



THE KAMLOOPS Self Advocate NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2024

FREE! TAKE ONE! Serving people since September of 2013.

March is here and we are excited to welcome spring. There is a lot to celebrate and enjoy this month, including Irish Heritage Month, St. Patrick's Day, World Down Syndrome Day, Easter, and more. We've got articles and activities for all of this and more.

As the weather changes, spring encourages us to step outside and enjoy the great outdoors. It's a time for celebrating friendships, embracing new beginnings, and soaking in the positive vibes of the season.

This month, we're also reminded of the importance of inclusion making sure everyone feels valued and appreciated. With that in mind, we also have some disability awareness articles, featuring stories from the Easter Seals House in Vancouver, BC.

We'd love to hear how you are celebrating the changing seasons. Why not send us a story of your successes, experiences, and advocacy and we can share it with our readers? Let's make this spring a season to remember. Happy reading!

A New Experience in the Online Kamloops Self Advocate Newsletter



Hey Readers! Look for a few changes in the on-line newsletter. We're adding a table of contents to make it easier to find articles and activities. We're also shortening the newsletters, so it will be closer to 12 pages. As much as we like to offer lots of stories and information, we realize it can be a bit overwhelming when the newsletter is really long.

Get ready for a newsletter that's not just informative but also perfect for you! We will keep sharing great stories, important updates, and cool ideas. The Kamloops Self Advocate Newsletter is changing for the better, all for you, the fantastic readers!

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Celebrating Disability Awareness, success stories and inclusion for all! Written by people with Diverse Abilities ***Do you have a story idea or an event you think would be good for our readers? Contact us at***

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Office phone: 250-828-1344. We always look for writers and people to interview.
Please subscribe! Be sure to check out our online newsletter for bonus stories!
KSA Facebook page: The Kamloops Self Advocate Newsletter On KSA website: ksanews.ca



Special thanks to The Printing Place for your continued support of the Kamloops Self-Advocate Newsletter.



The KSA has created a program to recognize and promote local businesses that are accessible and supportive of all members of the community. The businesses listed here are friendly, accessible, and great to deal with.

Ability Friendly Accessible Business Program

- Horizon Dental Clinic**
- 5 Bean Brewbar & Café**
- All Around Gamerz**
- The Vic Downtown**
- Kamloops Film society**
- Kamloops Art Party**
- New Horizons Professional Support Services Inc.**
- Our Footprints Eco Store**



Krystian's Corner

It's time to say goodbye to winter blues and say hello to Spring. With spring the weather changes and people are outside more. People can go for a hike in the spring and relax in the nice fresh air. It's also a time to celebrate friendships and new beginnings.

This month we are celebrating St. Patrick's Day and Irish Heritage month in Canada. On St. Patrick's Day people can drink green beer, go to St. Patrick Day Parties, go to Irish-themed restaurants, go to St. Patrick Day parades, and have fun. We've also got

an interesting interview about the Easter Seals House in Vancouver, BC. I also have a cool story to tell about my time at the Easter Seals House.

This newsletter is here to help and support people with different abilities, just like myself. I also talk about important things to put a positive spin to the articles created by the newsletter team.

In our newsletter, we love celebrating community living and inclusion. We're working hard to make sure everyone feels welcome. We're also trying to stop people from treating others unfairly, and we want everyone to understand and accept each other.

There is too much negative news these days so I try to keep things as positive as I can in the newsletter. We also share exciting things like movies, music, entertaining articles, word searches, and tips for mental health and wellness.

This month let's think about the choices we make, especially when it comes to the Community Living Movement. I believe in celebrating what people with different abilities and disabilities can do, not what they can't do. Everyone has unique strengths, and that's what makes us special!



Neurodiversity Celebration Week
18th - 24th March 2024



Taken from <https://www.neurodiversityweek.com/>.

What is Neurodiversity Celebration Week?

Neurodiversity Celebration Week is a worldwide initiative that challenges stereotypes and misconceptions about neurological differences. It aims to transform how neurodivergent individuals are perceived and supported by providing schools, universities, and organisations with the opportunity to recognise the many talents and advantages of being neurodivergent, while creating more inclusive and equitable cultures that celebrate differences and empower every individual.

Why were we founded?

“I founded Neurodiversity Celebration Week in 2018 because I wanted to change the way learning differences are perceived. As a teenager who is autistic and has ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia, my experience has been that people often focus on the challenges of neurological diversity. I wanted to change the narrative and create a balanced view which focuses equally on our talents and strengths.”

Siena Castellon, Founder

'Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour' coming to Disney+ in March.

Taken from <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/business/story/2024-02-07/taylor-swift-eras-tour-movie-disney-plus>

BY CHRISTI CARRAS, MEG JAMES

FEB. 7, 2024, 1:37 PM PT



The blockbuster "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" concert movie will join the Disney+ streaming service March 15.

Walt Disney Co. announced Wednesday that it secured streaming rights to last year's smash hit film in a deal that demonstrated, once again, the enormous appeal — and economic prowess — of the pop superstar.

The movie was one of last year's biggest hits. Distributed by AMC Theatres, "Taylor Swift: The Eras Tour" collected \$96 million in ticket sales during its first four days at the domestic box office — the highest opening ever for a concert film. It went on to become the 10th highest grossing movie of 2023 in the U.S. and Canada with about \$179 million, according to measurement firm Comscore.

Worldwide, the film raked in more than \$260 million.

The arrangement continues Swift's association with the Burbank entertainment giant. Disney+ is already the home of Swift's "Folklore: Long Pond Studio Sessions," which saw the singer perform intimate renditions of the tracks on her Grammy-winning eighth studio album at Long Pond Studio in New York.

The extended "Taylor's Version" of the Eras Tour movie will include songs not featured in the theatrical release, including the "Folklore" single "Cardigan" and unspecified acoustic performances (likely culled from the rotating "surprise songs" portion of Swift's set).

Disney did not disclose what it's paying for the streaming rights to the concert film.

Swift was the big winner at Sunday night's [66th Grammy Awards](#), collecting the album of the year award for "Midnights" and setting a new record for the most wins by an artist in the annual ceremony's most prestigious category. Swift announced the April release of a [new album, "The Tortured Poets Department,"](#) earlier in the evening when she accepted the award for pop vocal album.

The North American leg of Swift's Ticketmaster-breaking greatest hits tour is estimated to have earned more than \$700 million in ticket sales and elevated the "Cruel Summer" hitmaker to billionaire status. The concert movie was filmed during Swift's six-night stint at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood.

Since then, the global pop sensation has taken her concert overseas. She is slated to perform several shows in Tokyo this week before her boyfriend, NFL superstar Travis Kelce, is set to play in this year's Super Bowl in Las Vegas.

March is Music Therapy Awareness Month

Taken from <https://www.hvh.ca/march-is-music-therapy-awareness-month>

Submitted By: Meghan Walsh, MTA
Therapeutic Services Director



Music therapy is the skillful use of music and musical elements by an accredited music therapist to promote, maintain, and restore mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

Music has nonverbal, creative, structural, and emotional qualities. These are used in the therapeutic relationship to facilitate contact, interaction, self-awareness, learning, self-expression, communication, and personal development.



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Centre

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Stigma-Free Stories

By Krystian

There is a great new web-site that has stigma-free mental health stories. We wrote about the site last month and wanted to share an update, which includes Krystian's story. You can go here to read more of his story:

<https://studentmentalhealthtoolkit.com/youth-corner/stigma-free-stories-public/>.

It shares about how I didn't let anything stop me from starting my business! Even though I sometimes feel anxious because of my anxiety disorder, I didn't give up. I showed everyone that I can do anything I set my mind to! You can also watch a short video about me, which is only 2 minutes long. Just click on the link for more information. I hope my story inspires you to never give up on your dreams, no matter what challenges you face. Or, maybe you will feel inspired to share your story as well.



Remembering Toby Keith

Toby Keith was a famous singer who sang songs like "How Do You Like Me Now?!" and "I Love This Bar." People who love country music really liked him. But now, Toby Keith is not here anymore. He passed away when he was 62 years old in 2024 because of cancer. He had something called stomach cancer, which is a very serious sickness.

We should remember Toby and all the happiness he gave us through his songs. Let's take a moment to think about him and send our prayers to his family and friends. It's very sad when someone we love goes away, but we can keep Toby's memory alive by listening to his songs and remembering the fun times we had when we listened to him.

Toby Keith was a very special singer, and there will never be another one just like him. Many people, especially those who work in country music, loved him. Toby will always be in our hearts, and we will never forget him. Rest in peace, Toby Keith.

Respite: A Break from Everyday Life

By Krystian

Respite care is a special name for a short-term break for caregivers. It can also be a special time for the person receiving care. For me, respite is when someone helps me and gives my mom and me a break from each other. My respite provider, Chris, is like a superhero who comes to help us when we need it most. He's there when my mom needs a break, and when I need a break from her too.

One of the best things about respite is that it gives me the chance to do fun things with Chris. We go out to eat at restaurants, and we even go to the movies! Just the other month, on February 10th, we went to see a movie called "Mean Girls" at the Cineplex movie theater. It was so exciting!

"Mean Girls" is a movie about bullying, but it's also a musical comedy. That means there's lots of singing and dancing throughout the whole movie. It's a remake of an older movie, and it's full of funny and exciting parts. There are even scenes about Christmas and Halloween, which are my favorite holidays!

Did you know that the movie was based on a book called "Queen Bees and Wannabes" by Rosalind Wiseman? That's pretty cool! And guess what? They even turned it into a Broadway musical before making it into a movie again!

Watching movies is one of my favorite things to do and getting to see "Mean Girls" with Chris was an extra special treat.

Respite is not just about having fun though; it's also about taking care of ourselves. My mom works really hard to take care of me, but sometimes she needs a break. And that's okay! We all need a break sometimes. Respite gives her the chance to relax and recharge, so she can keep being the best mom ever.

So, that's what respite is all about. It's about taking a break, having fun, and taking care of each other. I'm grateful for Chris and all the other respite providers out there who help families like mine. And if you ever need a break, remember that it's okay to ask for help. We all deserve a little respite now and then.





Comedy Fundraiser for The LOOP Starring Big Daddy Tazz

Friday, March 22

\$20 +fees

EARLY SHOW: Doors 6:30 Comedy 7pm

LATE SHOW: Doors 8:45 Comedy 9PM

Come together as a community to laugh and raise money for The LOOP!

The LOOP is a Community Resource & Drop in Centre in its fifth year of operations providing meals, clothing, advocacy and supports to Kamloops Homeless and others living in poverty with mental, physical and substance use challenges.

Big Daddy Tazz turns mundane events into side-splitting stories! He is the act that has no act. His quick wit, improv style, crowd interaction, clean show and amazing stage presence bring audiences to their knees in laughter and to their feet with applause and adulation, with no two shows being the same.

His amazing stand-up comedy shows have been featured on Just for Laughs, the CBC Winnipeg Comedy Festival, CBC's "The Debaters" and the Comedy Network. Tazz once set a record for the longest standup comedy show at 8 ½ hours as a fundraiser for one of the many charities he supports.

After thirty years of denying he had the mental illnesses that were controlling his life, Tazz realized that being a manic-depressive, attention deficit, socially-anxious, obsessive-compulsive dyslexic could either destroy or enhance his life: the choice was his.

Today, audiences are happy to join him on his rapid cycle ride down the road to recovery that has led him from the psych ward at the Calgary Foothills Hospital to speaking engagements across North America.

Whether it's a corporate event or charity fundraiser, comedy show or keynote seminar, Tazz will make you laugh until you cry and then laugh some more, it's the bi-polar way.

"It was so nice to have an evening where everyone could laugh and no one felt uncomfortable. Tazz proves that you can get laughs without being foul or offensive"

CBC's Winnipeg Comedy Festival

Go here to buy Tickets <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/comedy-fundraiser-for-the-loop-starring-big-daddy-tazz-tickets-809678398887>



Kamloops Film Fest

Dates February 29th to March 9th, 2024

The Kamloops Film Festival, launched in 1997 as the Kamloops Canadian and International Film Festival, is a 10-day celebration of excellence in filmmaking. 20+ screenings take place in March, and include opening and closing galas, workshops, special guests and other events.

For more information on Kamloops Film Fest go here

<https://www.thekfs.ca/kff/>

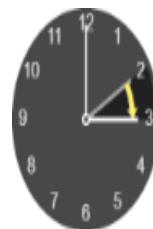
Mar 10, 2024 - Daylight Saving Time Starts

When local standard time is about to reach Sunday, March 10, 2024, 2:00:00 am clocks are turned forward 1 hour to Sunday, March 10, 2024, 3:00:00 am local daylight time instead.

Sunrise and sunset will be about 1 hour later on Mar 10, 2024 than the day before. There will be more light in the evening.

Also called Spring Forward, Summer Time, and Daylight Savings Time.

Taken from [Daylight Saving Time 2024 in British Columbia, Canada \(timeanddate.com\)](https://www.timeanddate.com)



BIG Little SCIENCE CENTRE
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BIG Little Science Centre: For ages 2 and up.
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Accessible. 458 Seymour Street, Kamloops.
250-554-2572 BLSCS.org



Quotes

“My advice to other disabled people would be, concentrate on things your disability doesn’t prevent you doing well, and don’t regret the

things it interferes with. Don’t be disabled in spirit as well as physically.” -**Stephen Hawking**

“A hero is an ordinary individual who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles.” -**Christopher Reeve**

“... What I learned was that these athletes were not disabled, they were super-abled. The Olympics is where heroes are made. The Paralympics is where heroes come.” — **Joey Reiman**

“I choose not to place ‘DIS’, in my ability.”
— **Robert M. Hensel**

Jokes

Q: Who says sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me?

A: A guy who has never been hit with a dictionary.

Q: How do you make a fire with two sticks?

A: Make sure one is a match!

Q: Why did the banana go to the hospital?

A: Because he wasn’t peeling well!

Q: Why can’t you say a joke while standing on ice?

A: Because it might crack up!

Fryer’s Express Food Truck

By Riley

Hi! I went to a good food truck today. I got myself some mac and cheese and a chilli cheese dog. It was great. I’m sharing a picture of what their business is all about. I suggest everyone try the food. If you are going to Canadian Tire, drop by for a visit there. I’m sure you will like it just like me. You can also follow them on social media.

Kudos to the owner and chef, Gordon Fryer.

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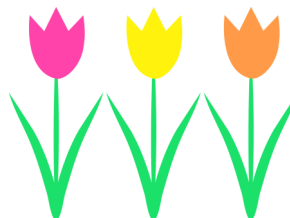
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S F N U S R P R S F Z R A R J
L T Z U U P C I A R G Q S G M
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WORD SEARCH

- ASH WEDNESDAY
- LEPRECHAUN
- PANCAKES
- SPRING
- BIRDS
- MARDI GRAS
- PARADE
- ST. PATRICKS DAY
- FAT TUESDAY
- MASKS
- SHAMROCK
- TIME CHANGE



"Ben's Journey: A Big Move and New Beginnings"

In the past, I used to live in a small town called 100 Mile House with my parents. In October of 2014, my family and I decided it was time for a change. We packed our bags and moved to a larger city called Kamloops.

It was time for my family and me to embark on a new chapter in our lives. The move from a small town to a bigger city was filled with excitement, marking the beginning of something special.

Upon our arrival in Kamloops, we started our new adventure by exploring different living options. After careful consideration, my parents and I decided to try something called home sharing. It provided me with a chance to experience a different way of living and make new friends.

After several years, the real magic unfolded when my parents and I found a fantastic apartment for me. With supports in my new living situation I instantly fell in love with this new model of living.

Living in Kamloops brought about many changes for me. I gained new neighbors and discovered new places to explore. Every day became an opportunity for a fresh start and new adventures.

I want to express my gratitude to my parents for their help during this exciting time. Their support made the move smoother, and I felt a deep sense of appreciation for their love and care.

As I settled into my new home, I realized that change could be a good thing. The larger city offered more opportunities, and I embraced the chance to learn and grow. I made new friends, and one special friend, Krystian, became my new best friend. We enjoy going to movies, celebrating holidays together, and exchanging gifts during Christmas. Krystian and I even went on a trip by ourselves, attending a self-advocacy retreat in Mission, BC.

Krystian also became my sighted guide, helping me navigate the world around us. We enjoy springtime adventures, sleepovers, and the joy of celebrating friendships.

My apartment is a special place, filled with love and good times. It isn't just an apartment; it is a home where lasting memories are made. It is a place where I can dream big and imagine all the wonderful things the future holds.



Nanaimo BC
May 30 - June 1, 2024

Join us to learn, celebrate,
network, and share real stories
for disability inclusion.

Register
Today!



inclusionbc.org/conf-2024



Enhancing Each Day
for Each Individual



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of BC Individuals for over 35 years.

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What is World Down Syndrome Day?

By Dominique

World Down Syndrome Day is to raise awareness, love, and support for people with Down Syndrome. I hope you will join me on March 21st to celebrate world Down Syndrome Day. Family and



Friends please wear some bright colored and different patterned socks to celebrate the uniqueness of the triplicated 21st chromosome which causes Down Syndrome. This lots of socks campaign is being

done to spread the awareness of World Down Syndrome Day. There are three different types of Down Syndrome, which makes people with Down Syndrome very diverse individuals. There is Mosaism, Translocation and Tri-somy 21. The theme this year is “end the stereotypes”, Despite our differences people with special needs are mostly just like you. We go to school, university, spend time with family and friends, and work. Growing up with DS I realized how unique and diverse I am. All my friends are unique too. I can do everything you all can, just in my own way. Having DS is just a part of me and my friends. I am a strong, confident, young lady. Please don’t forget to post your fun socks on to the Down Syndrome Facebook page!!



March 2024 Irish Heritage Month, Canada “official”

Taken from: <https://celticacademy.ca/march-2024-irish-heritage-month-canada-official>

Its official- the month of March has been declared “Irish Heritage Month” by the Government of Canada-

Whereas, in 2004 the Government of Ontario proclaimed Bill 33: An Act proclaiming Irish Heritage Day- March 17th, the day of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Irish, and Whereas, the Government of Canada marked the

first official Irish Heritage Month in Canada in March 2022, Whereas, today almost 4.6 million Canadians in towns and cities across Canada can trace their ancestry back to Ireland, Whereas, Irish Canadians have greatly contributed to the story of our country, province and town- this month is an opportunity to learn more about the history, culture and positive impacts to our local communities-

#celticacademyirishdancecanada invite you to attend the National Flag Raising Ceremonies in your local communities in the Month of March 2024.

A Pot of Gold

By Tami

I hope you have fun with this St Patrick’s Day craft. Crafting can be calming and relaxing to do as a hobby. It takes your mind off your daily stresses and worries. You can be as creative as you want with crafting it doesn’t have to be perfect, that’s what its all about! Just have fun!

Leprechaun Pot of Gold

You will need:

Terracotta Pot

Paints

Paint Brush

Easter Grass

Yellow Wrapped Candies (any gold foiled wrap e.g. Chocolate)

Variety of coloured pipe cleaners

Paint the terracotta pot any colour you would like and let dry. Glue one end of the pipe cleaner to the rim of the terracotta pot and the other end on to the opposite side. The pipe cleaner should go over top of the pot in an arch like a rainbow. Then add the easter grass inside the painted terracotta pot. After that add your foiled gold candies into the pot.



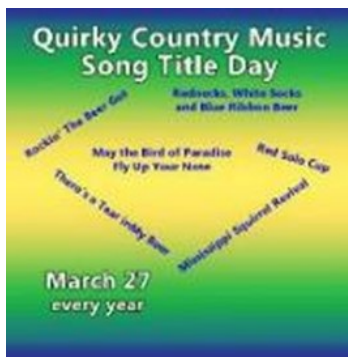
Blazers Report

By Andrew

With the second half of the season underway, the Blazers have a record of 15 Wins 29 Losses 3

Overtime Losses and 2 Shootout Losses through 49 games so far this season. They are still sitting in last place in the BC Division, Western Conference and in the Overall Standings. Here’s hoping that the team can make a good push until the end of the season on March 22nd and 23rd when they play the Prince George Cougars.





Quirky Country Music Song Titles Day

Taken from <https://nationaltoday.com/quirky-country-music-song-titles-day/>

Quirky Country Music Song Titles Day is a yearly event that takes place on March 27. Quirky Country Music Song Titles Day was established to recognize the unique titles of the songs that are available. There are numerous quirky country music song titles available; therefore, a special day in the calendar was established to honor them. While the lyrics to country music may be humorous, it's not always obvious from the titles. But today is all about those titles that make you pause and laugh as well as wonder what was going through the singer's head when they named the song.

HISTORY OF QUIRKY COUNTRY MUSIC SONG TITLES DAY

While many musical styles impacted country music, its roots can be traced back to eastern Tennessee. In the 1920s, studios in Bristol, Johnson City, and Knoxville began recording the unique sounds of mountaineer artists from the Great Smoky Mountains. The music of former Appalachian people who had relocated to Atlanta to work in its cotton mills pumped through the city's robust music culture. They dreaded the "hillbilly music" that they left behind. Promoters could now commercialize country music. Country music became an acknowledged genre when a promoter "discovered" Fiddlin' John Carson.

Early A.M. radio stations began playing the distinct regional music on "barn dance" programming in the 1930s introducing new fans to country music. Until the 1980s, rural A.M. radio played mostly country music. Country music had a vast musical heritage. It increased in popularity to encompass western swing, honky tonk, country boogie, and rockabilly. Regular boundary-crossing encouraged audiences to define country music broadly. Several renowned groups released hundreds of songs in many genres.

Country music has endured for nearly a century due to its adaptability. Like country musicians in the 1920s and 1930s, performers since the 1970s have refused to be pigeonholed. 1970s country music was transformed by country-pop and country-rock. Country music has been hybridized into the 21st century, with country performers topping the charts. Country music continues to captivate audiences with captivating musical fusions.

Magic Minty Fudge

Taken from <https://www.bettycrocker.com/recipes/magic-minty-fudge/efab693f-e9a4-42f6-b332-d5bbce485292>

This delectable fudge, made with Betty Crocker Rich & Creamy frosting, can be pulled together in only ten minutes. No wonder it's called "magic!"

by Brooke Lark

Updated May 24, 2022

Ingredients

- 1 bag (12 oz) dark chocolate chips (2 cups)
- 1 tub (16 oz) Betty Crocker™ Rich & Creamy Milk Chocolate Frosting
- 1 bag (10 oz) mint-flavored chocolate chips (1 2/3 cups)
- 1 tub (16 oz) Betty Crocker™ Rich & Creamy Vanilla Frosting
- 1/2 cup white vanilla baking chips
- 2 tablespoons Betty Crocker™ Decorating Decors chocolate candy sprinkles

Steps

- 1 Spray 9-inch square pan with baking spray with flour. In medium microwavable bowl, microwave dark chocolate chips uncovered on High in 30-second increments, stirring after each, until melted and smooth. Stir in chocolate frosting. Spread in pan.
- 2 In another microwavable bowl, microwave mint chips uncovered on High in 30-second increments, stirring after each, until melted and smooth. Stir in vanilla frosting. Spread over chocolate layer.
- 3 In small resealable freezer plastic bag, place white chips; seal bag. Microwave on High 30 to 60 seconds until softened. Gently squeeze bag until chips are smooth. Cut off tiny corner of bag; squeeze bag to drizzle melted white chips over mint layer.
- 4 Top with chocolate sprinkles. Cover; refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour. Cut into 4 rows by 4 rows.

Tips from the Betty Crocker Kitchens

Tip 1 Using baking spray with flour makes removing the fudge from the pan quick and easy.

Tip 2 Make Grasshopper Fudge by pressing crushed creme-filled chocolate sandwich cookies between the chocolate and mint layers.



Easter Seals House

By Krystian

Meet Ann Fonseca, Director of Easter Seals House. She took some time to answer questions about Easter Seals House.

What is Easter Seals House?

Easter Seals House is a home away from home that provides safe and affordable accommodation to individuals and families traveling to access medical care. The House consists of 49 self-contained rooms with private bathrooms and kitchenettes. There is access to laundry on-site, communal space, and the House's location is near BC Children's, BC Women's, and Vancouver General Hospital.

What is the purpose of Easter Seals House?

Easter Seals House is a supportive environment where at the end of what can be long, stressful days of appointments, treatment and therapies, our guests can return to relax and unwind.

It is also a place of respite for parents and caregivers of persons with disabilities to give them a place to rest and recharge. For so many adults and families, knowing Easter Seals House is here gives them a sense of peace and calmness. The House is a safe, affordable home that helps relieve families of the stress and financial burden of finding somewhere to stay in an expensive, and unfamiliar big city.

Who can use Easter Seals House?

Individuals and families travelling to Vancouver from communities across British Columbia and the Yukon for medical care can access the House. We also provide respite stays to parents and families.

What is the best part of working at the Easter Seals House in Vancouver?

The best part of working at the House is meeting our guests and knowing that we are providing a calm, welcoming space to help them on their healing journey.

How did Easter Seals House come about?

When Lions Clubs formed the BC Lions Society for Children with Disabilities (Easter Seals BC & Yukon) in 1947, they recognized the need for people to have access to affordable accommodation when travelling to Vancouver to seek medical attention for their children. They also saw the need to offer accommodation to Indigenous peoples who needed to travel to Vancouver for medical attention. Funds were raised, and in 1955 the first Easter Seals House was built.

2020 marked the 65th anniversary of Easter Seals House, and also, the 35th anniversary at its current location on Oak Street, in Vancouver, which opened its doors in 1985. Since first opening, Easter Seals House has been a home-away-from-home to over one million guests who come to stay when traveling to Vancouver for medical appointments, treatments or to visit a patient.

What do you enjoy about the Easter Seals House?

Whether it's seeing a guest making cookies in the lounge or hearing the little ones playing in the garden, it's a wonderful feeling knowing that every day we are coming to a warm, welcoming environment.

What else would you like to add?

For me, at the heart of Easter Seals House is providing a space where our guests can feel "at home".



My Amazing Stay at Easter Seals House in Vancouver

By Krystian

When I was a child, I had some the amazing experiences staying at the Easter Seals House in Vancouver, BC. It was a fantastic experience that I will always cherish.

The Easter Seals House is a wonderful place where families like mine can stay when they need to visit the BC Children's Hospital, located on Oak Street in Vancouver. I want to tell you all about my adventures and why the Easter Seals House is such an essential and warm place for families.

When I was a child, I had to go to the BC Children's Hospital with my mom. It was a bit scary, but knowing that we had a comfortable and welcoming place to stay made everything a lot better. The Easter Seals House became our home during that time. The room has a kitchenette in it with 2 single beds, but cots are also provided if needed. They have a playroom down the hall filled with lots of toys and a TV. If you don't want to cook, there are places to eat not far away. There is also a bus stop close by if you want to go and explore Vancouver.

One of the best things about the Easter Seals House is that it's a short distance away from the BC Children's Hospital. This is great because families like mine can focus on getting the medical care, they need without worrying about traveling long distances.

The house itself is like a warm hug. The staff at the Easter Seals House were so kind and friendly, making us feel welcome from the moment we arrived. They understood that we were going through a tough time, and their support meant the world to us.

The rooms at the Easter Seals House were comfortable and had everything we needed. It felt like our own little space where we could relax and recharge after a day at the hospital. There were communal areas too, where families could come together, share stories, and support each other.

But the support didn't end with the physical space. The Easter Seals House also provided resources and information that helped families navigate their way through a challenging time. From practical advice to emotional support, the Easter Seals House went above and beyond to ensure that families felt cared for.

During our stay, I also got to explore Vancouver a bit. The city is beautiful, with its stunning parks, vibrant neighborhoods, and friendly people. Despite the reason for our visit, being in Vancouver and staying at the Easter Seals House made the experience a bit brighter.

I can't express enough how important it is for people to know about the Easter Seals House. It's a haven for families facing medical challenges, providing them with a comforting and supportive environment. By raising awareness about this incredible place, we can help ensure that more families get the assistance they need during difficult times.

My stay at the Easter Seals House in Vancouver was a positive and uplifting experience during a challenging period. I hope that more people learn about the Easter Seals House and support its mission to be a home away from home for families in need. If you want to know more or contribute, visit their website at

<https://www.eastersealsbcy.ca/easter-seals-house/>.

Together, we can make a difference and spread the word about this fantastic place that holds a special place in my heart.

KUNG FU PANDA 4 IN THEATRES MARCH 8

This spring, for the first time in almost a decade, comedy icon Jack Black returns to his role as Po, the world's most unlikely kung fu master, with a hilarious, butt-kicking new chapter in DreamWorks Animation's beloved action-comedy franchise: Kung Fu Panda 4.

Genre: Animated Comedy Adventure

Cast: Jack Black, Awkwafina, Viola Davis, Dustin Hoffman, James Hong, Bryan Cranston, Ian McShane and Ke Huy Quan

Director: Mike Mitchell **Producer:** Rebecca Huntley

Co-Director: Stephanie Ma Stine Taken from <https://www.kungfupanda.ca/>



Kindness and Compassion with Gwen Kerr

By Lisa Coriale

As self advocates, we teach those around us how to look at life from our perspective. Kindness and compassion change our interactions from strained, stressful, unpleasant, and hurtful to easy, peaceful, joyful, and healthy. There are many simple ways to express and offer kindness and compassion each day. This feature shows us how many different individuals use kindness and compassion to improve their daily lives and the lives of those around them.



Please tell me about yourself.

My name is Gwen Kerr. I moved to Kamloops three years ago with my husband. We love it here and have bought a trailer which has allowed us to begin to really get to know B.C. and appreciate its diverse natural landscape. I love art and enjoy looking at works by other people, as well as creating things myself. I paint and work with textiles. It is important to me to find situations where I can continually learn and grow. I am currently a student in the Master of Arts in Human Rights and Social Justice program at Thompson Rivers University.

What do you do for a living?

I am retired from the Federal Government. I spent almost all of my career doing policy work in the Immigration program. I learned a lot throughout my career and am grateful for the experiences and opportunities I had to help make Canada a safer and more welcoming country for immigrants.

What does kindness and compassion mean to you?

Kindness and compassion are ways we can gently approach life and those around us in order to increase harmony and peace in the world. I think kindness and compassion are things we need to consciously cultivate. It's not as though we are born with them – we have to turn our minds to creating them and make a commitment to applying them in our lives.

Why is it important to show kindness and compassion to others?

The well-known 'golden rule' applies here. To me it's common sense to treat others as we would like to be treated ourselves, and I know I am happy to receive kindness and compassion in unlimited doses, so why shouldn't I offer it whenever I have the opportunity? What I have found is that as I've increased my ability to extend kindness and compassion to others, I've felt better about myself, and have been able to be more generous towards myself with kindness and compassion. It's a win-win.

How do you show kindness and compassion to others?

Sometimes it's being a good listener – just looking someone in the eyes and taking in what they are saying while trying to really understand them as a fellow human being. Sometimes it's smiling at someone. It could also be sharing my time with someone in a way that shows them that they matter to me. It might mean being willing to soften my heart and truly let go of resentment I am holding towards them, or just being willing to warmly hold that person in my consciousness and wish them well. We can also express it through words by telling others we are happy they are in our lives, that we enjoy their company, and by honestly sharing what we see that is good in them.

How can people show compassion when they are in community?

I think working to treat others equitably can be a life-long exploration. It means being willing to be equally open and kind to those we disagree with or feel different from as well as those we see eye-to-eye with or can relate to easily. It means working to deeply understand others and why they are the way they are – especially if they are different than we are. When we are in a community it means demonstrating respect for everyone, regardless of who they are.

What are some ways people can show kindness and compassion to people with diverse abilities?

I think it's valuable to take the time to get to know people with diverse abilities. Spending time together to understand them as individuals is important. We all like it when people ask us about ourselves and show interest in our lives. It's no different with people with diverse abilities.

Gwen gives me a lot of hope because she knows that all people are valuable and worth our time. She is willing to really "see" people of all abilities and treat them the way she wants to be treated.

Continued on next page

Kindness and Compassion Continued

Being kind to ourselves improves our mental health. In what ways are you kind to yourself?

This can be such a challenge. Last week I was cranky with a clerk at the grocery store. I had to work through being sad about not being a kind person in that situation and then I was able to go back after a few days and tell her I was sorry. I actually got to the place where I could laugh about myself being a cranky old lady in that situation. It may sound odd but that felt like being extremely kind to myself because I was able to let go and forgive myself for my bad behavior.



People sometimes have negative views and/or attitudes towards people with diverse abilities. What do you do, or can you do, to increase kindness and compassion for those who are diversely abled?

Well, I think this starts with *choosing* not to have negative views and/or attitudes towards people with diverse abilities. It's a conscious decision to see each person we encounter, regardless of their abilities, as a fellow human being and treat them with openness and respect.

Lisa's Thoughts - Throughout the process of doing these kindness and compassion interviews, I have learned that I believe it is important to feature everyday people. Different people have different perspectives and I enjoy hearing from those who are not well known in our community. I think that they are people many others can relate to.

Gwen points out that we aren't born with the skills of kindness and compassion. We have to make a conscious effort to create them and then apply them in our lives. Part of this is doing what we can to understand others as fellow human beings. We have the most effect on people when we learn the ways that they feel understood and treat them that way. This shows them that they matter. Sharing with others the good that we see in them lifts their spirits and ours.

The Community Living Movement: A Better Life for Everyone

By Krystian

Once upon a time, some parents had a big idea. They wanted to make sure that their children, who had special needs, could live happy and free lives, just like everyone else. This idea sparked something amazing called the Community Living Movement.



The Community Living Movement began because parents believed that their children with developmental disabilities deserved to have choices in their lives. In the past, many people with special needs lived in old institutions where they didn't have much say in what they did or how they lived. These parents thought that everyone, no matter their abilities, should have the chance to make choices about their own lives.

One important idea of the Community Living Movement is inclusive employment. This means that people with developmental disabilities should have the opportunity to work at jobs that they enjoy and are good at. Just like anyone else, they should have the chance to contribute to their community and feel proud of their work.

Another important part of the movement is where people with developmental disabilities live. Instead of living in big institutions, they should be able to choose where they want to live. It could be in their own apartment, a house, or a place where they feel comfortable and happy.

What we eat is also a big choice, and the Community Living Movement believes that everyone should get to decide what goes on their plate. People with special needs should have the chance to enjoy different foods, just like anyone else.

Friendship is another important part of life, and the Community Living Movement says that everyone deserves to have friends. People with developmental disabilities should be able to choose who they want to be friends with and be able to spend time with people who make them happy.

Imagine being told when to go to sleep every night. That might not be very fun, right? Well, the Community Living Movement believes that people with special needs should have the freedom to decide what time they want to go to sleep. This helps them create a routine that works for them and makes them feel good.

Hobbies are something we all love, like going to the movies, eating out, going to concerts, going to plays, going to parks, and exercising. The Community Living Movement says that people with developmental disabilities should have the chance to enjoy these hobbies, just like everyone else. It makes life more exciting and enjoyable.

The Community Living Movement is all about making sure that people with developmental disabilities have the same opportunities and choices as everyone else. It started with parents who wanted the best for their children, and now it's a big movement that helps create happier and more inclusive communities. Everyone deserves to live a life full of choices, friendships, and joy, and the Community Living Movement is working hard to make that happen for everyone.