all four days and are still very interested in pursuing a career in emergency services, Orangeville Fire Chief John Snider said that pathways will

be available from Camp Molly onwards for those interested, thanks to local partners.

"We're expecting to be looking for volunteer firefighters again next year, as there's a few vacancies coming up," he said. "At the end of the day, you don't have to be on the hose or on the fire truck. There's a number of careers that don't involve the fire trucks that are great opportunities for everyone to explore."

"We have a private career college nearby called the Ontario Fire Academy, which is a great local opportunity to get the education and move into those other pathways. There is a lot to explore and a lot of variety there."

Day to day, Orangeville Fire responds primarily to medical calls, alarm activations, motor vehicle collisions, and structure fires, while also continuing to expand its capabilities, such as training for technical and rope rescues to meet local risks.

Public education and fire prevention are central pillars of its mission, making Camp Molly a natural extension of the department's commitment to community safety and to fostering a more diverse, future-ready fire service.

Camp Molly is set to serve as a unique opportunity for girls and non-binary individuals to explore their career interests in a safe, controlled environment, with the guidance of industry professionals and emergency service experts as they see real, hands-on demonstrations and education.

Colleen Adams, training officer with the Orangeville Fire Department, said that regardless of whether they continue down that path afterward, the camp aims to leave them more confident, more connected and more experienced.

"Even if they decide that they don't want to do this, it's another way to meet other people," she said. "It is a team based environment. They will be able to push themselves, ultimately, this camp is going to give a lot of girls the opportunity to grow."

To register or volunteer, go to www.campmolly.ca.

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SIU invokes mandate following Dufferin OPP arrest

The province's Special Investigations Unit (SIU) has invoked its mandate following an arrest in Orangeville.

On Thursday, April 9, shortly after 4 p.m., Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers responded to a disturbance at a residence on Glengarry Road in Orangeville.

As a result of the investigation, an individual was arrested, taken into custody,

and transported to the Dufferin Detachment.

While in custody, the individual required medical attention and was transported to the hospital.

The OPP is unable to provide any further information at the time. The SIU has invoked its mandate and will conduct an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

Starting in April, recycling in Dufferin County will be even more convenient with a new recycling cart.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters raises \$25,000 at annual bowling fundraiser

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Supporters of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin and District gathered at the Best Western on April 10 to celebrate the organization's largest annual fundraiser, Bowl For Kids' Sake.

The themed event, held each year to raise funds in support of mentoring programs for local youth, brought together teams made up of workplaces, friend groups and families — highlighting the breadth of community support behind the organization's mission.

Executive Director Nancy Stallmach thanked event attendees for their continued commitment and emphasized the importance of mentorship.

"When we think about growing up, we all have memories of someone who made a difference in our lives, someone who took the time to listen, who gave us guidance, or just simply was there for us," Stallmach said. "That is our aim at Big Brothers, Big Sisters. Our goal is to ensure that every child has the chance to experience that kind of mentorship."

The bowling portion of the event marked the final leg of the fundraiser, with participants taking part in virtual Wii bowling matches set up inside a rented hall at the hotel. The interactive format allowed large groups to compete and socialize throughout the afternoon. With live music, prizes, and a western cowboy theme, attendees wasted no time getting into the sports, going head-



to-head against each other on the virtual lanes.

Stallmach noted that the annual fundraiser continues to play a critical role in sustaining programs across the region, helping the organization reach youth in need of guidance while enriching volunteers' lives.

"Last year alone, through our programs, we matched over 200 children with caring mentors. Your participation today helps us continue that and to operate in Dufferin County and provide our critical services to local children and families. Mentoring a child doesn't just change their life, it can also transform your own," said Stallmach.

The fundraiser concluded with the annual Bowl For Kids' Sake event held throughout the day, ultimately raising approximately \$25,000 in donations from the community.

With another successful year completed, organizers say the continued generosity of local supporters ensures that mentorship opportunities remain accessible to children and families across Dufferin County.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTOS

WESTERN BOWLING: Supporters and sponsors of Big Brothers Big Sisters gathered at the Orangeville Best Western for a fun afternoon of virtual bowling as part of their yearly Bowl For Kids Sake fundraiser. Support this year was strong, with the organization raising \$25,000 in donations and contributions to be reinvested in connecting youth with mentors who offer guidance and support.

Dufferin Child and Family Services to hold open house for Autism Acceptance Month

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An upcoming community event aims to bring families together while promoting greater understanding and acceptance of autism.

Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS) is hosting an open house on April 29 from 12:30 to 6 p.m. at its Behaviour Solutions site at 224 Centennial Road, Orangeville, as part of Autism Awareness and Autism Acceptance Month.

The free event is open to the public, with Tyler Brown, manager at DCAFS, encouraging community members, families, and caregivers to attend.

"The goal of the open house is to raise autism awareness, share information and to celebrate our community," he said. "We are hoping that people take away a sense of connection and support, while also learning

about where they can go to get information about services and to have their questions answered."

The open house will feature a range of interactive and inclusive activities designed to engage attendees of all ages.

Planned programming includes an art and fine motor station, a movement-based dance area, and a sensory room intended to provide a calming space for participants. A dedicated Minecraft-themed activity is also scheduled.

In addition to recreational elements, the event will provide opportunities for learning and connection.

Staff from DCAFS will be available throughout the day to share information about available support and services, including those offered through its Behaviour Solutions program. Attendees will also have the chance to meet individuals and families who have accessed these services and hear

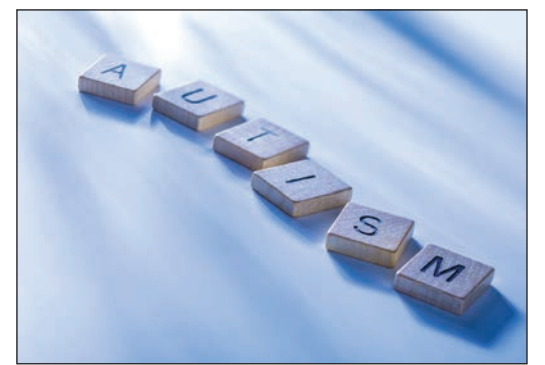
about their experiences.

The open house is part of a broader effort during April to recognize Autism Awareness and Acceptance Month, which highlights the importance of inclusion, understanding and community support for individuals on the autism spectrum.

As part of the event, community members are also invited to contribute artwork reflecting what autism means to them. Submissions may be displayed at DCAFS locations and shared online as part of an ongoing awareness campaign.

Organizers say the open house is intended to combine education, creativity and community engagement, offering a welcoming environment for both those familiar with autism services and those looking to learn more.

"Community engagement through events like these can help by providing a venue for families to develop connections, build rela-



tionships and learn about new opportunities and services that are available," Brown said. "It also helps to promote knowledge and understanding within our community, while creating an environment that is safe for people to be who they are, judgment-free."

For more information on the open house, go to dcafs.on.ca/event/open-house-autism-awareness-autism-acceptance-month.

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Parking issues remain with accessible spaces in Orangeville, says advocate

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

The quality of accessible parking makes the difference between people with mobility challenges participating in the community and being excluded.

Tamara Limebeer, a well-known Orangeville accessibility advocate, said during council's April 13 meeting that improperly designed accessible parking spaces may prohibit wheelchair motorists from safely exiting their vehicles.

As per the Accessibility for Ontarians Act, off-street accessible parking has to include an access aisle, which is the space between parking spaces. Type A parking spaces are at least 3.4 metres wide with Van Accessible signage. Type B parking spaces are a minimum of 2.4 metres wide.

Some of the issues Limebeer has found in Orangeville's public and private parking lots include spaces that are too narrow and lack the required 1.5-metre access aisle. Some access aisles are often blocked or used as parking. Others have incorrect or are missing required signage.

In some parking lots, accessible spaces or their aisles have been used as a place where snow was pushed during snow-clearing operations.

Her presentation included numerous photos of accessible parking spaces at Orangeville locations.

"When accessible parking works properly, it benefits everyone," Limebeer said.

She said the City of Brampton has a very successful accessible parking program. The "accessibility bylaw specialist" helps municipalities and businesses understand the standards and how to implement them, she said. That training has been offered free to other municipalities.

And that presents an opportunity for Or-



angeville, she said, and urged the town to invite the Brampton specialist to an accessibility committee meeting.

"Accessible parking may seem like a small thing," Limebeer said. "But for someone with mobility challenges, it may determine if they can participate in the community at all."

Mayor Lisa Post said town staff can't order parking space lines to be redrawn on private property. But there could be an opportunity to work more closely with business owners toward improvements.

This is an ongoing component the town can work on, she said.

"As long as they have met the requirements that they needed at the time that building was built, then we have a problem where we can't force them to change the size and width of their parking spaces," Post said.

David Smith, the town's CAO, said bylaw enforcement is aggressive in ticketing people who are illegally parked in accessible spaces. That aggressiveness works out to about 45 tickets monthly.

"They are very assertive at issuing those tickets," Smith said.

Dufferin County council considers extending warden term length from one to two years

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Dufferin County council tweaked some aspects of its procedures and practices.

A revamped procedural bylaw was accepted when council met on March 26. The revised bylaw modernizes council procedures, aligns the document with current practices, and enhances clarity in governance. Key amendments proposed include establishing a two-year term for the warden and creating a deputy warden role.

All county councillors are eligible to serve as the warden, who is elected by fellow councillors in a vote.

It's believed a two-year term would afford the warden greater opportunity to advance strategic priorities, intergovernmental partnerships, and longer-term initiatives.

Under this structure, the warden would be elected for a two-year term at the inaugural meeting following a regular municipal election, with a subsequent election for warden occurring mid-term.

A formally established deputy warden would serve in a defined leadership and supporting role and be given the authority to act in the place of the warden when the warden is absent or unable to act.

The deputy's term would be concurrent with the warden's.

A new, earlier start time was suggested for evening council meetings, along with modernized and clarified procedures for delegations and enhanced requirements for notices of motion that have significant financial implications.

Beginning meetings at 6 p.m., rather than the current 7 p.m., will provide greater predictability for council, staff, and the public. About 73 per cent of evening meetings in the current term have already started before 7 p.m., so it is reflective of current practice.

"Collectively, these updates ensure that the procedural bylaw more accurately reflects current practices and provides a clear and effective structure to guide council proceedings in the next term," accord-

ing to a report to council.

Councillor Todd Taylor, Orangeville's deputy mayor, lauded the suggested changes to procedure.

He further suggested that the practice of daytime council meetings be ended in favour of evening gatherings.

"We have no one here from the public (during day-time meetings)," Taylor said.

He has missed some daytime meetings because of work commitments during those hours, he said.

Coun. Gail Little, Amaranth's deputy mayor, didn't agree that the warden should be given a two-year term in the big chair.

"It's quite easy to have an election every year," she said.

Coun. James McLean, the deputy mayor in Melancthon, welcomed the proposed changes. He said there's a learning curve and much work with the warden's position, so an extra year in the role would be of benefit.

"It usually takes, I would assume, six to eight months to get up to speed with all the different processes," he said. "You build up that time, that expertise, and then all of a sudden the warden has to go right into an election and we may not get the benefit of their full expertise."

Coun. Earl Hawkins, Mulmur's deputy mayor, came out on the side of Little. If councillors believe the warden is doing a pretty good job, all they have to do is reelect that person in the fall.

"I believe the democratic way is a one-year term," he said.

Should council decide on two-year terms for warden, McLean asked if there could be a mechanism by which a person could be removed from the role if required.

"Is there an opportunity to do a recall?" he said.

Warden Lisa Post, Orangeville's mayor, said there was no such opportunity.

Darren White, Melancthon's mayor and a former warden, voiced his support for two-year terms.

"One year just doesn't work, and it's that simple," said White.

CDVS partners with OPP to create dedicated safe space for crime victims to give statements

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Caledon Dufferin Victim Services (CDVS) has partnered with the Caledon detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) to launch a dedicated safe space for individuals impacted by crime and adverse events.

"The initiative establishes a quiet, private, and supportive environment within the Caledon OPP Detachment where victims can feel grounded and comforted while providing statements to investigators," reads a press release from Caledon OPP. "The space is designed to reflect a trauma informed and culturally responsive approach, offering access to religious, faith-based, cultural, and nondenominational items of comfort to meet the diverse needs of the community."

Contained within the space are sacred texts, prayer mats, rosaries, grounding tools, blankets, and a dedicated area for children. The area has backpacks filled with

essential items to support them through a challenging situation.

The goal of the space is to reduce anxiety, support emotional regulation, and promote a sense of safety while statements are taken by police.

"CDVS plays a key role in this initiative, providing emotional support, crisis response, and advocacy to individuals accessing the space. The partnership strengthens collaboration between Police, Victim Services, and those in need, ensuring support begins at the earliest point of contact," said Caledon OPP.

"Together, Caledon OPP and Caledon Dufferin Victim Services are fostering a more holistic and compassionate approach to community safety; one that recognizes the importance of comfort, faith, reflection, and human connection in the aftermath of trauma."

Please visit cdvs.ca for more information about Caledon-Dufferin Victim Services.

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Dufferin Oaks earns highest level of accreditation for rehabilitation facilities

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Dufferin Oaks has earned the highest level of accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Dufferin Oaks and Dufferin County Community Support Services (DCCSS) CARF's accreditation program in December 2025.

Dufferin Oaks was accredited for three years, which is the highest award possible. The process involved three surveyors, peer professionals with expertise in long-term care and community services, who completed interviews, documentation reviews, and virtual observations as part of a two-day survey.

Accreditation is a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation process that healthcare organizations undergo to demonstrate their ability to meet established criteria and evidence-based standards set by an external accrediting body.

Achieving accreditation signifies that an organization is credible, reputable, and committed to maintaining continuous compliance with the highest standards of quality, safety, and service.

A number of strengths were identified through the accreditation process. It was noted that the home provides a warm, accessible, and community-connected environment that promotes independence and

engagement.

Staff members, clients, and families alike identified Dufferin Oaks as a "workplace and facility of choice." Spaces in both long-term care and adult day programs include natural light, greenery, and thoughtful design to enhance comfort and calmness. Shared private rooms preserve dignity while providing affordable accommodation options.

CARF recognized a strong and capable leadership team that fosters a positive culture, innovation, and high-quality care. Long-serving staff were highlighted as a major organizational asset contributing to stability, trust, and service excellence.

The county's adult day services demonstrate high levels of person-centred engagement with examples of meaningful peer support and tailored activities.

Residents described the space as inviting, comfortable, and socially supportive, noting that staff enable participation in meaningful activities.

Once accredited, the Ministry of Long-Term Care provides \$0.41 per resident day for each year the home maintains accreditation. For Dufferin Oaks, that means \$23,944 per year in dedicated funding to support ongoing quality and operational excellence.

Councillor Philip Rentsch, Grand Valley's deputy mayor, said the small sum of money doesn't really make the accreditation worthwhile.



FILE PHOTO

ACCREDITED ORGANIZATION: Dufferin Oaks recently received accreditation for three years from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

Brenda Wagner, the county's health and human services director, said they don't seek accreditation for the money that's received. They initially went through the process because it was required, but that changed when they saw the value of evaluation by external peers.

"It's a great opportunity to bring our stakeholders together," she said. "Our families, our residents, our staff to really come together and do that quality review and to weigh us against those standards that are out there."

Shelburne and Orangeville host flag-raising ceremonies for Sikh Heritage Month

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The flag raisings, held throughout the day on April 15, are meant to recognize and celebrate Sikh history and contributions to Canadian history.

In 2013, April was first recognized in Ontario as Sikh Heritage Month, created to both acknowledge and celebrate the Canadian Sikh community. Across Dufferin County, municipalities held their own flag raisings in tandem with the local Sikhs. Orangeville and Shelburne both hosted flag raisings and proclamations in the morning on April 15.

In Shelburne, municipal leaders and staff, along with Sikh community members, gathered at Jack Downing Park, across the street from town hall, to raise the Sikh flag together.

Shelburne Councillor Len Guchardi, attending on behalf of Mayor Wade Mills, welcomed attendees and expressed the town's ongoing dedication to inclusion and diversity.

"I want to offer my welcome to everyone that is here today," he said. "Today is a very special day for the town, because we are coming together to raise the Sikh Heritage Month Flag. The community, our town, we welcome everybody. We remain an inclusive community, and we thank you all for being a part of our community."

Before the flag was raised, the Sikh community took time first to honour and thank Canada for welcoming them, singing 'Oh Canada' before the Sikh national anthem.

Once they concluded, the Sikh flag was raised, marking the end of the Shelburne ceremony.

Afterwards, the group moved to Orangeville to conduct a flag-raising ceremony outside of its town hall, at the intersection of Second Street and Broadway.

Representatives from the Town of Orangeville, led by Mayor Lisa Post and councillors Joe Andrews and Debbie Sherwood, met with Sikh community representatives inside

town hall. Community leaders again began with an acknowledgement of the warm hospitality Canada has offered their community, and sang 'Oh Canada', followed by the Sikh anthem.

Following the anthems, community leaders shared the history of Sikh Canadians and their long-lasting legacy on Canadian history. Despite initially facing severe discrimination, early Sikh immigrants established their roles in the forestry and railway industries.

Mayor Post followed with a proclamation officially designating April as Sikh Heritage Month in Orangeville, recognizing the significant contributions Sikh Canadians have made to the country.

"Whereas the Sikh Heritage Month Act of 2013 proclaimed the month of April each year, as Sikh Heritage Month in Ontario... the province of Ontario recognizes the important contributions that Sikh Canadians have made to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric," she said. "Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate, and educate future generations about Sikh

Canadians and the important role they have played and continue to play in communities across Ontario."

"Therefore, I, Mayor Lisa Post, on behalf of council, do hereby proclaim the month of April 2026 as Sikh Heritage Month in the Town of Orangeville, and encourage the citizens of our community to recognize and celebrate Sikh Heritage Month," Mayor Post concluded.

Sikh Heritage Month in Ontario has historical significance for the community.

Ontario was the first province in Canada, and the whole world, to recognize the contributions of its Sikh population. April also holds spiritual significance, as it is the month Sikhs celebrate Baisakhi, a major holy day marking the new year in their faith.

With ceremonies held in both Shelburne and Orangeville, as well as other municipalities in Dufferin County and across the province, the day's events underscored a shared commitment to recognizing the history, culture, and ongoing contributions of Sikh Canadians within the community.

Safe & Sustainable Water for Mono's Future

Join your Mayor and Councillors for a Town Hall Meeting
Saturday, April 18th 9:30-12:00
Town Hall 347209 Mono Centre Road

With Special Guest Speaker:
Andrew McCommon
Executive Director of Ontario
Headwaters Institute

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Local advocate calls on Orangeville council to remove ‘procedural barriers’

Written By **JAMES MATTHEWS**

At least one Orangeville resident feels the process by which people can request time to be a delegate before council is unfair.

Tamara Limebeer, an advocate for improved accessibility in Orangeville and area, was a delegate during council’s April 13 meeting.

“From an accessibility standpoint, this is a procedural barrier,” she said. “Accessibility is not only about physical spaces. It’s also about systems and processes.”

Individuals or groups who want to be delegates must register and provide all information at least seven days before the meeting, and may only delegate after consultation with

relevant staff. Should the subject matter of the delegation fall within the scope of a municipal committee, delegates are encouraged to schedule their delegation with the relevant committee.

Only residents, taxpayers, service providers, or members speaking on behalf of an association or organization that serves Orangeville can register as a delegate.

Limebeer raised concerns about the delegation process for allotting time to an individual or group to speak at a council meeting. She said its shortcomings affect transparency, fairness, and public access in decision-making.

Residents are required to delegate requests before the meeting’s agenda is released, she

said.

For the April 13 meeting, the delegate request deadline was April 2, and the agenda wasn’t publicly released until April 8.

“That means residents are being asked to speak up without knowing what they’re speaking about,” she said.

And that doesn’t respect the principles of an open and transparent municipal government.

“This process creates an uneven playing field,” she said. “It favours those who may already have an advance awareness of coming matters while excluding residents who rely on publicly-available information to participate.”

And that’s selective access to people who want to speak with council.

She said municipalities have a responsibility

to remove barriers, not create them.

Mayor Lisa Post said the town has considered Limebeer’s argument in the past through discussions about the municipal procedural bylaw.

“We believe, like you do, that we want residents to have the opportunity to come up and speak at council,” Post said, and added that many Dufferin County communities don’t have a Question Period during council meetings.

Jordyn Lavecchia-Smith, the town’s deputy clerk, said the procedural bylaw will be reviewed after the Oct. 26 municipal election. Amendments were made to the legislation in December 2024 that enhanced public participation in council meetings’ open forum.

Heavy rainfall causes unsafe road conditions for drivers throughout the region: OPP

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

As heavy rainfall continues across the region, the Central Region Headquarters of the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is reminding drivers that safety starts behind the wheel.

Wet roads, reduced visibility, pooling water, localized flooding, and the potential for dense fog in some areas can make driving hazardous when conditions can change quickly.

Significant rainfall has occurred throughout the week and is expected to persist over the coming days, increasing the risk of water collecting on roadways, washouts, debris, and sudden road closures. These conditions may develop rapidly and can be difficult to predict,

particularly in rural areas.

Before leaving home, drivers are encouraged to check current road conditions, closures, and travel advisories through 511on.ca and municipal511.ca, monitor localized weather forecasts through The Weather Network, and follow OPP Central Region social media channels for timely updates on active road closures.

Police remind all road users to take the following precautions:

- Slow down and increase following distance, as visibility can change quickly and wet roads reduce stopping ability
- Ensure all vehicle lights are turned on, including headlights and taillights, to improve

visibility and help other drivers see you in poor weather conditions

- Avoid driving through flooded areas or large puddles, as water depth can be difficult to judge and may conceal roadway hazards
 - Remain alert for washouts, debris, and the risk of hydroplaning
 - Obey all posted signage and road closures
- Flood conditions can develop quickly and may present serious dangers to motorists. Drivers are encouraged to choose alternate routes or delay travel when conditions worsen.

Taking a few extra precautions can make all the difference. Plan ahead, stay alert, and stay safe.



Anyone requiring emergency assistance is reminded to call 911. For non emergency incidents, the public may contact the Ontario Provincial Police non-emergency number at 1 888 310 1122.

County of Dufferin invites residents to Kickoff Open House for Official Plan amendment

Dufferin County is inviting residents to get involved as it updates its Official Plan to guide how local communities grow and evolve over the coming decades.

The Official Plan is the County’s primary land use planning document. It sets out the vision, goals, and policies that shape where housing, jobs, and infrastructure are located, while also protecting farmland and natural areas, supporting economic development and addressing climate change.

Official Plan Amendment Number Five will ensure the County’s Plan reflects current conditions, aligns with provincial requirements and supports complete, resilient communities across Dufferin.

The County invites community members to learn about the project, ask questions and share ideas at a Kickoff Open House on Thursday, April 23, at 6 p.m., at the atrium inside the county’s administration building, 55 Zina St., Orangeville.

At the Open House, participants can learn

about the Official Plan and what is being updated; Share what’s working well in the community; and identify key issues, challenges and opportunities.

The County wants to hear from people across Dufferin, including residents, local businesses and employers, agricultural community members, developers and landowners, community organizations and service providers and any other interested parties across the county.

Community input is a critical part of the Official Plan update. There will be multiple opportunities to participate throughout the project, including open houses, online engagement, and targeted conversations. The County will continue to communicate with the community as the project progresses

What is an Official Plan?

An Official Plan is a long-term policy document that guides land use and development.

It helps answer important questions, such as:

- Where should new housing and jobs be located?
- How do we protect farmland and natural heritage systems?
- How do we plan for infrastructure like roads, water, and wastewater?
- How can we build healthy, complete, and climate-resilient communities?

All planning and infrastructure decisions in Dufferin County must conform with the Official Plan.

What’s being updated in the Official Plan and why?

- As part of this update, the County will:
- Update mapping and policies to strengthen protection of natural heritage systems
 - Assess land needs to ensure there is enough land to support future growth
 - Review and update policies to align

with current provincial plans and legislation

- Incorporate climate considerations into how we plan for growth and infrastructure
- Ensure the Plan reflects local priorities and community needs

The Official Plan shapes decisions that affect daily life, how people move, where homes are built, how communities grow and how natural systems are protected. This update is an opportunity to:

- Plan for growth in a coordinated and sustainable way
- Protect the County’s rural character and agricultural lands
- Support housing options and economic opportunities
- Build resilience to climate change and extreme weather
- Reflect the values and priorities of the community

Learn more about the project on the County’s Join In Dufferin page at: joinindufferin.com/official-plan-amendment-five

Save the date—April 28

MAYOR POST’S SPRING TOWN HALL

Join Mayor Post, Councillor Sherwood and Councillor Stevens at this community-oriented event.

This event will cover topics important to those who live, work and play in Orangeville, such as:

- summer road safety (Dufferin OPP)
- economic development and tourism in Orangeville (Economic Development team)
- summer road construction (Infrastructure Services staff)

A question-and-answer period will follow the presentations.

April 28, 6:30 to 9 p.m.
Tony Rose Banquet Hall

Doors open at 6 p.m.

Town of Orangeville 2026 interim property taxes

Taxpayers in the Town of Orangeville are reminded that the second instalment of the 2026 interim tax bill is due on **Monday, April 27, 2026.**

Please note: failure to receive a tax bill does not relieve the taxpayer of the responsibility for payment and/or late penalty charges. Penalties are charged at a rate of 1.25% on the first day of each month following the due date.

To obtain a copy of your tax bill, contact Finance by:

Phone: 519-941-0440 ext. 7306
Email: propertytaxes@orangeville.ca
In person: Town Hall, 87 Broadway

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Help make Orangeville greener one tree at a time! On April 25, join Sustainable Orangeville and Credit Valley Conservation for their annual spring tree planting event. Trees are an important part of our environment, and growing our tree canopy helps it thrive!

April 25 | 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Rebecca Hills Park

Register online at orangeville.ca/PlantWithUs

School Board Trustee positions return with limited power

Written By RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

In an April 13 announcement, Minister of Education Paul Calandra announced major changes coming to Ontario's education system.

Included in this was the long-awaited decision regarding school board trustees, who Calandra had previously sidelined in a March decision to appoint supervisors at both the Peel District School Board (PDSB) and York Catholic District School Board.

Put forward as the Putting Student Achievement First Act, 2026, Calandra announced the decision to standardize the number of elected trustees to a maximum of 12, as well as limit their discretionary expenses and honoraria.

Trustees will be required to pay out of pocket for external organization membership fees and to "improve oversight over school board subsidiaries and their use of public funds."

The PDSB has 12 trustees, elected on November 15, 2022.

In addition to these trustee changes, Calandra also announced that English-language district school boards will soon have two new roles.

The Director of Education would be-

come known as the Chief Executive Officer, who would be responsible for financial and operational oversight and "required to have business qualifications."

As well as a new Chief Education Officer, who would be appointed by the CEO to focus on "student achievement and required to hold pedagogical qualifications, including Ontario College of Teachers membership or equivalent."

The CEO would then lead budget development, while referring budget matters to the Minister for decision when "trustees are unable to reach an agreement."

Calandra also announced the introduction of mandatory written exams on official exam days in Grades 9 to 12, as well as requiring attendance and participation to be part of the final mark for students in Grades 9 to 12, with attendance worth 15 per cent for Grades 9 to 10, and 10 per cent for Grades 11 to 12.

Stan Cameron, PDSB trustee for Caledon, says that the one positive from the Bill introduction is that the school board Trustee position remains in place, and on the October election ballot.

"It is frustrating, however, to see how Minister Paul Calandra has treated all English Public and Catholic Trustees by minimizing their role with respect to budget development and approval," says Camer-

on. "In addition, he is flexing his political muscle to remind everyone involved that he still has the power, in Bill 33 which he orchestrated, to take down any board of Trustees, for any reason he deems necessary. He explicitly said in his press conference that he won't hesitate to use that take down power."

Cameron says that Calandra "misrepresented the facts" when he stated that the PDSB operated for the past five years with a deficit budget.

"That is blatantly untrue and can be proven with research into the Board's budget deliberation files," he says. "It fits his intentional narrative. Or, you can trust Trustees who can attest to passing a balanced budget. One such vote that is on record for all to see."

Cameron added that Calandra says he will keep the eight boards he currently has under his supervision until they show a balanced budget and a built-up reserve fund.

"The PDSB has always approved a balanced budget, and perhaps unknown to the less-than-detailed-researcher Minister Calandra, the PDSB has a \$140 million dollar surplus," says Cameron.

"If those two reasons are why he has the PDSB under supervision, perhaps he needs to think of another fictitious reason

to keep the PDSB under his control."

Cameron adds that "nowhere" in Calandra's announcement was a word addressing the Ministry's "lack of funding" for children, their families, and staff.

Cameron also announced his intentions regarding the upcoming trustee election.

"I wouldn't personally consider running in the October 26 election for a Trustee position, the less-than-honourable Minister Calandra has intentionally created a high risk-low reward situation for Trustees," he says.

Cameron says the high risk is the chance that Calandra could yet again take down any Board of Trustees.

"The low reward can be seen in a message I received from a long time and retired Trustee who said, 'It looks like Trustees will now become glorified call centres for frustrated parents with complaints and questions'," he says.

"I have a lot more to give my community and will look at the Town Council for opportunities to serve there. I refuse to make myself vulnerable to the erratic, controlling, and less-than-truthful Paul Calandra."

"It's a lot of important work moving forward for all Trustees in the province. All at the risk of Paul Calandra taking their board down, just because."

International Women's Day event raises \$80,000 for local women's shelter

Written By SAM ODROWSKI

Nearly 300 people gathered for Family Transition Place's annual International Women's Day event, a morning focused on community, connection, and celebration.

While International Women's Day has been marked locally for over a decade, FTP took a different approach this year, hosting a brunch at Hockley Valley Resort in early March.

"In a departure from its long-standing luncheon tradition, FTP reimagined the event as a morning celebration," reads a press re-

lease from FTP, issued on April 10.

"The warmth in the room — and the generosity of guests — made it clear the community was ready to embrace the change: the event raised just under \$80,000 in support of FTP's shelter, counselling, and education programs."

The event opened with singing and drumming from Sharon and Tessa of Brave Canoe, an Indigenous-led not-for-profit, setting the tone for the morning.

Attendees then participated in a five-minute chair yoga session with Taylor from GoYoga Orangeville, one of the event's pre-

senting sponsors.

Sabina and Travis, youth educators with FTP, offered an interactive demonstration of the school-based programming they teach to students across Dufferin County and Caledon.

"Events like this one are what make our work possible," said FTP Executive Director Lynette Pole-Langdon. "The outpouring of support from our community allows us to continue providing safety, support, and hope to those who need it most."

FTP's Youth Education Program operates largely without dedicated government

funding and relies on community events and school parent councils to continue its work.

The annual International Women's Day event is one of the primary ways FTP funds its Youth Education program.

In addition to brunch, guests could bid on more than 50 silent auction items.

Presenting sponsors GoYoga Orangeville, RBC Royal Bank and Roud Wealth Management RBC DS, along with floral sponsor Orangeville Flowers Ltd., provided gifts for attendees. They also received a sweet treat courtesy of Blissfully Baked x The Little Almond, a Bolton-based bakeshop.

Dufferin OPP charge Orangeville woman with impaired driving following traffic complaint

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) charged an impaired driver in Orangeville on Tuesday, April 14.

Around 5:30 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers responded to a traffic complaint in the area of Riddell Road.

A short time later, officers arrived on scene

and spoke with both the complainant and the driver. Following their interaction, an impaired driving investigation was initiated.

As a result of the investigation, Lisa Legg, 51, from Orangeville, has been charged with operation while impaired - blood alcohol concentration (80 plus)

The charge has not been proven in court.

If you suspect someone is driving while impaired, call 9-1-1. For non-emergency matters, contact the OPP at 1-888-310-1122 or Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477 (TIPS) or online at www.crimestopperssdm.com.



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Alleged porch pirates arrested after police identify suspects at local restaurant

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

Dufferin Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) officers charged two men in connection to an incident where a package was stolen from an Orangeville home.

On April 4, at approximately 5 p.m., Dufferin OPP officers responded to a report of a theft involving a package that had been delivered to a residence on Second Avenue in Orangeville.

Two men attended the residence and took the package. Unbeknownst to them,

their actions were captured on video. Officers arrived on scene and were provided with footage showing the suspects taking the package without the owner's consent.

On April 14, Dufferin OPP officers responded to a call for service regarding an unwanted individual at a restaurant on First Street. Upon arrival, officers recognized the individuals as the same suspects involved in the ongoing theft investigation.

As a result, Dylan Massis, 34, from Orangeville, has been charged with Theft

Under \$5,000 and Fail to Comply with Probation Order. Adrian Szumowski, 23, with no fixed address, has been charged with Theft Under \$5,000.

The Dufferin OPP reminds residents to take proactive steps to protect themselves from "porch pirates."

"Residents are encouraged to track deliveries closely and, when possible, be home at the time of arrival," reads a press release from Dufferin OPP. "Requesting a signature upon delivery, having parcels sent to a secure location or trusted neigh-

bour, installing visible security or doorbell cameras, and bringing packages inside promptly can all help reduce the risk of theft."

The Dufferin OPP also encourages residents to participate in the CAMSafe program. This voluntary registry allows residents and businesses to register their security cameras with police. In the event of an investigation, officers can quickly identify potential video sources in the area, saving valuable time and improving investigative outcomes.

Caledon Community Services receives \$168,600 from OTF to expand transportation services

Written By **RILEY MURPHY**
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

On Friday, March 27, Caledon Community Services (CCS) unveiled its newest addition to its transportation services: a brand-new, specialized accessible vehicle made possible through the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF).

The OTF is one of Canada's largest grant-making foundations, helping to build "healthy and vibrant communities." CCS was awarded a \$168,600 Capital grant.

"Today, we are here to celebrate something very tangible," said Cathy Perennec McLean, Director of Programs and Operations at CCS, at the celebration last Friday.

"This bus represents far more than a vehicle. It represents access, independence, and connection for the people we serve, particularly seniors and individuals living with disabilities across our community," said McLean. "Reliable, accessible transportation removes barriers. It supports people in reaching medical appointments, participating in programs, staying socially connected, and continuing to live independently and with dignity."

MPP for Dufferin-Caledon Sylvia Jones met with the CCS team to celebrate the grant and spoke to how the OTF impacts local communities and what it has made possible for CCS.

"It's not really about the bus, it's about the freedom that the bus offers people," said Jones. "Over the years I've seen this organization transition and pivot because they see what the needs are in our community."

Christina Early, Board Chair and Regional Councillor, spoke at the event about how the CCS transportation service ensures the community can get where they need to go, especially with Caledon's large geographical area.

"I also want to thank the Trillium Foundation; these are gifts that are so beneficial for our community, so beneficial for us as an organization," said Early. "For me, it's just a

wealth of pride when I see the services that we offer the community."

CEO Geraldine Aguiar said their transportation program is a lifeline for residents of Caledon.

"When you cannot get yourself from point A to B, it impacts your quality of life," said Aguiar.

CCS currently runs over 30,000 rides a year, and Aguiar says demands are rising.

"We turn away over 15,000 requests just because we don't have enough vehicles, we don't have enough capacity to do that, and so these kinds of investments are so critical," she added.

"At CCS, we believe in opportunity. Our mission is advancing community well-being by working creatively and responding to community needs, and so for us, this bus gets us to move people from here, to wherever they want to go across our vast geography," said Aguiar. "Access to transportation is access to opportunity, and when you've got opportunity, you've got opportunity to enhance the quality of your life, to increase your social connections."

She also discussed how CCS drivers are "the lifeline" of the transportation service, assisting clients with hand-to-hand transfers, helping secure seatbelts, unloading groceries, and more.

Karley Kitson, a Mental Health Support Worker with Oliver House, spoke to the impact these transportation services have on their residents.

Oliver House is a specialized housing program under the Community Homes for Opportunity program, located in Caledon Village; they currently book over 130 rides a week through CCS's services.

"We have 53 residents right now when we're at full capacity, supporting individuals with severe mental health and developmental disabilities. While we live on 40 acres, it is a huge challenge for transportation, but with services like Caledon Community Services,



RILEY MURPHY PHOTO

EXPANDING TRANSPORTATION: CEO Geraldine Aguiar and MPP Sylvia Jones sit with Councillors Early, Sheen and Russo in the brand-new vehicle.

they're not just helpful, they're essential," explained Kitson.

She said that for many residents of Oliver House, transportation isn't just about getting from point A to point B; it's about access to health care, independence, dignity, and quality of life.

"Because of CCS, our residents are able to attend medical appointments, participate in programs, and stay connected to essential supports that they would otherwise struggle to access," said Kitson.

Kitson said they have seen firsthand how this type of access not only improves physical health but also mental health, confidence, and overall well-being.

Without this type of access, she added, the risk of isolation increases, and residents' daily lives are less purposeful without being able to go into town themselves with support from CCS.

"Today's announcement is incredibly meaningful," said Kitson. "Expanding accessible transportation means more people will have the opportunity to access the care and support they need when they need them. And in a community, like ours, where transporta-

tion options are limited, that kind of investment truly changes lives."

Fay Davy was a former driver for CCS; she provided reliable, safe transportation to the residents of Caledon for 8 years. To her, as to other drivers, she said a new bus like this "lifts you up."

She explained that the new bus is comfortable, reliable, and larger than previous vehicles.

"It means freedom for the clients and it's great for the community. Most of our drivers are part of the community as well, and it's hopeful that we're going to get more," said Davy.

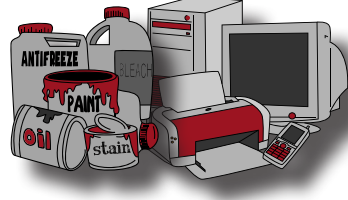
The newest vehicle joining CCS' fleet is larger and taller to accommodate more people and various needs, and features various mobility aid accommodations.

McLean said the announcement that day was for more than just a bus, "it's about mobility, inclusion, and opportunity."

"Because of this support, more seniors will be able to attend programs, more individuals with disabilities will reach essential services, and more people in our community will feel less isolated and more connected."

hazardous & electronic waste event COMING SOON!

Date: Saturday, April 25, 2026
Time: 8am - 3pm
Location: Grand Valley Agricultural Society Lands
60 Main St. N, Grand Valley (beside arena)



- Hazardous waste** includes automotive containers, cleaning products, fluorescent lights, batteries, paints, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, syringes, and much more.
- Electronic waste** includes audio equipment, cameras, computers, home entertainment equipment, phones, and household electronic items, including lamps, alarm clocks, microwaves, toasters, and small appliances.
- Limitations** No waste from industrial, commercial, or institutional sources. No white goods/large appliances (including any appliances with freon). No garbage, or recycling. No unidentified/unknown materials. No drums of materials.

Visit dufferincounty.ca/waste for updates and a full listing of acceptable materials & limitations.

Future events: May 30, June 27, July 22, August 19, September 19, October 31.

See website for details on hours & locations for each scheduled event.

Dufferin County residents, including Amaranth, East Garafraxa, Grand Valley, Melancthon, Mono, Mulmur, Orangeville and Shelburne can attend any of these events.

Dufferin county 519.941.2816 ext. 2620 • dufferinwaste@dufferincounty.ca **dufferinwaste**

The 2026 dufferinwaste guide is coming!

Check your mail for your copy.



Contact Dufferin Waste if you don't receive a copy by May.

Dufferin county **dufferinwaste** 519.941.2816 ext. 2620 • dufferinwaste@dufferincounty.ca

compost give away

Saturday, April 25, 2026

Horning's Mills Earth Day Event

9:00am to 12:00pm
14 Mill Street, Melancthon

Bring your own container.
Limit of one blue box-sized container per household.
First come, first served.



Do you participate in our Green Bin & Yard Waste programs?
Enjoy the end result! Your garden will thank you.
For more information, visit dufferincounty.ca/waste

Dufferin county 519.941.2816 ext. 2620 **dufferinwaste**

Spring Into Style!

CLOTHING SWAP & SHARE

Saturday, April 25, 2026
10:00 am - 4:00 pm

Sunday, April 26, 2026
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

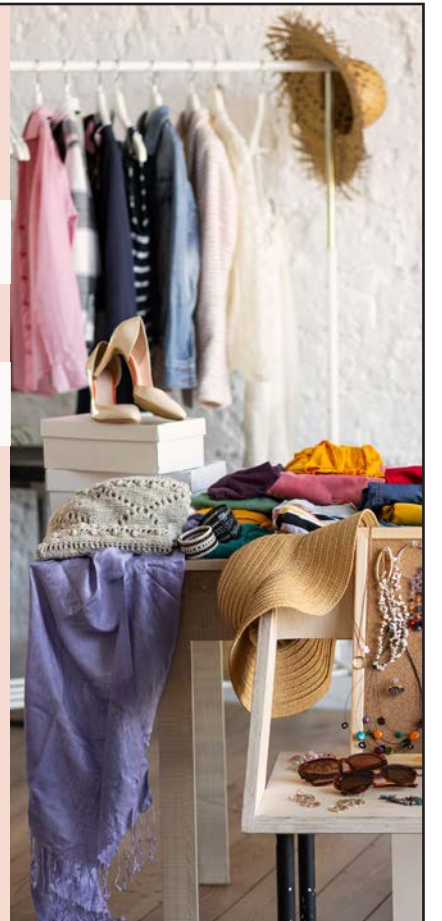
Grand Valley Public Library
4 Amaranth St. E, Grand Valley

Bring your unwanted spring and summer clothing/accessories to the event and look for something new to wear for free! Don't have anything to bring? Stop by anyway! All are welcome.

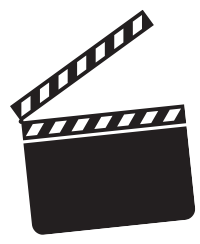
Clothing Drop-Off Options at Grand Valley Public Library:
Wednesday, April 22nd (10am - 6pm)
Thursday, April 23rd (10am - 8pm)
Friday, April 24th (10am - 6pm)
Saturday, April 25th (Before Noon)

All clothing must be clean and in good condition.
Event guidelines: dufferincounty.ca/waste

This is a FREE event. Light refreshments will be served.
Plus, get a chance to win prizes!



Dufferin county **GVPL** **dufferinwaste**



Arts & Entertainment

LOCAL COMMUNITY EVENTS



Museum of Dufferin to host Canadian author Antonio Michael Downing

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

An upcoming literary event at the Museum of Dufferin will bring one of Canada's emerging voices in fiction to the region for an afternoon focused on storytelling, identity and community.

Scheduled for April 25 from 2 to 4 p.m., the event will feature author Antonio Michael Downing in a moderated conversation, followed by a book signing. Hosted at the Museum of Dufferin, the program is part of a broader effort to connect readers with writers in an intimate, community-driven setting.

Moderated by Shelburne Public Library CEO Shannon McGrady, the afternoon is designed to offer attendees not only insight into Downing's work but also an opportunity to engage directly with the ideas behind it. Tickets are available in advance, with organizers emphasizing accessibility and community participation as key elements of the experience.

Downing's appearance is part of ongoing initiatives in Dufferin County to bring literary voices into smaller communities, creating spaces where readers can engage with authors beyond the page.

Originally from Trinidad, Downing said that his early life and interest in reading and writing were deeply influenced by his grandmother, who introduced him to reading and storytelling at a young age.

"My grandmother was [the person] who really got me started," he said. "She raised me and gave me a lot of gifts, but the two that had the biggest impact were singing, which she did a lot of, and reading. She was older, and her eyes were bad, so she taught me how to read at a really young age, so that I could be her eyes, and that kind of stayed with me ever since."

"It was just the magic of picking up this object made a paper, and reading these markings just scrawled onto it, and somehow that transports you to another place and another time. I was just hooked as a kid."

After her passing, he relocated to northern Ontario, an experience that profoundly shaped his perspective and creative direction. That transition, marked by a sudden shift in culture, climate and identity, continues to inform much of his work.

"Everything had changed, the weather, the people, the way we spoke," Downing said. "When someone says, 'Who are you?' Usually, we just start talking about where we're from, who raised us, what kind of food we like, and such. What if every single thing that was part of that was gone, but you still existed?"

"That's how it felt. That mystery of where exactly is the self, where does the self live, how do we feel, what makes us feel like we belong somewhere? That sense of identity, belonging, becoming, those things are the things I write about almost always, because it was such a big moment for me in my life," he added.

His novel, *Black Cherokee*, explores themes of identity, belonging and self-discovery through the story of a young girl navigating complex cultural roots. Spanning her formative years, the narrative examines the pressures of being asked to define oneself within rigid boundaries, while also questioning broader societal ideas about inclusion and exclusion.

"The story is about a young girl, and just like the title sounds, she's both black and Cherokee," Downing said. "She gets rejected by both sides, by both communities, and she has both communities asking her to choose one or the other. We meet her when she's seven, and we leave her when she's 18, and it's really about the choices she makes along the way of trying to figure out who she is and who she should be."

"Really, it's asking about a lot of the politics of our day. When you really get to the heart of it, it's about who's included and who's excluded. Just like she is being excluded from these communities she belongs to, we're often asking that about immigrants, are they really Canadian. We're almost constantly asking ourselves this in our politics, and



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GUEST AUTHOR: Born in Trinidad, Downing was introduced to literature and storytelling by his grandmother, who taught him to read. After moving to Canada and reflecting on his sense of identity and belonging, Downing took his thoughts to paper, and became a writer fascinated with exploring concepts of identity, belonging and becoming. His latest book, *Black Cherokee*, explores that concept of identity as a way to address ongoing societal and political conversations in Canada and beyond. He'll be discussing the new book in a moderated conversation at the Museum of Dufferin on April 25, from 2 to 4 p.m.

this story is really a microcosm of this greater debate," he added.

For Downing, storytelling serves as a fundamental way of understanding both personal and collective experience. His work reflects an ongoing exploration of how individuals come to define themselves, particularly when faced with displacement or competing identities.

Drawing on his own experiences, he approaches writing as a means of making sense

of life's uncertainties, using fiction to examine questions that are often difficult to address directly.

His rich storytelling will be on full display at the Museum of Dufferin on April 25, allowing guests to engage directly with Downing in a moderated setting, rounded off by a book signing.

To buy tickets, go to canhist.ca/small-town-big-ideas. Tickets can also be purchased at Booklore in Orangeville.

David Gauthier
Service Consultant

David brings a calm, customer-first mindset to every service appointment. As a MacMaster Certified Service Consultant, he works hard to ensure every visit is smooth and stress-free. Whether you're dropping in for maintenance or need help navigating a repair, David is ready with clear communication, helpful insight, and a friendly attitude.

Maurice McDonald
Service Consultant

Maurice is the kind of advisor who makes service feel easy. He's known for his warm, approachable style and his ability to keep customers informed every step of the way. With strong product knowledge and a passion for helping people, Maurice takes the guesswork out of vehicle service at Orangeville Chrysler.

Jazz Matharu
Service Consultant

Jazz combines technical knowledge with an easygoing, professional style that customers appreciate. Bilingual in English and Punjabi, he makes sure every guest feels heard and understood. Whether it's a routine visit or a more involved repair, Jazz helps keep the process efficient, transparent, and tailored to your needs.

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The Citizen CROSSWORD

Puzzle No. 264310 • Solution on page: CLASSIFIEDS SECTION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
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CLUES ACROSS

- Greek goddess of marriage
- Tropical American blue jay-like bird
- Abba __, Israeli politician
- Dark olive black
- Light, crinkled fabric
- Notre Dame has a golden one
- Leaked blood
- Confronted
- Negligible amount
- Facilitated
- Hill or rocky peak
- Minneapolis suburb
- Songs to one's beloved
- Brake horsepower
- Angry
- Children's game
- Spelling is a type of one
- Obtained in return for labor
- Indicates center
- Chinese dynasty
- Old World buffaloes
- Slang for time off
- Fabric
- Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- Defunct regional economic organization
- Philly footballers
- Female sibling
- Peter Griffin's daughter
- Digital audiotape
- Insecticide
- Scientific instrument
- Pages may be dog-__
- Israeli city __ Aviv
- Type of sword
- Middle Eastern military title
- Wise individuals
- French Polynesian island Bora __
- Popular shoe type
- One of 50
- Divulge a secret
- Dish of cooked meat mixed with potatoes
- Actress Zellweger
- Romanian city
- Completed
- Discharge
- Arrest
- Partner to cheese
- Coffee receptacle
- Stagnate
- Satisfies
- Snakelike fish
- Consume food
- Type of school
- Erase
- Inform
- Girl's given name
- Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- Every one of two or more things
- Northern India city
- Seventeenth stars in a constellation
- Weapon
- Amounts of time
- Isodor __, American Nobel physicist
- Soviet Socialist Republic
- Witness

CLUES DOWN

- Greek cupbearer of the Gods
- Ancient Syrian city
- Small Eurasian deer (pl.)
- Range of mountains
- One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- Spoke
- City in Georgia
- Theatrical
- CNN's founder
- Icelandic poems
- Bjorn __, tennis player
- Bowfin genus
- One point north of northeast
- Political divisions in ancient Greece
- Electroencephalograph
- Cool!
- Male parent
- Where some gymnasts work
- Capital of Vietnam
- Sailboats
- Shelter (Scottish)

No one has more self-confidence than the person who does a crossword puzzle with a pen.

Kids' Corner

How they say that in...

English: Engine
Spanish: Motor
Italian: Motore
French: Moteur
German: Motor

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ACROSS

- Speed
- Walks through woods
- Slightly open
- Motor
- For example

DOWN

- Cars and trucks
- Group of travelers
- One year old animal
- Move from one place to another

Did You Know?

Maintaining proper tire tread and air pressure are two vehicle maintenance tips that help keep drivers safe.

NEW WORD

PRESSURE

application of force exerted against an object

Get the PICTURE?

Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Dashboard

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Author publishes imagination-fuelled adventure, 'Alice and the Blue Ghost'

Written By RILEY MURPHY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Many may know local author Stacey Fokas from her longstanding Caledon business, Cowhide Promotional Wear Inc., which she started with a partner in a 600 sq. ft. garage at the age of 19, or from her family favourite recipe book, Freshalicious.

Now, after over a decade since the last book, she's returned with a world-bending, fantastical new novel, "Alice and the Blue Ghost."

Fokas was a Caledon resident for over 30 years and still runs her business there, now residing nearby in Erin, not wanting to stray far from the community she calls home.

Growing up, Fokas has always been a part of a creative world, which translates into her current work in the promotional business.

"I'm a girl who is driven to learn and experience new things," says Fokas.

But her creativity does not stop there.

"My mom nurtured me as a small child to read from a very, very early age, fairytales and listen to classical music, watch her favourite movies, cartoons and hockey with her brother, so I have her to thank for everything she taught me, right down to sewing my own dresses," says Fokas.

Her creativity and love for learning are partly what pushed her to pursue her first book, Freshalicious, but truly, it was her daughter.

"It's a cookbook like no other," explains Fokas. "My daughter's food allergies inspired me to write and share recipes and short stories about sourcing local, eating healthy, in-season and dairy-free."

"That's my love, it's for creative writing, that's my true passion."

But as a busy mom with a full-time career, Fokas put creative writing on the back burner.

"I knew I always had a story to tell, I knew that I wanted to pursue writing, I just didn't know where to start for years," she explains. "The story has to come to you, you cannot just sit down and write, you have to have a purpose to write. Having an imagination for the unthinkable is both a blessing and a curse. Either way there is a great feeling that comes with expression through writing."

Her mom was always encouraging her creativity, pushing her to write her next book.

One day, after admitting her mother to the hospital, she asked Fokas once again when she was going to write her next book, and Fokas finally answered, "I'm working on it mum."

Her mother never got to see her finished book, but it's now available for the world to read and enjoy.

When COVID hit, it was the perfect opportunity for Fokas to truly pursue the story that had lived in her head for all these years.

Not just a fantastical story, she says, but a story that holds meaning for all ages.

Alice and the Blue Ghost follows small-town girl Alice as she approaches her 16th birthday.

Her life takes a turn after being mysteriously attacked in the Secret Forest, leaving her with a large tattoo that signals the beginning of a dangerous quest orchestrated by the Ancients, one she must go on with her best friend, Josh, to save all of humanity.

Fokas' mother is not the only loved one who plays a heavy influence on her fantastical writing; it was her brother, too.

After the loss of her older brother, prior to Fokas being born, she's left with the "what if," and with her oldest brother, both asking the same question but never speaking of it, she says.

In her book, the tragic loss of Alice's twin brother triggers the fantastical adventure she embarks on, and for Fokas, she constantly wonders how different her own life would be if she too had her brother by her side.

"I always wondered growing up, 'what would life be like if he had lived? How different would our family have been if my brother was here with us today?'"

Another point Fokas also wants to bring across, as a lover of all things natural, is a message for young readers who are experiencing a world so different from what it was many years ago. The way we lived, how we were.

Growing up, Fokas explains, she was always told by her mum that she asked too many questions, but through her book, she hopes to encourage young readers to do the same.

"Hopefully I can open up young readers' minds to start asking more questions about everything, to open up the possibilities to do better, to be better, to live better. Everything is possible, anything is possible. I just feel we need more faith today, encouragement to think independently, relying less on social media," she adds.

The main messages surrounding the book are not only about faith and hope, but also friendship, love for the earth, and family.

"Things are not always going to go the way you want them to, but you can always look beyond that and make the effort to make change for positivity," says Fokas.

"I think one of the most important things I've thought about is, Alice is tasked with an unexpected journey with her best friend, Josh. They have no choice but to go on a perilous quest and do something magnificent. Inspiring young minds to believe any-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NEW RELEASE: Now available at Orangeville's Booklore, "Alice and the Blue Ghost" offers an adventure filled story of a small-town girl set on a quest to save humanity after a mysterious attack marks her with a large tattoo. The book is written by Caledon author Stacey Fokas.

thing is possible."

Not only that, but Fokas wants young readers to immerse themselves in a fantastical world that may lie right under their feet, to dream of magical places, mystical creatures and beautiful places, an escape from the day-to-day.

When her editor finished the piece, they told her readers would "enjoy immersing themselves in a vibrant, fantastical book that is also very much rooted in our inter-

connectedness, history, the wonders of our natural world, and urgent environmental concerns," all pieces Fokas had hoped to bring across.

For Fokas, she hopes this book is the start of many, hopefully continuing it on into a series.

Those looking to read "Alice and the Blue Ghost" can find it locally at Booklore, Indigo Books and Music, Amazon, Archway Publishing, and Barnes & Noble.

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Westminster United Church launches 'Together Under One Roof' campaign

Written By CONSTANCE SCRAFIELD

The Citizen recently had the opportunity to sit down with a few people at Westminster United Church. Located at 247 Broadway, Orangeville, the church was built in 1879 and became a United Church in 1925. Currently, the church is running a vigorous fundraising campaign for building repairs and a new roof, called "Together Under One Roof."

To learn how the church is involved in its own spiritual mission and in the community at large, the Citizen sat down with Rev. Aidan Legault, Music Minister Nancy Dettbarn, Facilities Manager and Office Administrator Margo Tasker, and Chairman of the Board Bob Borden.

Rev. Aidan was ordained and embraced by his new congregation on Nov. 8, 2025, out of respect for which, the interview began with him.

Aidan said as a young man, he was lonely and sad, but growing up "openly gay" in the church and active in its programs helped him to navigate his journey.

Although active in the church, Aidan never thought he would join the ministry, but he admired the wonder of the Christian faith and felt a calling to meet God. It was a time he came to understand love in the world.

Puzzled by the negativity of some United Church ministers, who claimed to be atheists at one point in the United Church's history, Rev. Aidan was happy to acknowledge that "most Christians have a much more dynamic approach. They tell how there are dynamic priorities to support the congregation." He added that, as a student, affirming the open statement welcoming all people became a priority for him.

The congregation at Westminster officially voted to present Aidan as a candidate for the ministry. There was an extensive process, a lengthy round of interviews and orientation; a time of ministry education.

Rev. Aidan offered the details of his formal education leading to his ultimate goal:



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DEDICATED GROUP: The Bells of Westminster have been here since at least 1990. They play at the church occasionally as part of Sunday worship and play at other community events as well.

"I graduated from Mount Allison University in 2019 with a Bachelor's in Political Science, with minors in French and Religious Studies. I graduated from Emmanuel College at University of Toronto with a Master's of Divinity in 2022."

In the long run, it was the congregation itself that led Aidan to his current role, as Bob Borden explained, "We decided this is the man we have. We sought the opportunity to grow our own minister, hand in hand. Walking together. There was real synergy within the congregation."

It is the business of Westminster United Church that inspired the idea for a sit-down interview with the Citizen, and to that, Borden made the point, "Margo [Tasker] is the lifeblood of our team."

The tenant of the church is to be involved

with all parts of the community outside the church. There is a very long list of about 30 "regulars" who use the church for their various needs, choirs come to rehearse, and others come to bake.

People come to celebrate the most momentous moments of their lives with baptisms and weddings, and to celebrate a life.

Once a week, "We open our food cupboard," said Tasker, adding that they do ask how many people live in each household. Every Thursday, the church donates food to the Orangeville Food Bank and contributes to the Uptown Church's Lighthouse program, where anyone in need receives a free lunch, just down the street on Broadway.

Westminster also takes food items to the cafe at Headwaters Health Care Centre.

Several groups come to cook or learn to

cook in the kitchen there.

A "Clothing Depot" supplies free clothing and a number of counselling groups – AA, CA and NA gather to help people with addiction problems.

Others will find that friendships develop as they meet regularly with one group or another in the welcoming space of the church's lower level. Such accommodation leads to outreach, a prime focus of the church, and outreach then informs the community about the possibilities within the church.

A garden in a growing space has been established to grow vegetables, and a green wall is growing next to it.

Music is a big part of Westminster United Church, and not only do choirs meet, but so do musicians who come for the Open Jam at the Music Club.

The church is the home of the Bells of Westminster. Truly, a number of people play the hand bells as an ensemble for some services at the church and at other events in town. The Bells have been part of Westminster since at least 1990.

Borden wanted to be sure to mention the church's milk and formula program for families in need. The recipients mainly come to them through referrals from social workers and agencies.

Yet it was Rev. Aidan who wanted to talk about the connection one-on-one with people, too. There's now a chance to sit and have coffee with someone at the church. Just a short while for conversation.

For the last two years, the church has held a Santa's Shop filled with items to pick up as gifts, which are all free. It takes the financial pressure off people to be able to shop this way, Tasker said.

When asked if a student or other person offered to volunteer to help with everything that needs to be done, would that person be welcomed, without pressure to join as a church member?

Rev. Aidan replied firmly. "Absolutely," he said. "They are [100] per cent welcome to come with no pressure."

From retirement ceremony to wedding vows: Legion hosts dual celebration for captain

Written By JOSHUA DRAKES
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Andrew Horvath came to the Shelburne Legion Branch 220 for a retirement celebration, but left as a married man.

After years of dedicated and heartfelt service to the Royal Canadian Air Cadets in Shelburne, Capt. Andrew Horvath is retiring from his leadership role and returning to civilian life. Horvath had worked with the cadets for 10 years, putting off his retirement until he was forced to due to rules regarding service age.

That didn't mean they were going to let him go quietly, however. Horvath was honoured by the cadets, the Shelburne Legion, veterans and the general public on April 9 with a retirement ceremony held at Branch 220's building in town.

Capt. Horvath fought back tears as he addressed the room of guests and his cadets.

"I'd really like to thank all of you for coming," he said. "Thank you for all your support. You guys are my adopted sons and daughters. I'll be back as a CI (civilian instructor). I can't not come back and see all these smiling faces, especially the marksmanship team."

"Somebody's got to be here to distract you guys," Capt. Horvath added.

With half the building filled with the cadets he had worked so closely with for a decade, he and those in attendance got to see firsthand the legacy he would be leaving behind.

When Capt. Horvath assumed command of the unit during the COVID-19 pandemic, he faced some of the most challenging years in the squadron's history. Under his leadership, the unit survived low attendance, on-line training, staff shortages, and even the threat of closure, eventually rebounding to the point where cadet interest exceeded available capacity.

That leadership was reflected in his deeply personal approach to command. Cadets consistently described him as both mentor and friend, someone who sits with them at meals, learns about their lives, and uses humour to keep spirits high. His personal approach has deeply impacted the lives of many cadets

that he worked with.

Thankfully, however, he will not be gone for long. Squadron leadership made it clear that they are working to find a path to return him to the unit as a civilian instructor, so that he may continue working with them, even in retirement.

Even as he steps back from leadership, Capt. Horvath has been honoured by more than just the local cadets and legion branch. He received honours from the Canadian Armed Forces, Cadets and Junior Canadian Rangers, and even a letter from Prime Minister Mark Carney for his dedicated and thoughtful service.

The ceremony was full of laughs, good memories and the understanding that this wasn't a goodbye, just a break for the captain before he returns.

The good news didn't just end there.

Near the end of the ceremony, a special service was held. Capt. Horvath and Capt. Diane Powers were married, right there in the legion hall. The move was a shock to everyone; only the newly married couple and the involved Padre knew it was coming.

Chris Skalozub, Deputy Zone Commander with the Royal Canadian Legion, congratulated them on their marriage, noting that it was truly an exception, something you don't see every day.

"Back in the old time when I served, you had to go and get the Padre and the acceptance of the base commander to get married because you were essentially in uniform," he said. "That's exactly why he did this wedding today, it was his last day in uniform. He's a married man now. It's fantastic. It looks good on them."

"They're the happy couple now, and that gives them more incentive to keep on coming back and keep on working."

He continued by expressing his support for getting Captain Horvath back with the cadets.

"He doesn't have the rank anymore, but he's coming back as a civilian instructor next year, which is perfect, because he's still involved."

Capt. Horvath may have entered the legion to retire and close a chapter of his life, but a surprise marriage to end the evening proved it was not a goodbye — but a new beginning.

NOTICE Hunting in the Dufferin County Forest

All users of the Dufferin County Forest are hereby advised that April 26-May 31 is the spring shotgun/archery season for wild turkey in 2026. Wild turkey hunting may occur only from 1/2 hour before sunrise to 7:00 p.m. During this time there will be a number of hunters using the Dufferin County Forest properties. Please use caution in the forest and wear bright-coloured clothing. There is no hunting allowed at any time in the following tracts: north portion of Amaranth, Hockley, Leening, Levitt, Little, Main, Mono, Thomson, and River Road. Suspected violations of the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act should be reported to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry at 877-847-7667 (877-TIPS-MNR). Other inquiries should be directed to the County Forest Manager at (519)278-1366.



JOSHUA DRAKES PHOTO

SPECIAL CEREMONY: Capt. Andrew Horvath may have entered the Shelburne Legion on April 9 to formally retire, but instead left a married man. With the legion Padre to officiate, Capt. Horvath and Capt. Diane Powers were married. It was the final night Capt. Horvath would be able to wear his uniform. Capt. Horvath might have closed one chapter of his life, but a new one is beginning at the same time.



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SAVE \$2 **17⁹⁹**

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SALE **8⁹⁹**

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SALE **11⁹⁹**

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SALE **8⁹⁹**

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SAVE \$2 **17⁹⁹**

Cheddar & Bacon Stuffed Beef Burgers
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SAVE \$2 **17⁹⁹**

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How seniors can build their social networks in retirement

Social isolation and loneliness can have a notably adverse effect on a person's overall health.

According to the World Health Organization, roughly 12 percent of older individuals experience loneliness, which can have a negative impact on their physical and mental health, quality of life, and even their life expectancy.

Seniors have much to gain when they take successful steps to avoid social isolation. Seniors who are concerned about the prospect of social isolation or loneliness or those already experiencing such feelings can try these strategies to build their social networks in retirement.

responsibilities have ended, making this a perfect time to reconnect with old friends who also might have extra free time on their hands. Reach out through social media, text message or even a phone call, and let the situation unfold organically from there.

• TAKE ADVANTAGE OF COMMUNITY OFFERINGS
Many communities sponsor events for seniors, like bus trips to local museums or stadiums, in an effort to encourage seniors to get out of the house. Retirees can take advantage of these opportunities, which tend to attract like-minded individuals with the same interests. A bus trip to a theater production will attract fellow arts lovers, and shared interests are a solid foundation for friendship.

• RECONNECT WITH OLD FRIENDS

It's easy for adults to lose touch with old friends. By the time many adults reach middle age, professional and personal obligations can leave little time for a thriving social life. Successful professionals may be preoccupied with work projects, and while parents may be juggling their own hectic schedules with their children's obligations. Come retirement, much of those

• START A LOCAL CLUB OR GROUP

Starting a local club based on a particular activity is another great way for seniors to build a social network in retirement. Take to social media and express your interest in starting a local book club or walking group. Like community-sponsored bus trips, clubs and groups tend to attract like-minded individuals, providing a built-in pathway to friendship.

• RECONNECT WITH YOUR FAITH

Houses of worship also offer a great way to meet locals and build relationships based on a shared identity. Faith-based communities provide a sense of belonging that can help retirees overcome social isolation and loneliness.

• OPEN YOURSELF TO NEW EXPERIENCES

Trying something new is another great way to make new friends. Many local agencies like parks departments or community recreation offices offer seniors in-person workshops covering a wide range of activities. These offerings are a great way to discover a new pastime and meet new people along the way.



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How seniors can find a suitable volunteering opportunity



Volunteering is a rewarding experience that engages people from all walks of life.

While young adults and adults in middle age may find it hard to squeeze volunteering into their schedules, retirees are free of many of the professional and personal obligations that prevent younger adults from volunteering.

Retirees can reap some unique benefits from volunteering. Volunteering can provide retirees new opportunities to socialize, which can help them avoid feelings of social isolation and loneliness that many seniors confront after retiring. Volunteering also can provide an opportunity for seniors to utilize their professional expertise to the benefit of others.

With so much to gain from volunteering, retirees can start looking for opportunities in their communities. Many such opportunities exist, and the following tips can help retirees find the most suitable one for them.

IDENTIFY YOUR MOTIVATION TO VOLUNTEER
Identifying why you want to volunteer can be a great first step. Many retirees who had long and distinguished careers in the professional arena aspire to give back by employing their expertise in new ways. For example, retired attorneys may want to volunteer with a nonprofit organization that provides free legal advice to those who cannot afford to hire their own

legal representatives. Once retirees have identified why they want to volunteer, they can then look for opportunities that align with that motivation.

CONSIDER ANY POTENTIAL LIMITATIONS YOU HAVE

Some volunteering opportunities are physically demanding, which makes them difficult for retirees. Seniors may not be able to handle a volunteering opportunity that requires heavy lifting or one that asks volunteers to spend hours on their feet. Be honest about any physical limitations, and discuss any uncertainty you might have with your health care provider before committing to a volunteering gig.

DECIDE HOW MUCH TIME YOU CAN VOLUNTEER

Volunteering is often characterized as a rewarding experience that offers homebound seniors a chance to get up and go. But some retirees already have active social lives, so it's imperative that prospective volunteers identify how much time they have to volunteer. Many organizations allow volunteers to determine how much time they spend volunteering, but others may ask more of volunteers in regard to a time commitment. For example, volunteering to organize community events may require a significant time commitment that some retirees do not necessarily want to make.

There are many great reasons to volunteer. Retirees considering volunteering can give the prospect ample consideration before they begin searching for the right opportunity to give back.

MAKING FRIENDS IN YOUR golden years

AGING AND CHANGE GO HAND IN HAND. Physical changes associated with aging, such as graying hair or reduced muscle mass, may garner the most attention. But personal relationships also can change as people age.

As a person ages, interests could change and home base may not be what it once was. People move after retirement, and friends you might once have seen with frequency may no longer be as close by. Children are older, and the friends you made from these early parenthood relationships may change as well.

It is important to have a solid group of friends. Psychology Today reports that a strong social network reduces the risk of early death by around 45 percent. Recent data even indicates that loneliness is as great a health risk as smoking half a pack of cigarettes per day. Starting fresh and making friends at 50 or older might seem challenging. Although making new friends after 50 may take more effort than it did when you were younger, it is cer-

tainly not impossible. Here are some tips for making friends after 50.

• **JOIN A NETWORKING GROUP**
Networking isn't just for advancing your career. Networking groups that focus on friendships can help individuals meet one another. Perhaps there is a neighborhood group in which people from a particular housing development or several streets in town get together? Shared interests can include the place where you live.

• **ORGANIZE A GET-TOGETHER**
Sometimes making friends involves effort on your part. You might need to step out of your comfort zone and initiate first contact with others. Maybe there is a person at a store you run into frequently, or someone whose path you cross regularly that can be asked out to a get-together?

• **GET INVOLVED WITH ACTIVITIES**
A church group or a volunteer activity can



be a great place to meet new people. In fact, volunteers often get involved for the express purpose of getting to know others and to be integral members of the community.

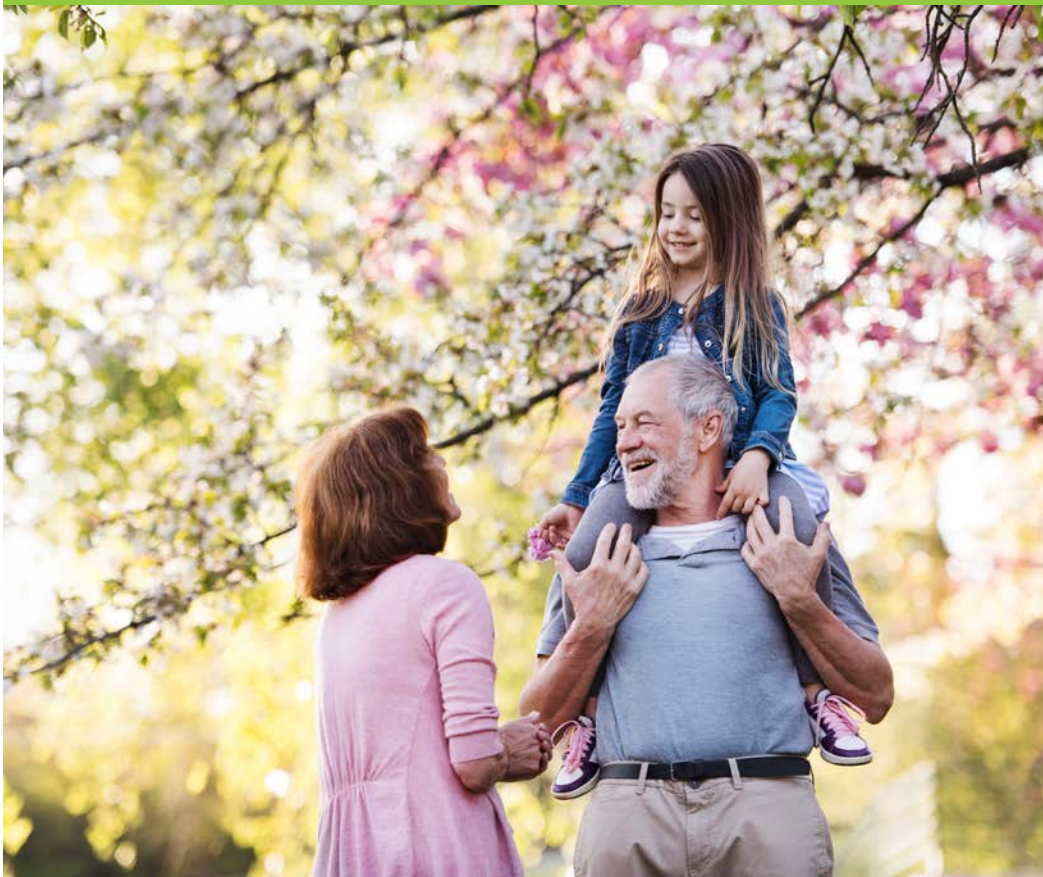
• **CONSIDER OTHER GENERATIONS**
Friends need not be the same age and from

the same generation. Keep an open mind that friends can come in all ages and from all walks of life.

Making friends after 50 requires some effort, but a sizable social network can benefit individual well-being into one's golden years.



A GIFT IN YOUR WILL



A gift in your Will of any amount can have an impact on health care for future generations

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Contact Joel Porter at 519.941.2702 ext. 2303 or by email at jporter@headwatershealth.ca to learn more about how to include Headwaters in your Will.

PLANNING TODAY for the Impact You'll Leave Tomorrow



Planning for the future is one of the greatest gifts we can give to the people we love, and to the community we care about. For many, that planning includes preparing a Will that ensures family members are supported and that personal wishes are honoured. Increasingly, it also includes the meaningful act of leaving a charitable gift to a cause close to the heart.

What many people don't realize is that thoughtful estate planning allows you to do both: provide for loved ones and make a lasting contribution to the organizations that matter to you. A gift in your Will can be structured in a way that aligns with your values, fits your financial situation, and still protects everything you intend for your family.

A charitable gift in a Will does not require enormous wealth. In fact, most come from ordinary people, like you and me, who want to make a meaningful difference. Even a small percentage of an estate can have a remarkable impact. For organizations like Headwaters Health Care Foundation, these gifts help ensure exceptional health care close to home for generations to come.

Including a gift in your Will can also bring financial advantages, such as reducing the taxes owed by your estate. For many, this means the ability to leave a larger gift to both family and charity than might have been possible during their lifetime. It's a powerful way to ensure your values continue to support the community long after you're gone.

If you're considering a gift in your Will, there are important reasons to let us know:

Knowing your intentions allows us to thank you properly during your lifetime. It also gives us the opportunity to understand how you wish your gift to be used, and to ensure those wishes can be fulfilled exactly as you envision.

Also, awareness of future gifts strengthens long-term planning for the Foundation. When we understand the generosity that is coming, we can plan strategically to meet the future needs of the hospital, invest in vital equipment, and ensure patients and families continue to receive the outstanding quality of care we want for them.

Finally, we may be able to recommend ideas to discuss with your lawyer or financial planner to help minimize your estate taxes and maximize what you leave for loved ones and your preferred charitable organizations.

As you review your estate plans or consider updating your Will, I encourage you to think about the causes that have shaped your life and supported your community. A gift in your Will to Headwaters Health Care Foundation ensures that exceptional, compassionate care remains available close to home for your family, your neighbours, and future generations.

It can begin today with a simple conversation.

You can reach us by emailing foundation@headwatershealth.ca or calling 519.941.2702 ext. 2303.

Celebrating SENIORS

WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO SEE IT FOR YOURSELF?



There is something about the arrival of spring that invites a fresh perspective.

After a long winter, there is often a quiet urge to try something new, revisit something once loved, or finally say yes to an idea that has been sitting in the background. At Avalon Retirement Lodge, that sense of renewal is not tied to a single season. It is part of everyday life, shaped by the interests, ideas, and curiosity of the people who live here.

Recently, two residents shared a simple but meaningful goal. They wanted to learn how to play the piano.

Through Jarlette Health Services' Better Late Than Never initiative, that idea is now becoming a reality. The program is centred on bringing residents' dreams to life, whether that means learning something entirely new, returning to a favourite passion or memory, or exploring something they have never had the chance to try before. For these residents, it means sitting down at the piano for the very first time, embracing the learning process, and discovering the joy that comes with it.

Another resident expressed an interest in dance lessons. It was not part of a scheduled program or something that had been planned in advance. It was simply a reflection of what they wanted to explore. That idea has since sparked new conversations and is helping shape future programming within the Lodge.

More recently, seated line dancing has been introduced, bringing a sense of energy and connection into shared spaces. It is an activity that encourages movement and participation while remaining accessible, and it has quickly become a source of laughter

and enjoyment for those who take part.

These moments are not exceptions. They are part of a broader approach that places residents at the centre of daily life.

At Avalon, engagement is not about following a set schedule. It is about creating space for residents to explore their interests, share their ideas, and influence what happens next. Some days that means trying something entirely new. Other days it is about finding comfort in familiar routines and meaningful connections. Both are equally important.

For many people, retirement living is still viewed through a limited lens. It is often imagined as quiet or restrictive, shaped more by assumption than experience. But inside Avalon, we like to think a different picture begins to emerge. It is one of growth, creativity, and connection. It is a place where learning continues, where interests evolve, and where residents are encouraged to shape their days in ways that feel right for them.

This spring, as new ideas take root and possibilities begin to unfold, there is an opportunity to take a closer look. Not just at what retirement living is, but at what it can be.

If you've been curious about Avalon Retirement Lodge or what retirement living could look like for you or a loved one, this your invitation to book a personal tour with our team. Contact Alisa and come see for yourself! You have nothing to lose and so much to gain.

Avalon Retirement Lodge. 355 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 3Y3. (519) 941-3351



What is polypharmacy?

Polypharmacy may contribute to complications that could jeopardize seniors' health.

Johns Hopkins Medicine defines polypharmacy as the regular use of multiple prescriptions. According to data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the Canadian Health Measures Survey, 22 percent of adults between the ages of 40 and 79 in the United States and 19 percent of adults in that same age bracket in Canada took at least five medications in the 30 days prior to participating in each survey.

Prescription medications are designed and prescribed to help people overcome various medical conditions, but polypharmacy can contribute to other issues that are worth noting, and some of those conditions can have an adverse effect on seniors' daily lives and overall well-being. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, symptoms of polypharmacy include:

- Reduced alertness
- Confusion or cognitive problems
- Falls and accidents
- Weakness and dizziness
- Loss of appetite
- GI problems such as diarrhea, constipation or incontinence
- Skin rashes

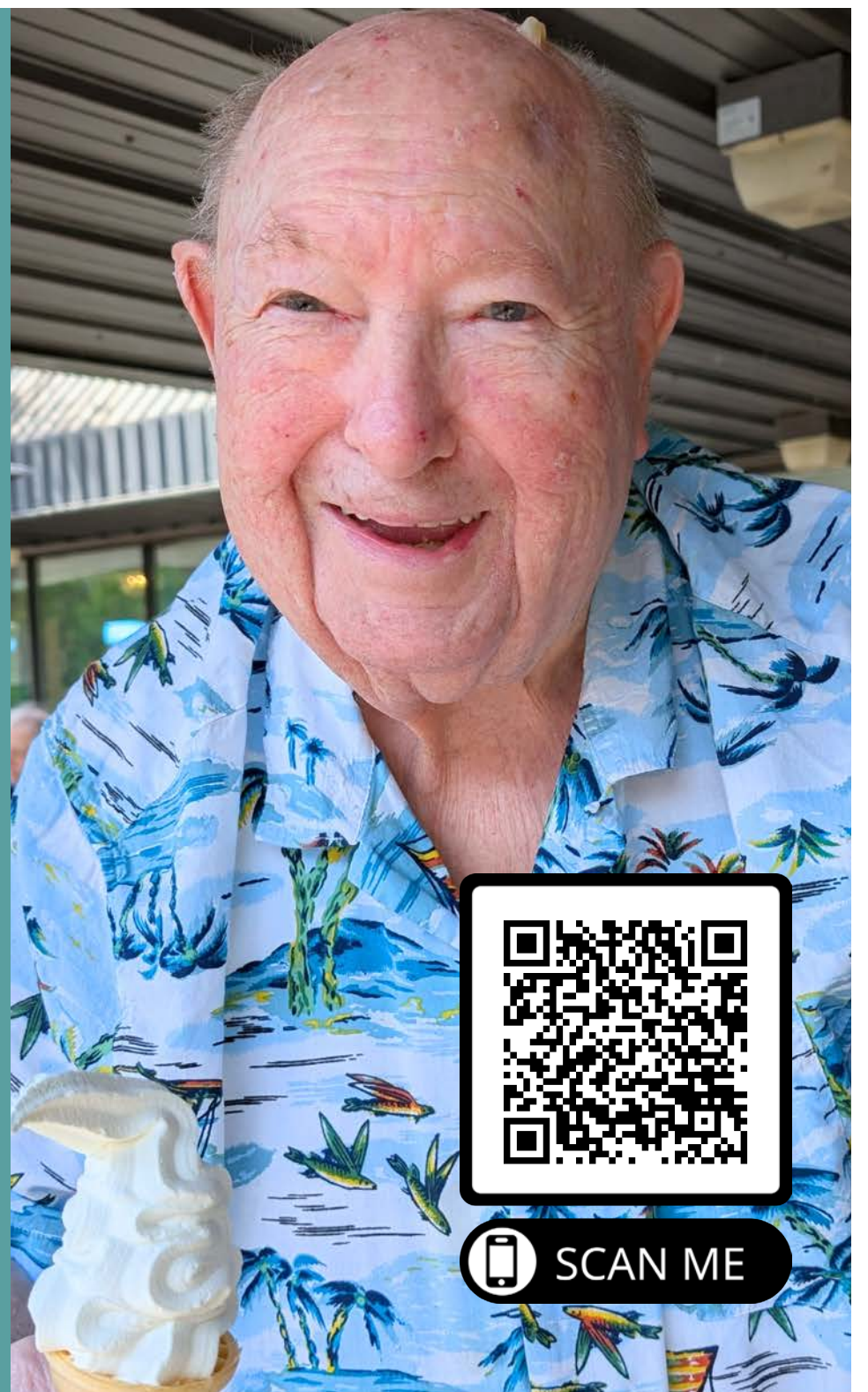
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Excitability

It's equally important that seniors recognize that polypharmacy affects aging adults differently than it affects younger people, as changes in body composition that are a natural part of aging can affect how the body reacts to medications and might affect how different medications interact with one another. The effects of new drugs on seniors also may be unknown, as Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that test subjects for medications may not include older adults.

Polypharmacy is a delicate situation and each individual's reaction to taking multiple medications at once is unique. Seniors are urged to be open and honest with all health care professionals they interact with regarding the medications they're taking. Report any difficult or unusual side effects immediately. Seniors who feel they might be taking too many medications should address those concerns with their health care professionals, who may deprescribe a given medication and work with patients to find alternatives that can treat existing conditions without adversely affecting quality of life.

Wouldn't you like to see it for yourself?

Spring has a way of opening the door to new possibilities. For some, it starts with realizing that retirement living isn't what they thought or that it's even an option. This is your invitation to take a closer look at Avalon Retirement Lodge... **You never know, it could change everything!**



Avalon Retirement Lodge
 355 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 3Y3
It's Worth A Conversation (519) 941-3351

PROTECTING YOUR SIGHT AS YOU AGE: What every Canadian needs to know

(NC) As Canada's population ages, chronic conditions such as diabetes, stroke and neurological disorders are becoming increasingly common.

With these conditions comes a heightened risk of vision loss. Early detection, timely treatment and proper follow-up care are crucial in reducing the risk of vision loss.

This approach is particularly important for conditions like diabetic retinopathy (DR), where early intervention can prevent blindness. Integrated, people-centered eye care within health systems is essential, with strong primary health care as the foundation.

Diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes, is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in Canada.

"If you have diabetes, early detection of diabetic retinopathy is the best protection against vision loss," says Dr. Mona Dagher, an ophthalmologist. "Nearly 60 per cent of patients with Type 2 diabetes in Canada will develop DR within 20 years of diagnosis. That's why annual screening is key to early detection and timely intervention."

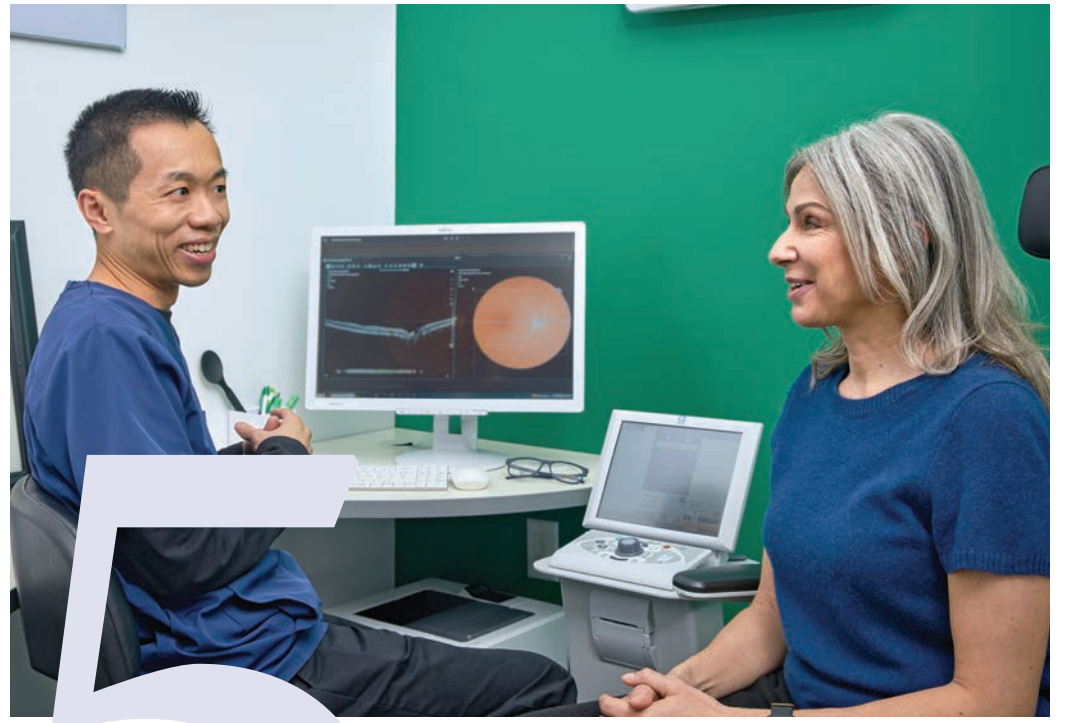
Chronic health conditions can also affect vision in other ways. Stroke survivors may experience visual field loss, while people with Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis may have difficulty with eye coordination or focus. These challenges extend beyond eyesight, impacting mobility, independence and overall well-being.

Thankfully, low vision rehabilitation services can help individuals remain active and independent, even with changes in their vision. Since significant or complete vision loss isn't inevitable, many Canadians are finding prac-

tical solutions to continue living full and engaged lives. From mobility training and home safety modifications to assistive technologies like magnifiers, screen readers, talking GPS devices, and smart-home tools, these services help individuals adapt, and support daily living.

Vision helps us navigate the world, connect with others, and see what matters most. With the support of Specsavers, the "My Corner of Canada" photography contest is helping showcase the role of vision in connecting Canadians by having participants submit photos showing what their community means to them. You can find more information at seethepossibilities.ca.

www.newscanada.com



health problems an eye exam can catch

(NC) They say that the eyes are the window to the soul.

But they're also your window to the world around you, which is why it's important to have your eyes tested regularly. Beyond issues with your vision, an eye exam can also help detect other health issues that you should investigate further. Particularly if your eye exam includes an optical coherence tomography (OCT) scan, then it may help detect some eye conditions at earlier stages.

Here are five health issues that may be seen during an eye exam.

BRAIN TUMOURS

Some types of tumours can increase pressure on the brain, which in turn can impact your eyes. An optometrist can see if you have swollen optic nerves, which can be caused by a brain tumour.

SKIN CANCER

Your optometrist will examine your eyes for indications of skin cancer on the eyelids, around the eyes or within the eye as part of the exam.

DIABETES

Your optometrist might be able to detect diabetes even before you've been diagnosed with it, by spotting a yellow fluid or bleeding in your retina. An OCT scan can also help optometrists detect early or subtle diabetic changes. Early detection of diabetes can help avoid long-term vision loss or other serious complications.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

An eye exam provides a non-invasive way for optometrists to view the actions of blood vessels and nerves. Changes in the retina such as bleeding or changes to blood vessels at the back of the eye can indicate high blood pressure, which is one of the risk factors for developing glaucoma.

HEART DISEASE

An OCT scan can also help your optometrist look for signs of eye strokes which could indicate heart disease. Eye strokes happen when cells have died because they were deprived of blood or oxygen, or a vein is blocked causing blood to pool up in the eye.

Optometrists who operate the independent clinics at Specsavers include OCT scans as a standard part of all their eye exams at no additional cost to the patient.

Learn more about the benefits of regular eye exams at specsavers.ca.

www.newscanada.com

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SOME RISKS, YOU CAN'T CONTROL. YOUR HABITS, YOU OFTEN CAN

(NC) Understanding what you can and can't control can make a real difference to your health.

Not all risks for heart disease and stroke can be controlled, but knowing what's fixed helps you focus on what you can change. Did you know that about half of your overall risk is inherited? This makes healthy habits even more important for prevention.

Dr. Sara Kirk, a professor of health promotion, says many factors influence our ability to make healthy choices. "We're living in an often health-disrupting environment with social and structural determinants that can prevent people from being able to make decisions that would improve their health and wellbeing," she says. "The choices we make are dictated by the choices that we have, and in some cases, there's not even a choice."

Understanding your factors is a key first step. There are tools, like the Heart & Stroke Risk Screen, that can help, by showing you where you stand, and where changes can potentially help.

IMPORTANT RISK FACTORS YOU CAN'T CHANGE

Genetics and age: Studies show that about half of a person's overall risk for heart disease is inherited. As we age, the heart and blood vessels naturally change,

which increases risk it. Understanding these factors encourages earlier screening for high blood pressure, high cholesterol and diabetes — and prompts preventive action.

Sex: Women and other people who can experience natural or medically induced menopause face distinct risks during reproductive, menopause and post-menopause stages. Conditions such as hypertension and gestational diabetes during pregnancy increase lifetime risk, and after menopause, hormone changes can further raise it.

Ethnicity: Different communities experience varied levels of risk based on genetic, cultural, environmental and socioeconomic factors. Racism and discrimination add pressures that contribute to depression, anxiety and chronic stress—all of which harm heart and brain health.

Social and environmental factors: The ability to make healthy choices can be easier for some, and harder for others, depending on many factors, including where you live, your finances and access to healthy choices and resources. Air pollution also affects heart and brain health.

Understanding what can't be changed helps people focus on meaningful actions — and empowers them to protect their heart and brain health. Healthy habits such as sleep, physical activity, stress management and eating well make a powerful difference, and it's never too late to start. You can find tips for healthy habits at heartandstroke.ca.

www.newscanada.com



Embracing changes and new opportunities: a key step in living with intention in your senior years

Living with intention isn't about having life perfectly planned. It's about learning how to pivot, and to stay connected and hopeful, even when the path ahead changes.

As we age, change can show up more often and feel more personal: shifts in health, moving to a new home or even the world around us feeling less predictable. Living with intention isn't about predicting every twist and turn. It's about tapping into your resilience and responding in ways that honour what matters most to you. Here are three ways to do just that:

1. BE OPEN TO "PLAN B"

Sometimes life happens and goals or plans need revising. For example, if you plan to visit family across town but need to cancel due to bad weather, the day isn't ruined. Remember that the goal was connection. Let your family know and propose a video or phone call instead.

Plan B can also be about embracing new opportunities. Maybe you'd planned to watch a TV program but were invited to try a painting class instead. You may find painting enjoyable and even spark a new hobby.

2. LET YOUR VALUES BE YOUR COMPASS

During times of change, your core values can act like a compass, helping you make decisions that feel true to who you are. For example, if you're having mobility issues and value independence, you can stay self-reliant by using tools such as a walker or cane for longer walks, or make home upgrades such as adding grab bars in the bathroom.

By adjusting how you do certain tasks, you can keep living life on your own terms.

3. FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL, GIVE YOURSELF GRACE

Even when life feels unpredictable, there are choices you can make to help you feel steadier. How you start your morning, for example, can set the tone for the day. Simple rituals such as enjoying a cup of tea by the window, or doing a crossword, can help you feel grounded and in control.

How you speak to yourself also makes a difference. On days when life veers off plan, it's easy to be self-critical. Instead, shift your perspective and offer yourself encouragement, saying, "It's okay if plans change. I'm making the best decisions I can in this moment."

Focusing on your values, setting achievable goals, staying mindful, and using these tools during times of change can help you experience fulfillment and purpose in this chapter of life.

At Amica Senior Lifestyles, we get to know what our residents value so we can tailor our life-enrichment programs to meet their needs and evoke their passions. Our beautifully designed seniors' residences offer engaging activities, deliciously fresh culinary options and discerning care. Together, we create meaningful moments all year long.

Disclaimer: The information provided in this guide is for general informational purposes only and should not be considered professional advice. Always consult with a qualified professional for any specific concerns.

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1. Premium amenities, design and location

Amica Aurora Promenade has it all, with refined amenities such as a solarium, private dining room, fitness centre, home theatre, hair salon and spa, gardens and multiple terraces, so you don't need to leave the residence to host a family celebration, exercise, or meet a friend for dessert—the possibilities are endless. With tasteful décor in colours inspired by the natural stone and lush greenery of the region, the residence features elegant-yet-accessible design. "You can't beat the location, because you have access to all the downtown shops and restaurants, and it's steps from the Aurora Town Centre," says General Manager Meghan Solimine.

2. Staying connected and empowered

Each day, you'll have the opportunity to live on your own terms. You can spend time with like-minded peers during enriching activities such as walks, wine tastings, fitness classes, holiday celebrations, cultural events, wellness seminars, excursions with scheduled transportation and more. The building is also designed with many social spaces that encourage you to sit and chat with friends. Whatever your perfect balance is between doing things independently and being social, you can find it at Amica Aurora Promenade.



3. Exceptional dining

Choose from a menu of delicious, balanced meals prepared daily by our culinary team using fresh local ingredients. Our talented Chef creates seasonal rotating menus, for every day and special events, to suit every palate. Dietitian-approved and customized to residents' diets, each dish accommodates seniors' special nutritional needs, including puréed options for a smoother dining experience. Our flexible dining options also allow you to eat wherever you'd like, whether it's in the dining room, sun-filled atrium, our bistro, or from the comfort of your own suite.

4. Best-in-class care

We offer lifestyle options of Independent Living, Assisted Living and Memory Care at Amica Aurora Promenade. "That continuum and level of care is unique, and it means you don't have to move if your needs change," says Solimine. Even with different care needs, couples can continue to live together.

As part of our Memory Care program, residents live on a secure floor with a dedicated Memory Care Coordinator. Our certified team delivers specialized programming to improve cognitive function and foster a sense of purpose.

No matter which lifestyle residents live in, they receive professional, personalized care delivered through a Personalized Wellness Plan. As their needs change, so too does our care. This, along with 24/7 on-site nurses, offer peace of mind for residents and loved ones.



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Modifiable risk factors for Alzheimer's disease

Dementia is an umbrella term used to refer to various illnesses, including Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is a sinister illness that slowly steals away memories, cognitive function and even personality. According to Alzheimer's Disease International, as of 2020 there were an estimated 55 million people living with dementia around the world. That number is expected to rise to 139 million by 2050. The organization reports that someone develops dementia every three seconds.

Alzheimer's disease can be challenging for patients and their loved ones. Individuals may wonder if there are any controllable risk factors that can help prevent or delay the formation of the disease. Although risk factors like age cannot be avoided, there are some controllable risk factors for Alzheimer's.

HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure, also known as hypertension,

is a significant risk factor for dementia, according to NYU Langone Health. High blood pressure can damage the small blood vessels in the brain, leading to reduced blood flow and oxygen deprivation. Hypertension also may trigger brain inflammation, which can contribute to cell damage and cognitive decline.

DIABETES

Research indicates that type 2 diabetes increases a person's risk of developing dementia, and is dependent on the length of time someone has diabetes and how severe it is, says the Alzheimer's Society. Diabetes, like hypertension, can cause damage to blood vessels feeding nutrients and oxygen to the brain.

SMOKING

Smoking is a tricky subject when it comes to Alzheimer's research. A report published in the journal Alzheimer's & Dementia in June 2015 indicated cigarette smoking has been linked to both increased and decreased risk



for Alzheimer's disease. However, the study's findings indicated overall former/active smoking is related to a significantly increased risk for Alzheimer's disease because of the related cerebral oxidative stress that facilitates Alzheimer's disease formation.

HEAD TRAUMA

The Alzheimer's Association reports there appears to be a link between Alzheimer's and serious head trauma, especially when an injury causes loss of consciousness. Taking steps to avoid head injury may be

a preventive step against Alzheimer's.

ALCOHOL

There is a complex relationship between alcohol and Alzheimer's disease. BrightFocus Foundation reports moderate alcohol use may accelerate Alzheimer's disease, while the Alzheimer's Association says recent research published in the journal Neuropsychiatric Disease has shown moderate drinking (two alcoholic drinks per day) reduces one's chances of developing Alzheimer's, while regular heavy drinking can increase the chances by 300 percent.

Discover Abbeyfield Caledon: A welcoming community for seniors

NESTLED IN THE HEART OF CALEDON, the non-profit Abbeyfield Caledon residence offers a unique and supportive living experience for seniors who value independence, community, and comfort.

With a commitment to providing quality accommodation, Abbeyfield Caledon is more than just a place to live- it's a place to thrive. Residents experience community-oriented living, enjoying private rooms while sharing common spaces, fostering friendships and a sense of belonging.

The communal environment encourages social interaction through shared meals and activities, helping everyone feel at home.

Abbeyfield Caledon balances service with independence. Its non-profit model ensures affordability and transparency.

Abbeyfield Caledon welcomes seniors from all backgrounds, creating a diverse and vibrant community.

Delicious meals are prepared daily, with special attention to dietary needs and preferences.

Located in scenic Caledon East, Abbeyfield House offers easy access to local amenities, parks, and walking trails, allowing residents to appreciate the natural beauty and tranquility of the area.

It also provides the perfect location to be able to serve residents from surrounding communities.

The staff and volunteers are dedicated to creating a safe, welcoming environment where every resident is respected and valued.

Whether you're seeking peace and quiet or vibrant social engagement, Abbeyfield Caledon adapts to individual preferences and needs.

"I loved it right from the very beginning, and I haven't changed. I love the fact that I can go to my suite and be by myself, and the food is great," says resident of six years Kay Burtney. Karen Hopper, resident of one year, says her daughter-in-law found Abbeyfield and immediately told her she would love it, and she does.

"Other retirement homes, most of them rely on catered in, brought in food, here they shop locally and prepare fresh food. It's from scratch, and that's the big difference," says Richard Paterak, a resident of two years. Marianne Herbert has been at Abbeyfield for two years and says they have so much independence, but always come back as Abbeyfield is their home.

"It's like my big house," says resident Desirée, who has been at Abbeyfield for two years.

"It's just a wonderful feeling. I feel very welcomed here, and Lisa and Connie, they cook with love. They're always watching out for us. I feel very protected and safe here."

Lisa Chevalier, Manager, and Connie Irwin, House Supervisor, prepare fresh food every day, as well as perform numerous tasks all over the house.

But they say it's not work at all. "It's like home for all of us. I feel like we're one big family," says Chevalier.

To join the family, Abbeyfield Caledon Board of Directors is currently seeking a Volunteer Treasurer and a Director of Development with property development experience. If you think you're the perfect fit, reach out to Abbeyfield at 905-860-0181.

To continue meeting the ever-growing needs of the community, and based on the initial success of Abbeyfield 1.0, the Abbeyfield Board of Directors has launched a new project - Abbeyfield 2.0. With support from Mayor Groves and Members of Council, the Abbeyfield Caledon Board of Directors is exploring the potential to develop a second Abbeyfield within Caledon.

There is a growing need for more affordable housing in the community, and the Abbey-

field model will serve seniors well into the future.

In addition, The Board has developed some enhancements to Abbeyfield 1.0. The first is a live after-hours answering service that connects residents to family members or staff in the event of an overnight issue or emergency.

The second is a pilot project testing a new, state-of-the-art Fall Detection System called Pontosense.

This technology can detect a fall in a resident's suite and, within 90 seconds, send a notification to volunteers, staff, and family members on the contact list.

No wearables - wrist or necklace are required for the system to operate. The Board of Directors will continue to look for innovative ways to increase the safety and security of all residents.

Serving the Region of Peel and Dufferin County, Abbeyfield Caledon encourages residents to sign up for its waitlist or book a tour! Please reach out to Lisa Chevalier at lisa@abbeyfieldcaledon.org for further details.



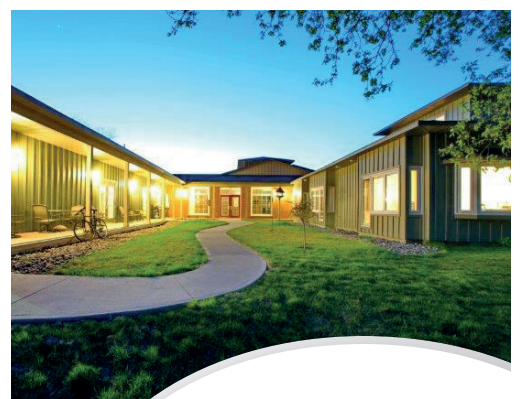
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Abbeyfield Caledon is a non-profit residence for independent seniors, nestled in the charming town of Caledon East. Our home is committed to fostering community, offering wholesome nutrition, and creating meaningful connections.

"It's like home for all of us. I feel like we're one big family."
- Lisa Chevalier, Manager



Interested in becoming a resident? Contact us for more details.

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Join Our Team of Volunteers!
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Westside athletes compete at District 4 badminton championships

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

Westside Secondary School Thunder athletes competed at the District 4 badminton championships on Wednesday, April 8.

The junior championships were held at Erin District High School, while the senior championships were held at Centre Dufferin District High School in Shelburne.

Events got underway at 9:00 a.m. and ran all day. The initial round-robin competition determined who would advance to the final matches and qualify for the regional CWOSSA competition.

The top two finalists in each division advanced to regional competition.

The competition featured singles boys and girls, doubles, and mixed doubles.

The play was fast and very competitive. The final medal rounds were especially spirited and well-matched as players tried to win a good spot in the CWOSSA placement.

Six schools were in the tournament, including Westside, Centre Dufferin, Emmanuel Christian High School, Erin District High School, Norwell District Secondary School, and Centre Wellington from Mount Forest.

"This is the District tournament to see who goes on to CWOSSA," explained Centre Dufferin coach and senior tournament organizer Patrick Clendinning. "There are six schools competing here today. Both winners who compete in the final matches will go on to CWOSSA. The difference

is that whoever wins will go on to be the number one seed. We have single girls, single boys, double girls, double boys, and mixed doubles. Most teams sent around 12 players, so there's close to 50 players here today."

Players who advanced to the final round played six matches throughout the day.

That included three round-robin matches, followed by quarter-final and semi-final matches.

Badminton is a sport that requires fast reflexes and good hand-eye coordination, and there is a lot of fast movement on the court.

The regional competition will feature the top players from the District competing against top players from other districts, making it highly competitive.

The CWOSSA competition will take place at Conestoga College in Kitchener, beginning with the Junior championships on Wednesday, April 15, followed by the Senior championships on Thursday, April 16.

BRIAN LOCKHART PHOTO

GOLD MEDAL WIN: Westside Secondary School athletes competed at the District 4 badminton championships on Wednesday, April 8. The juniors were at Erin District Secondary School while the seniors played at Centre Dufferin District High School in Shelburne. Sabrina Bigler competes in the girls' singles final. Sabrina won the gold and will advance to regional competition at CWOSSA.



Orangeville Otters represented at the 2026 World Para Swimming series in Italy

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

Members of the Orangeville Otters swim team were represented at the 2026 World Para Swimming Series held in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy, in March.

Otter's head coach, Sam Kuntz, was selected to be on the official coaching staff, where he supported an outstanding performance by Otter's swimmer, 16-year-old Alyssa Smyth, competing with NextGen Train & Race.

The meet was held from March 12 to 15, and was one of the key stops on the 2026 World Para Swimming series calendar. The meet attracted hundreds of athletes from around the world, making it one of the most competitive events to date.

The event featured para swimmers from all classifications competing across multiple days of heats and finals that tested versatility, endurance, and speed.

During the meet, Alyssa delivered an outstanding performance, reaching two A finals and three Youth Finals with four top-ten finishes. She earned youth gold in the 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly, and 100m backstroke, and silver in the 50m freestyle, demonstrating her skill and versatility

on an international stage.

The NextGen team included five athletes and four staff, with Kuntz providing leadership, coaching, and strategic support throughout the meet. His guidance was a key part of helping the athletes navigate the rigorous competition schedule and succeed against top international swimmers.

Alyssa's achievements at the meet were a proud moment for the Orangeville Otters, as they reflect on the strength of the Club's development pathway and the impact of its coaching on the international para swimming stage.

With athletes and coaches contributing at this level of competition, the Otters continue to build a strong presence in high-performance swimming, inspiring the next generation of swimmers.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

DYNAMIC DUO: The Orangeville Otters were represented at the 2026 World Para Swimming Series held in Lignano Sabbiadoro, Italy, on March 12 to 15. Head coach Sam Kuntz was on the official coaching staff. Competitor Alyssa Smyth won gold and silver medals in several events.



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Magic

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OPINION

Turn into the waves

When I was in my final year of high school, our entire Grade 12 class entered the gym to view the movie "A Tale of Two Cities."

The teachers set up a large movie screen and ran the film through a projector.

We were studying the classic Charles Dickens novel in English class, and this was a good way to really bring the story to life.

I believe it was the 1958 version of the film.

There were a lot of crying girls at the end of the film when Sydney Carton stands in front of the guillotine, and his overdub states: "It is a far, far better thing that I do, than I have ever done; it is a far, far better rest that I go to than I have ever known."

It was a great way to learn about something you are studying.

If there is one film I have always thought that should be shown in schools, it would be the 1954 classic, "The Caine Mutiny," starring Humphrey Bogart, Fred MacMurray, Van Johnson, Robert Francis, and José Ferrer.

It is a great film, and the final scene is where the lesson is taught.

The film is set on a fictional U.S. minesweeper in the Pacific during World War

Two. A new commander is taking over the ship. Lt. Cmdr. Queeg, played by Humphrey Bogart, is an old-school naval man who believes discipline and order are needed on a naval ship.

When Queeg assumes command, his executive officers are not pleased with his style. They begin to take notes on his behaviour.

At one point, several of the executive officers request a meeting with the Admiral to ask for Queeg's dismissal. However, as they wait for their meeting, one of the officers notices the behaviour of the sailors on the aircraft carrier.

He realizes those sailors were acting how you were supposed to behave on a naval ship, not the way the lackadaisical and undisciplined crew of the Caine behave, and they change their mind about meeting the Admiral.

Queeg certainly has some quirky habits, and it is suggested he is losing his nerve as a combat commander in a war zone.

The executive officers question his command and always give him a hard time. This frustrates Queeg, who is trying to run the ship as a naval vessel should operate.

During a severe storm in the Pacific, when

the entire fleet is in danger, Queeg refused to turn the ship into the waves or take on ballast, even though his executive officers are insisting on saving the ship, because the ship has received no orders to do so.

The officer played by Fred MacMurray steps in and orders Queeg to stand down, and he takes command of the vessel – effectively committing a mutiny.

In the resulting court-martial, in which the executive officers are on trial for mutiny, their attorney paints a picture of Queeg as being incompetent and possibly mentally unstable. He hails the officers as heroes for taking command from a faltering Queeg and saving the ship and the lives of everyone on board.

The officers are found not guilty as a result.

It is after the trial, when the executive officers are celebrating their acquittal at a party, that the real drama unfolds.

Their lawyer enters the room and is infuriated by the sight of the men celebrating.

He tells them what really happened. The lawyer tells them that to save them from being found guilty, he had to 'torpedo' Queeg and deliberately destroy a man's reputation.

If the executive officers had behaved

BRIAN LOCKHART
FROM THE SECOND ROW



like real naval officers and respected Queeg's command, he tells them, then likely during the storm, Queeg would have respected their advice and turned the ship into the waves.

He calls Henry Fonda's character the real villain and throws a drink in his face.

It is a story of deflecting the truth and avoiding responsibility and accountability.

Our current federal government is doing this all the time. Instead of addressing the concerns of our country's citizens, they make announcements about unpopular policies and tell us we should be thrilled about the decision.

The government gladly gives your tax dollars to other countries while we have homeless people sleeping on the streets. Our borders are not secure, but they tell us that building more houses will fix that, rather than addressing the real issue.

Violent criminals go unpunished while law-abiding citizens are threatened with more gun bans.

Canadians are a little too complacent when demanding responsibility and accountability from their politicians.

Hungary: The tide goes out

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk sent a message congratulating Hungary's newly elected prime minister, Peter Magyar, for having evicted long-serving populist leader Viktor Orban (aka 'The Viktator') from power. All the usual welcoming words, but Tusk's message ended with two slightly mysterious words in Hungarian: "Ruszkik Haza" – Russians Go Home.

There are no Russians in Hungary, apart from occasional visitors, so what was that about? It dates back to 1989, when a then-youthful student leader called Viktor Orban became an overnight national hero by giving a speech telling the Russians to end their 45-year-old military occupation and go home.

They did go home then, but their influence returned with Orban's return to the prime ministership. He had previously occupied the office as a conventional conservative in 1998-2002, but he practically invented modern populism – 'illiberalism', as he called it – for his comeback in 2010. And this time the Russians were with him all the way.

Hungary's value to Moscow was its membership in the European Union and NATO, which enabled it to pass on all the information that its representatives had access to as members. Orban also blocked various

EU decisions that Russia disapproved of, like his recent veto of a \$105 billion EU loan to Ukraine to replace the US aid that Trump cancelled.

That loan will now go through. Repairing the huge damage done by sixteen years of Orban will take a lot longer: the judiciary has been packed, the government is a kleptocracy, the media are 80%-owned by Orban's cronies, and the electoral map has been gerrymandered. But the main interest for non-Hungarians is the possibility that this is a communicable disease.

Populists all over the place clearly fear that it might be. Orban rose to power when Donald Trump was a property developer, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was a junior minister, France's Marine Le Pen and Britain's Nigel Farage were fringe figures, and Germany's Alice Weidel was a financial consultant.

They all found time in their busy schedules to offer their support to Viktor Orban, and now they are strangely silent. It's like when your parents die: you realise that it's now you on the front line.

Last week, with Orban trailing badly, they pulled all the stops out. Trump, in his fifth intervention in support of Orban in six months, posted "I AM WITH HIM ALL THE WAY", and Vice-President JD Vance

showed up in Budapest in person on the way to his equally unsuccessful performance in the 'peace talks' in Islamabad.

This is an unusual amount of attention to lavish on an election in a country of nine million people located in the unfashionable end of Europe. You only have to compare it to the attention that the world media gave to the 2023 election that brought Orban clone Robert Fico back to power in Slovakia.

That event got almost zero attention, whereas Sunday's election in Hungary got front-page coverage almost everywhere. The difference is entirely due to the fact that Orban's loss was seen as a defeat for the founding father for the populist strategy, at least in its current incarnation – and possibly a harbinger of the future.

The anxiety of some and the hopes of other have been stoked by the growing likelihood that the populist formula is failing in its natural homeland, the United States. Trump's own erratic behaviour is part of the problem, but the economic dislocation caused by his war against Iran is an even bigger reason for them to fear defeat in the midterm elections next November.

The governing party losing control of one House of Congress in the midterms, or even of both, is a frequent feature of

national politics in the United States, and it normally doesn't cause despair. It's a protest vote, and it's not even a reliable predictor of what will happen in the general election.

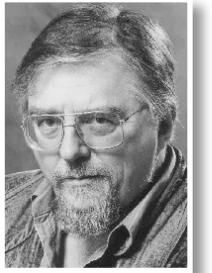
Yet Trump & Co. in the United States, and even more so their fellow travelers in Europe and far-flung outposts like Argentina, seem concerned that the wind has changed, even though nobody else has noticed it yet.

Maybe they are wrong, and this is only a minor setback in their inevitable march to power everywhere in the West. But protest-based mass movements have an average lifetime of 10-15 years, so a steep decline in the health and longevity of populist governments starting about now would not be untypical.

On the other hand, Trump's desperate antics as he seeks a face-saving way out of his war on Iran are prolonging an economic downturn that could end in a major recession.

Voters punish whichever government is in power when a recession arrives with complete disregard for the actual causes, so we could see old populist regimes go down even as new ones emerge elsewhere.

GWYNNE DYER
OUR WORLD TODAY



Astronaut lessons

Humans who travel into space say it is the most stunning, life-changing, extraordinary experience of their lives. It appears that every astronaut who has ever been in space longs to return, where their bones can just put up with weightlessness. As they watch the unforgettable sights of the earth from such great distances, calling it "beautiful, precious, vulnerable," snapping pictures, as many as they can while knowing that no one else, no one who has never experienced it, can know – these photos barely express the thrill of actually being in truly outer space.

Even extending to the high price of space tourism, which offers the experience of weightlessness (just undo your buckle) at anywhere from 100 to 1,400 miles from earth, the usual seems to be about 300 miles, cannot really compare to the rigours and truth of multiple days and more in space.

The travellers in the Artemis II achieved a distance from Earth of 248,655 miles (400171.432 kilometres) on their path in the sky, and their photos may well win all the prizes. When they re-entered Earth's atmosphere, the nose of their vehicle terrifyingly blazing to experience the splashdown in the Pacific Ocean, in spite of the confidence they had in their engineers and scientists who were sure they had fixed the fatal fail-

ings of Artemis I, each of them must have whispered their personal gratitude for the successful return to Earth.

But what did each of them bring back? Once their minds had truly settled on the reality of where they had been – namely, the furthest from earth than any other humans have travelled – at their soul level, what does it mean to them as individuals?

What will they tell their grandchildren? How will they convey who they are now to their life partners?

Recently, the CBC played an interview with Artemis II Commander Reid Wiseman and the New York Times about the conversation he had with his two teenage daughters. A widower and single parent, Wiseman relayed the heavy discussion with his daughters about the dangers and possibilities of his dying during this first experimental trip around the dark side of the moon.

He told them where his will and trust documents are located, saying, "If anything happens to me, this is what will happen to you." He talked about the inevitability of death each of us faces on some level, at various times in our lives – their own mother having died of cancer in 2020. He reassured them that he felt the importance of this mission was a tremendous honour. He was sure it

was worth the risk.

His daughters backed their father all the way.

That splashdown at the end of the successful ten-day flight, seeing their father safely home, must be a lifetime memory for those two girls. On the most personal level, this is part of Wiseman's legacy to his children.

Gives us all pause to think. Not only those of us who are parents or guardians of children, but also given the broad concept of legacy as meaning life lessons and the experiences in which we were with them at the time, but in a more general sense, the legacies we leave in the big picture of the world around us.

The Artemis II flight had a specific purpose: to prove what it takes to get to the moon and what it will take to colonize (and that is the word that is used) the moon, with plans to create permanent habitats with a judicious telescope to scan for what might crash where and on the moon, potentially causing craters.

All this work is as a stepping stone to landing on moon-sized rocks and indeed, planets much, much further away. Without a single blush, I readily admit to being a Trekkie, right from the early, surprisingly short

run television series to the six original movies, Voyager – almost all of it.

So, the irresistible call of space is clear, impossible to ignore. Yet we are still calling the ambition "colonizing" when, in fact, even if hidden, the understanding must be that there are so many reasons to expect to find other lives if we travel far enough.

Here we are, back to our legacy. It could be that the Artemis II success is a turning point, a serious time to reflect, looking around us with honest eyes, at what legacy we humans are leaving for all who follow us.

Ambition and skill, but without reason? Wayward governance for the land and all who live upon it? Shall we continue on the course of the destruction of this beautiful, spinning, perfect planet, run to ruin by leaders, for whom an eternity of blood and battle is their preferred policy?

Stephen Hawking told us to get off Earth if we want to survive. Really, it is too late for that. Space is too hard for such a schedule.

All we can do is scramble and make the sacrifice of an easy life for as long as it takes to stop and restart our legacy.

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COMMUNITY VOICES

Monthly Message: Nominations open for the Business Excellence Awards

Every local business has a story. It's the early mornings, the risks taken, the community supported, and the passion behind every product, service, or cause. These stories shape Dufferin County, and now is the time to recognize them.

The Dufferin Board of Trade (DBOT) is inviting the community to nominate outstanding businesses, nonprofits, and business leaders for the 2026 Business Excellence Awards. Nominations are now open and will close on May 1, 2026.



This is more than an awards program. It's a chance to celebrate the people behind the businesses we rely on every day. For nominees, it's a meaningful and "feel good" mo-

ment that brings recognition, builds pride, and provides an opportunity to share their story with the community.

Nomination Categories include:

- Business of the Year
- Small Business of the Year
- Nonprofit of the Year
- Businessperson of the Year
- New Business Award
- Local Impact Award

Winners will be announced at the Awards Gala on May 21, 2026, at the Best Western

Plus Orangeville Inn & Suites, featuring a Casino Night theme and an evening dedicated to celebrating local excellence.

Supporting local businesses isn't just about where we shop. It's about investing in our community. Taking a moment to nominate a business or organization is a simple but powerful way to show appreciation and help shine a spotlight on those making a difference in Dufferin County.

To submit a nomination or learn more, visit: dufferinbot.ca/2026BEAs



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Creating a crisis

Dear Editor,

I can no longer remain silent. The Ford government, with Minister Callandra leading the way, has gone over the edge in its moves to strip away local control of our public schools.

Can I remind your readers that this all started with the Harris government in the 1990s, with Minister Snobelen, "creating a crisis" in our public schools. They have wanted this for years, and now, under the guise of financial mismanagement (caused by annual significant underfunding), they are stepping in and wresting control of our local school boards. They've even added an extra layer of senior administration with a non-educator business administrator!

The voice of the local tax-paying citizen is now going to be farther away from the impact on their child's classroom.

This is a sham. I was a trustee with the Upper Grand District School Board for 13 years, and we never ran a deficit, all the while supporting our students to achieve some of the highest success levels in the province. The problem isn't with the school boards; it's the provincial government that is starving the local schools (and hospitals).

It's Minister Snobelen revisited...creating another crisis!

Respectfully,
R. J. (Bob) Borden
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Junior B Northmen look to rebuild team in upcoming season

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

Lacrosse season is almost here, and that means Orangeville, one of the most successful lacrosse centres in the country, will once again be filling the local arenas with fans to watch their teams battle it out for the 2026 season.

The Town is one of only a couple of centres across the country where the sport has such influence that it supports three junior-level teams.

The Orangeville Junior B Northmen are going through a rebuilding season this year.

After a successful 2025 season, the Junior A ranks were depleted due to player graduations. That means the A ranks are drawing

from the B roster to fill their line-up for the season.

The Junior B team must now fill its roster with new upcoming players. They have already played a couple of pre-season exhibition games.

"We lost 15 players from last year's team. Ten of them will probably move up to the Junior A team, and five of them went over age," explained Junior B Northmen General Manager Lindsay Sanderson. "It's a rebuild year that we are working on."

A rebuild year is not new for Junior sports clubs. As players advance or graduate, coaches and general managers begin looking for new players to fill roster spots.

The higher-level teams always draw from

the other teams in an organization.

"The Junior A club, they've been in the Minto Cup for the last two years. When you're challenging for the cup, you have to make trades and try to get the edge," Sanderson explained. "They've had to rely on our team to fill a lot of their void. The nice thing about it is we're a lacrosse town and there are some really good quality kids that played for us last year that will do well with the Junior A's."

Sanderson said they are now looking at players who graduated from the Minor system last year.

"There will be four or five of the top U17 players that will make our team and we will probably take three or four from the Junior

C team who have played a couple of years at Junior C and now they're ready for Junior B. We also brought in a couple of young men from Nova Scotia on an inter-provincial transfer, so we're filling the void."

The Ontario Junior B Lacrosse League has 24 teams in two divisions this year. The Northmen are in the West Division.

The Orangeville Junior B Northmen regular season will get underway on Thursday, Apr. 23, when they travel to Hamilton to take on the Bengals.

The Northmen Junior B home opener is scheduled for Saturday, May, 2, when they will host the Wallaceburg Red Devils at the Alder Street arena in Orangeville.

Game time is 7 p.m.

Stayner eliminated from PJHL playoffs after losing to Fergus in four-game sweep

Written By **BRIAN LOCKHART**

Three out of four conference finals have been decided in the Provincial Junior Hockey League (PJHL) after weekend play.

Locally, the Stayner Siskens are done for the season after losing in a four-game sweep to the Fergus Whalers.

The final game was played in Fergus on Sunday, April 12, and ended with a 3-2 win for the Whalers.

The Siskens eliminated the Alliston Hornets in the North Carruthers division championship in a series that went six games. That series wrapped up on April 1 in Alliston.

Fergus will go on to play the East Conference winner once that series is finished in the Schmalz Cup semi-final.

The Frankford Huskies are currently leading the Uxbridge Bruins 3-2 in the East Conference.

Frankford had a solid 3-1 lead, but the Bruins got back into the series with a 3-1 win in Game 5 on Sunday, April 12, on Frankford's home ice.

Game 6 of the East Conference series was scheduled for April 14, with results not available at press time.

In the South conference, the Tavistock Braves have emerged as the 2026 champions after eliminating the Dundas Blues in a

series that went four games.

The series ended on Saturday, April 11, on Tavistock home ice with a 3-2 win for the Braves.

Tavistock will now move on to the semi-final round of competition.

They will face the Lakeshore Canadiens in the semi-final.

The Canadiens won the West Conference title by knocking out the Mt. Brydges Bulls

dogs in a four-game sweep.

Lakeshore had an easy series win, dominating all four games.

The two teams remaining after the semi-final round of the playoffs will compete for the 2026 Schmalz Cup Junior C championship.

It has been a long season with a lot of exciting small-town hockey around the province.

As bears exit hibernation, OPP and province urge caution during encounter

Written By **SAM ODROWSKI**

As the seasons change and bears emerge from hibernation, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) is working with the provincial government to inform the public on how to stay safe and prevent attacks.

While Black bear attacks are extremely rare in Ontario, averaging less than one per year and often happening in remote areas, there is currently little natural food for bears. This results in them searching for other food sources, lying in garbage bins, bird feeders, and other residential receptacles, bringing them into populated areas.

If bears begin to make their presence known, there are several things the public can do to stay safe.

The OPP and the province suggest never feeding or approaching bears, storing garbage in waste containers with tight-fitting lids (preferably indoors), and waiting until pickup day to put out garbage for collection to reduce the odds of an encounter.

Another key suggestion is to remove bird feeders for spring and summer and instead offer birds natural alternatives, such as flowers, nesting boxes, or fresh water.

After barbecuing, be sure to clean the grill and grease traps of any food residue.

Keeping dogs on a leash and storing pet food indoors are two other ways to reduce one's chances of encountering a bear, according to a joint statement by the province and OPP.

Bears have excellent memories and will return to where they have found food in the past, sometimes travelling over 100 kilometres.

If bears have been an issue at your property in the past, remain vigilant for their re-



turn, especially as the weather warms and they emerge from hibernation.

"Alert neighbours about any bear activity and share these Bear Wise tips to reduce attractants in your community," reads the province's joint statement with the OPP.

When encountering a bear in a non-life-threatening setting, the public is encouraged to call a non-emergency, toll-free Bear Wise reporting line at 1-866-514-2327. The line operates from April 1 to Nov. 30 and is available 24/7.

If a bear poses an immediate threat by exhibiting threatening or aggressive behaviour, remain calm and call 911.

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Love Jack

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