



GOOD NEWS TORONTO
Our Everyday Heroes

Food and Culture: One Toronto Restaurant Owner Gives back



Roberto Martella exuberantly joyful in front of his establishment that serves as a community hub

Photo by Barry Shainbaum

AISLING RIORDAN

As a journalist, I've interviewed many people over the years, but I have to say I've never met a restaurant owner quite like Roberto Martella. Until now, that is.

Roberto Martella and his wife Lucia own Grano restaurant — an Italian eatery at Yonge and Eglinton. Most restaurants that I go into do the usual, serve food and drink — but not Grano. Roberto makes sure of that. Since its opening in 1986, it has been a cultural piazza or “salon” where people are encouraged to share and discuss ideas while eating great Italian food.

Roberto was born in Canada but it's not surprising why he's so passionate about the Italian culture when he tells me about his father. “My father came to Canada from

Continued on page 14

Inside This Issue



page 4

Passionate about presenting a positive image for the Jane and Finch area



page 7

Creativity flourishes at New Bloor Festival through art and music



page 6

Generations live on due to the humble heroics of gentle Giants



page 8

Making children laugh gives meaning to a rebellious soul
Please let me know if you need more



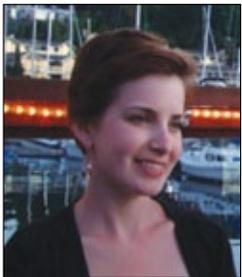
page 5

Undeterred by disabilities, determined to climb Mount Everest



Issue 7 Vol III

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Mission Statement

Good News Toronto celebrates the multitude of inspirational people who live in Toronto with the goal of motivating all of us to continue to make this city rich in everyday heroes.

Good News Toronto is a not-for-profit newspaper distributed at the beginning of the month throughout the GTA.

Good News Toronto had no political or religious affiliation.

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Dear Good News Toronto Readers,

I hope you have been enjoying your summer — one of the most spectacular ones we have experienced in Toronto in a long time.

I love summer. I love the sun and the heat. It allows me to do all the things that give me so much enjoyment. I can get around on my motor scooter (as does Roberto on our front cover), I can in-line skate on our many glorious park pathways, I can eat ice cream everywhere, and I can celebrate with Torontonians our abundant street festivals, such as the New Bloor Festival (page 7), sharing food, music, art, and good times.

One of my favourite activities this summer was the lunch the *Good News Toronto* extended family had at Palais Royale. On that beautiful Wednesday afternoon we gathered at this splendid vintage venue by the shores of the lake and partook of Chef Steffan Howard's creations. With this breathtaking view, we ate, told stories, laughed, and made new friends. And through everyone's generosity we raised funds to help us publish this paper.

We had such a wonderful time that we are doing it again! We would like to invite you to join us on **Wednesday, August 18th, at noon at Palais Royale**. Please check out our website for more details. Please call, email, or write to get your ticket. Do not let the summer go by without experiencing this wonderful day — and supporting *Good News Toronto* at the same time.



The Lunch Bunch at Palais Royale on July 14th

Another activity that has that has made my summer so much fun is doing random acts of kindness. I made lots of copies of the card on page 3 so when I indulge in my favourite summer treat — ice cream — I can treat the next person as well. Have you been one of my recipients? I hope so! Remember to send in your experience, as Barbara and Sharon have on page 3, and you could win a *Good News Toronto* T-shirt!

To encourage all of Toronto to participate in this profound endeavour, Stephen D'Amico, our Kindness Campaign manager, along with his team at Global Awakening In Action has created a **"Kindness Pays" Day on Saturday, August 21st at Nathan Philips Square from 2:00–4:00pm**. Lots of wonderful activities have been planned to encourage us, inspire us, and to collectively have fun as we embark on a multitude of acts of kindness. Please join us for this first event of its kind in Toronto. Together

let's create a groundswell of positive change!

Now, please make yourself the Summer-Thyme Lime Refresher on page 10, go outside to your favourite spot, and enjoy this August issue of *Good News Toronto*. As always, I appreciate hearing which hero touched you the most, which column resonated with you, and which photo sparked your curiosity. After reading your issue please pass it on to someone else. Let's keep good news going and kindness flowing.

I look forward to seeing you on August 18th and 21st!



Fondly,
 Eva Karpati
 Publisher/Editor
evakarpati@goodnewstoronto.ca

Join us for **LUNCH** at Palais Royale 1601 Lakeshore Blvd. W.

on Wednesday, August 18th at 12:00 noon

This is a wonderful opportunity to meet the GNT contributors, enjoy delicious local, sustainable food, and dine in an original historic Toronto landmark by the shores of the lake on a wonderful summer day.

Your \$20.00 minimum donation will benefit *Good News Toronto*.

R.S.V.P. to let us know you are coming at info@goodnewstoronto.ca or 416-661-2556, or visit <http://www.goodnewstoronto.ca/community.shtml> for more information and to pay online.

We truly look forward to an afternoon with you at the Palais Royale.
<http://www.palaisroyale.ca/>



Read us at www.goodnewstoronto.ca
 Email us at info@goodnewstoronto.ca
 Phone us at 416-661-2556
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The Kindness Campaign

STEPHEN D'AMICO

Last month we officially launched the Kindness Campaign here at *Good News Toronto*. Initially inspired by the desire to inject some kindness into the city following the end of the tragic Bryant–Sheppard case, we suggested placing flowers on someone's car or bike as a secret gift from the universe. But it is important to point out that the goal of our campaign goes beyond increasing empathy between cyclists and drivers, and includes our desire to inspire as many acts of kindness towards our fellow Torontonians as possible.

The concept is simple but powerful:

Each month we feature a suggested act of kindness. Readers are invited to perform the suggested random act of kindness (or one of their choosing) and leave behind the “Kindness Card” provided below.

The card explains the campaign and encourages the kindness recipient to “pay-it-forward” in the form of another act of kindness to a stranger. Do-gooders then submit the story of their act for inclusion in *Good News Toronto* and a chance to win a *Good News Toronto* T-shirt.

This month's story:

Our first story is from Bar-

bara Fishbein, a social worker at Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, who writes about facilitating a random act of kindness that was initiated by another person, powerfully reminding us that remaining anonymous never goes completely unnoticed.

Our second story is submitted by Sharon Smith, a school teacher in Toronto, whose story relates a humorous incident that arose when she decided to pay-it-forward with a gift card given by some of her students.

Please enjoy reading these stories. And as a reminder, write in and let us know about a random act of kindness you've either witnessed or participated in recently. If we end up printing your story,

we'll send you a *Good News Toronto* T-shirt as a commemorative token of our appreciation for your participation.

This month's suggestion:

As always, each month we suggest a random act of kindness to help get you started thinking about what you can do to bring a bit of kindness to an unsuspecting soul. Of course, our monthly suggestion is just that: a suggestion. We encourage you to let your spirit soar with possibilities, and then put those inspiring ideas into action through your spontaneous good deeds.

This month, we suggest sending a Thank you card or note of appreciation “from a

local citizen” to the officers at your local police station. Using the power of kindness, we can remind the officers on the police force that the citizens of Toronto appreciate the protection they give and the risks they take doing their jobs.



The Kindness Campaign is coordinated by Stephen D'Amico, founder of Global Awakening In Action. Please visit stephendamico.com and globalawakeninginaction.org for more information about our other work.

Reader Submissions of Random Acts of Kindness

From Barbara Fishbein

An anonymous person called me a while ago, as she had spotted a woman with three children, one with special needs, on a TTC bus. She had no name but thought the child may go to our centre (HOLLAND Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital). The centre serves thousands of clients, so as a social worker I certainly know many of them, but not all.

On the off chance that I could locate the family I asked the caller to give me a description of them. She told me that she saw a lady who was travelling with three boys. She continued to say that the mother appeared very tired but dedicated and hardworking and that one of the boys was in a wheelchair. She noticed the woman and valued how she cared for her sons as they travelled all together that day. She explained that the bus was travelling up Bayview at the time and that they got off at the stop that leads to our centre. She went on to say that she wanted to help the family in some way and that if they would accept it she wanted to give the mother a monetary gift. She wanted to remain anonymous and truly wanted to help if she could.

At first I thought about all the many families that I work with and how difficult it would be to find them. I listened further to the woman at the end of the line who sounded so genuine and sincere. I knew that if I did find them I would have to locate them and get their consent. I knew that there were many needy families and that this could potentially bring so much joy and hope to someone, as it was truly a random act of kindness.

After several hours and thinking about the time of day and the families I work with who take that TTC route with three children I realized that it could be indeed one of the families I work directly with. I also realized it was a family who was truly

in need, on welfare with a single parent raising not three but four sons on her own.

I called the mother and she was totally awestruck that a stranger would care enough to notice her and offer some assistance. I managed to connect them and she was given \$300.

A really special part of this story is that the client then took a portion of that money and donated it back to Holland Bloorview kids rehab for other families in need.

That day was very moving and reinforced my belief that Toronto was a truly good place to live. I call that lady an angel. I often think of that moment when I hesitate on deciding to give or not to give. When I tell the story I know others who are also inspired to put their thoughts into action. I applaud the donor for her act of courage in reaching out demonstrating a true act of human kindness and generosity that day.

From Sharon Smith

I was recently given a gift card from Starbucks and decided to treat a couple of friends while we were enjoying a brisk walk together. After placing our order, I offered the gift card for payment. The young man serving us asked if I was a teacher, to which I replied “Yes.” I had received the card as a gift from some of my students. Imagine my embarrassment when, after several tries, the card continued to show a zero balance! He then jokingly inquired, “Are you a bad teacher?” Upon hearing our laughter, the manager came over to see what was happening. After explaining the situation, she pressed a few buttons and, lo and behold, there was enough money to cover the cost of our drinks!

Thank you, Jessica for your “random act of kindness.”

Come to Toronto's First-Ever “Kindness Pays” Day

Join us on August 21st for *Good News Toronto's* first official “Kindness Pays” Day, a social action movement organized by Global Awakening In Action.

Learn how you can become a kindness activist, and start spreading kindness in our city!

Become part of a growing group and movement dedicated to changing the world one random act of kindness at a time, starting right here in our city.

August 21, 2010

2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Nathan Philips Square



Visit us on www.facebook.com/kindness.pays for more details

KINDNESS CARD

This Random Act of Kindness is sponsored by *Good News Toronto!*

Please help us **keep the kindness going...**

Give this Kindness Card to the next person you help. And, if you **pay it forward**, we would love to hear from you.

Just **write a brief description** of your act of kindness and email it to us at: info@goodnewstoronto.ca.

If your story is printed in our paper, you will receive a

FREE Good News Toronto T-Shirt

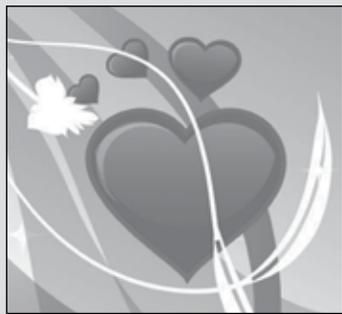
as a reminder of your good deed!

Visit goodnewstoronto.ca for more info.



Act with Courage

In this Q and A column, Communications Coach Vera Held explores with *Good News Toronto* readers important aspects of courage that surface in our personal and professional lives.



Q: I recently attended a conference overseas where I ran into “Frida,” a former business associate. I said a friendly “hello” and looked her straight in the eye, but Frida turned on her heel and did not acknowledge me. I was disgusted at her lack of business etiquette and her treatment of a fellow Canadian on foreign soil. Do you agree?

A: Frida’s got a few problems — thankfully none of which are yours. First, it’s unprofessional to not acknowledge someone who is simply making a salutation and demanding nothing more. What does it cost to say “hello”? Zilch. Yet Frida’s self-absorption took precedence. Second, Frida put her professional reputation in danger. Behaviours such as these spread like wildfire, especially at conferences. The inappropriate behaviour then takes on a whole new “status” once on terra firma and gossip will escalate. Moral of this story: Be nice. It’s the same price.

Q: I was standing by the elevator casually chatting with the son of the owner of our office building when all of a sudden “Priscilla,” the property manager, came up behind me and asked if I had any questions. I responded, “No, I don’t have any questions,” and I carried my conversation with the owner’s son to a natural conclusion. Although Priscilla didn’t interrupt again, she listened intently to every word we said. Is it my imagination or was she beyond rude?

A: Belligerent even. Perhaps Priscilla was concerned that you were talking about her. Or worse, that you were trying to get a deal on your office rent — behind her back. Despite her interruption, you chose to not return her rude-

ness. Further, you amicably concluded the conversation that you were in the middle of. Bravo. You’ve got class and finesse. And just to keep things in perspective, there are good property managers out there — Priscilla’s just not one of them.

Q: My colleague “George” receives \$25 an hour for an 8-hour day. The problem is that he consistently stretches out his day. So really he only works 4 hours, but gets paid for 8. Recently, a good man in our department was fired, and I believe George had something to do with his being fired but I can’t prove it. This situation really bugs me. I think the wrong man got axed.

A: I see why you are bugged. And it is clearly demotivating for you to see George getting paid for work that he could do in half the time. Here’s the rub: Will management appreciate your feedback? Or will you be seen as the office snitch if you come forward to report on George? Experience shows that eventually a person’s true colours surface and management gets savvy. What’s important is that you focus on you, and in doing the very best job that you can. When we put energy into situations and people that we have no control over, we take away from our self-motivation and our ability to continually challenge ourselves and grow. So target you as your number one client, and give yourself and your organization your absolute best.

Please forward queries on tough personal and professional situations to Vera at courage@goodnewstoronto.ca



Vera Held, M.Ed. is a coach, facilitator, speaker, writer, PR consultant, and the author of *How Not to Take it Personally* www.veraheld.com

There’s No Place Like Home

Paul Nguyen is proud of his childhood community, Jane and Finch, and hopes that Torontonians discover the beauty and inspiration it holds, just as he experienced it when he was a child.

ALINA OLSHENITSKY

Twenty-nine-year-old film producer and website developer Paul Nguyen grew up in one of Toronto’s most talked about neighbourhoods. No, it wasn’t in Forest Hills or anywhere in downtown Toronto — not even in the suburbs of the GTA. Paul has lived within a five-minute walk from the neighbourhood of Jane and Finch all his life, and he couldn’t be more thankful for this experience.

Unlike the media’s portrayal of Jane and Finch, Paul says that his best memories took place in the areas surrounding his community and the most inspiring people he’s ever known have all lived close to home.

With the goal of sharing with Torontonians the realities of the Jane and Finch Community, Paul has created a website called www.Jane-Finch.com, a non profit initiative run by students and volunteers. Together with Mark Simms, Paul’s childhood friend who is also the executive producer of the website, Paul decided to create a channel for people to voice their ideas on matters related to the Jane and Finch Community.

As the first and only project to feature original content about the Jane and Finch Community, the website has anything from historical maps of the area, population statistics, news and events, poetry submitted by anybody who wants to share his/her thoughts, and short videos of speakers who come to speak in the Jane and Finch Community.

Since the creation of the online initiative in 2004, the website has received widespread media coverage and praise from Canadian politicians and community leaders.

“The site has really changed my life. Normally I’m a really shy and quiet guy, but the site has put me in a situa-



Paul Nguyen is eager to draw positive attention to the Jane and Finch area

tion where I meet a lot of people and I learn a lot,” says Paul.

“It showed me that children who grow up here must be open to new experiences and talk to people outside of their immediate surroundings. When I used to hang out at the McDonald’s outside my house as a kid, I never thought I’d meet people such as the Governor General Michelle Jean, give presentations to top marketing firms downtown, or interview influential figures like the famous coach PinBall Clemons. Kids should really stay open minded if they want to discover their life’s passions.”

Paul decided to create a channel for people to voice their ideas on matters related to the Jane and Finch Community

Paul, who has graduated from the TV and Film Program at Humber College, had his first experience with producing a movie when his father brought a new video camera home when he was a kid. Both Paul and Mark played with the camera after school just for fun, and before they knew it, their fun turned into passion.

Their childhood passion turned into reality when in 2007, both Paul and Mark

helped co-produce *Lost in the Struggle*, a documentary for the prominent CBC series *The Fifth Estate*. The film features the stories of three young men living at Jane and Finch and their everyday struggles as they face social pressures and issues with the law as they turn from teenagers to young adults. The film is available for viewing in five parts on Youtube and CBC.ca.

At the moment, Paul is eager to continue fulfilling his dream of drawing positive attention to the Jane and Finch area and informing people worldwide about the beauty and talent this area has to offer. He is excited about enriching his website by having people contribute their thoughts and opinions from all over the world. Anyone wishing to contribute and/or volunteer can contact Paul by going to www.jane-finch.com.



Alina Olshenitsky is an ESL teacher and a freelance writer in Toronto

If the Mountain Will Not Come to Lynn Manwar, then She Must Go to the Mountain

Lynn Manwar uses her illness as a teacher guiding her onward and upwards

MARTIN WINER

Lynn Manwar has experienced a variety of medical conditions that most would find debilitating. The only constant across all these conditions has been her dedication to the human condition, viewing illness as a teaching experience



Lynn Manwar

and retaining an “onward and upwards” mentality.

After graduating university in 1996, she was eager to start her climb up the corporate ladder. Regrettably, her first step landed her in quicksand with her doctor delivering the devastating diagnosis of thyroid cancer. She feared this would spell the end to her dream of teaching English in Nagano, Japan, during the Olympics, but two surgeries later, while undergoing radioactive iodine treatment, she experienced a revelation. She visualized herself finishing her post in Japan and receiving laudation from her future employer. Just three short weeks later she flew out to Japan on a plane fueled with equal measures of kerosene and her own determination.

In Nagano she saw the possibility for peace at its finest, with myriad people speaking in the common tongue of peaceful cultural exchange. Shortly thereafter, she visited Hiroshima and witnessed firsthand the devastation war can wreak on a civilization. Japan had seen humanity at its finest in Nagano and at

its worst in Hiroshima. Strange irony that the radiation used to cure Lynn had also been used to destroy a culture.

Passion is needed in everyone's work life. I had to get arthritis to realize that

One morning, several years after, she woke to discover that she couldn't get out of bed. All her joints were too stiff to move. At the age of 30, she was diagnosed with Psoriatic Arthritis. She was now stymied; everyday tasks were proving difficult. Opening jars, turning doorknobs, washing dishes, and even using the bathroom were all suddenly out of reach. No stranger to adversity, she took each problem in turn: “I bought a jar opener, a raised toilet seat, and asked others to open my bottled water when out in public.” Just the same, the constant pain of arthritis made it difficult to cope with her career in recruitment and she tepidly submitted her resignation in 2003.

She transitioned into a volunteer coordinator for arts festivals with up to 600 volunteers. What had seemed misfortune

proved serendipitous in that she found passion in her new work, which served as a potent analgesic for her arthritic pain. Again she regarded her condition as a teacher rather than an adversary: “Passion is needed in everyone's work life. I had to get arthritis to realize that.”

Always looking to improve upon herself, Lynn became aware that she had acquired some surplus baggage in the way she looked and carried herself, and so she set a goal to get a professional makeover. She applied to appear on *Style by Jury* and attended what she thought was an interview, but was in fact the show already in progress. The jurists' comments were hard to swallow, but ultimately helpful. One juror noted, “She seems to be defining herself through her arthritis and using it as an excuse for the way she looks.” By the end of her makeover, her exterior better reflected her dynamic interior, and in a final comeuppance to arthritis, she swung from a trapeze at the Toronto School of Circus Arts.

Lynn Manwar has been

climbing mountains thrown up in front of her by her medical conditions. It only seems fitting that she has chosen to climb Mount Everest, as a member of the Arthritis Society's Joints in Motion program. She hopes to depart this winter or next spring, depending on when she can raise the funds. Lynn has never allowed her conditions to be impediments, merely guides in her personal journey. Undoubtedly she will one day reach base camp on Mount Everest, but for now her indomitable spirit will guide all of us in our ascension in life.

To support Lynn, please visit: <http://arthritis.akaraisin.com/pledge/Participant/Home>.



Martin C. Winer is a freelance writer in Toronto. He enjoys writing articles about social action. More details can be found on his blog: www.martincwiner.com

Fitness Matters

In this monthly column Marlon Teekah focuses on various aspects of fitness and answers questions you might have in order to encourage you to be your best in body, mind, and spirit.

The Truth about Nutrition

To expand on last month's article about fitness myths, I will discuss a few of the nutrition myths that many people have.

Myth 1: Low carbohydrate diets are the best and fastest way to lose weight.

Fact: Reducing your carbohydrate intake to dangerous levels leaves your body without the vital energy it needs for daily maintenance. Carbohydrates are your body's primary source of fuel, so when levels get too low, your body will start to store carbs to use as energy. The drastic weight loss seen at the beginning of low-carb diets is due to water loss as a result of your body burning up all of its remaining carbohydrate stores. In the end, cutting a particular food group from your diet will only lead to cravings and muscle breakdown, without any lasting results.

* Note: All carbs are not equal; reduce sugar intake, especially artificial and during the night

Myth 2: Crash dieting or fasting makes you lose weight

Fact: Crash diets may provide a quick 5lb fix but they ultimately hinder weight loss. Crash diets and fasting typically lead to a lot of water loss as well as fat and lean muscle. Decreasing lean muscle will decrease your metabolism, which means that your body is burning fewer calories throughout the day and therefore needs fewer calories to sustain itself. This means that once you inevitably stop the diet or the fast, you will gain more weight back and faster!

Myth 3: All foods that have reduced fats or are “diet” are okay for me to eat

Fact: Just because a food product proclaims to be “non-fat” or “diet,” does not mean that it is right for your diet.

Although “low fat” products reduce the amount of fat, they often contain more sugar than their counterpart, which may turn into fat if you do not use the additional sugar.

Diet sodas and low calorie drinks may have zero calories, but they are high in sugar substitutes such as aspartame that aren't doing your diet any favors. In fact, some studies have indicated that sugar substitutes have been found to increase fat storage; the long-term effects of these sugars on health are still unknown. In addition, many of these diet foods and mini-meals are highly processed and are lacking in many important nutrients and minerals that you can only get from real, natural food products.

Myth 4: All fats are “bad fats”

Fact: The moderate intake (35-45 ml/day) of healthy fats (such as omega 3-6-9) will

improve your heart health and body composition as well as improve your workout stamina. Remember, all fats are not created equal! Avoid trans and saturated fats found in baked goods and fried foods, which have no health benefits. Instead, opt for mono (omega 3) and polyunsaturated fats (omega 3-6-9) found in fish, nuts and vegetable oils (such as olive oil).

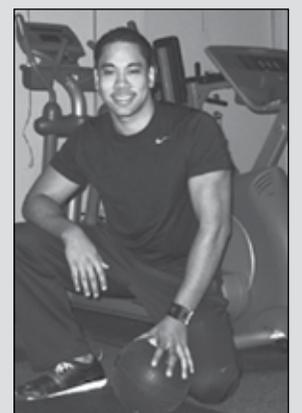
Now that you have this newfound knowledge, put it into action! For more information on Fitness, please visit me online at www.goodnewstoronto.ca or contact me directly at fitness@goodnewstoronto.ca with any further questions.

Best of luck,
Marlon Teekah

DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this article is recommended for the general population who are physically able

to exercise. To determine if exercise is appropriate for you, please consult your physician before trying anything offered in this column or exercise in general. Marlon Teekah and Good News Toronto are not liable for your safety.

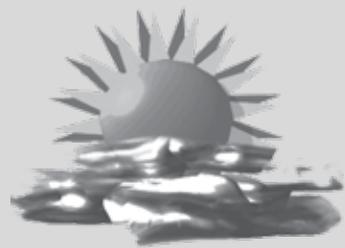
Marlon Teekah is a Certified Personal Trainer, Certified Kinesiologist, and Personal Fitness Coach at Marlon Teekah: Dynamic Fitness Training. If you have any questions or comments, you can e-mail Marlon at fitness@goodnewstoronto.ca or visit him online at www.marlonteekah.com



Marlon Teekah

Life's Elixir

This is a monthly column by Dr. Zahra Bardai in which she guides our path to well-being



At some point in our lives we've all experienced fear. It's vivid and disturbingly real. The kind of fear that generates pupil dilatation, shortness of breath, incontinence, and nausea. While the situation precipitating the emotion may be different for all, the underlying condition is not. When catastrophe happens and life as you know it hangs in the balance, that fear can be paralyzing.

It's mind-boggling how potent the power of the fear is. It can be so strong as to physically bind us in place. It's one of the most primitive reflexive emotions and leads to our fight-or-flight reaction. The gut response to a fear-inducing situation, be it physical or emotional, is to escape or to stand and face the problem. John F Kennedy said, "The only thing to fear is fear itself." What does that mean exactly?

Analyzing the fears and anxiety-provoking events can lead to a better understanding of what holds us back. This in turn makes our coping strategies more effective. By facing the meaning behind the fear and tackling it head on, fear can actually become a catalyst for positive action and change.

The first step is the deconstruction. Start by releasing the emotion in a safe and appropriate place. Cry. Scream. Vent. Whatever it takes as long as it's not hurting

yourself, or someone else. If you need to release your frustrations and fears on an inanimate object, choose well. Everyone has a "punching the wall" story, but a better alternative would be using a punching bag! Now, work on releasing the body's own emotion-anesthetizing endorphins. Take the time to do some deep breathing, meditation, and exercise. They really help.

Next comes the analysis. The process of identifying why you feel fear and anxiety can be stressful. Be prepared for this and be honest with yourself. For many of us, these emotions are rooted in our fear about loss, lack of control, and being alone or unsupported.

The last phase is probably the most challenging. It's known as the reconstruction stage. This is where you rebuild new connections in dealing with your fears. Strategies such as desensitization (incrementally exposing yourself to the situation garnering fear) and consciously changing the context and emotion associated with the fear can help sweep the mind of maladaptive associations.

With a little practice, it is possible to overcome all those things that go bump in the mind!



Zahra Bardai is a family physician. If you have any questions please e-mail her at life@goodnewstoronto.ca

Quiet Giants Among Us

ALVIN ABRAM

Several years ago I wrote a story about Martin Maxwell entitled *One Person Does Make A Difference*. It had to do with events that Max had no control over and weaved its way to a conclusion that emphasized the title of the story. It was a story of chance and circumstance.

On May 6th, I attended a Tribute Dinner at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue. The Honouree was a 101-year-old non-Jew. In 1938 he set into motion a series of events that affected the lives of many people in the years to come. He saved the lives of 669 children just before the war began; they grew up, married, had children and grandchildren and now number over 5,000.

Nicholas Winton was a stockbroker in England. Martin Maxwell was a young man in Austria. Nicholas saw the refugee camps that the Germans had interned Jews prior to their invading Czechoslovakia and realized their plight. He returned to England to find people to sponsor Czech children if he could arrange for their arrival. Martin Maxwell and his brother were rounded up with all the Jews in Vienna on *Kristallnacht* and brought to an assembly building to be shipped to a concentration camp.

Not getting any co-operation from the British government, Nicholas forged passports in the children's names, releasing them from the camps. He then engaged eight trains over the next several months filled with children destined for England. He rescued 669 children before



Honouree Sir Nicholas Winton

Martin joined the air force in England and on D-Day flew a glider into Normandy. His brother immigrated to the U.S. where he became a bombardier. His brother flew over Germany and bombed strategic sites. With England in the war, Nicholas joined the army. Martin was wounded in Arnheim, captured by the Germans, and put in a POW camp. His brother was shot down over enemy territory and with the help of the underground made his way back to safety. Whatever Nicholas had done, his records and photos were locked in a trunk and placed in his attic. Even his wife was not aware of what her husband had accomplished.

When the war ended, Martin became an interpreter for

to the children he had saved. He answered that he did not. The newscaster asked those in the audience if any of them knew where any of Nicholas's children might be. Almost everyone in the room stood up.

Nicholas forged passports in the children's names, releasing them from the camps. He then engaged eight trains over the next several months filled with children destined for England

Nicholas was knighted and his story was revealed to the world. When asked why he kept what he had done a secret, his answer was, "I didn't keep what I did a secret – I just didn't talk about it."

On May 6th, Beth Emeth honoured Sir Nicholas Winton; Martin Maxwell was in Holland as part of the celebration of the 65th Anniversary of the liberation of Holland by Canadian troops, selected to represent the Canadians who fought in Holland. He gave testimonial as a survivor of the Holocaust, as a Canadian, and as a person, like Sir Nicholas Winton, for making a difference.



Martin Maxwell in Holland as part of the celebration of the 65th Anniversary of the liberation of Holland by Canadian troops

war was declared. Martin Maxwell and his brother were asked by a German officer where their parents were. Martin replied, "They're dead." The officer, instead of ordering them sent to a camp, shouted that they leave the building before he changed his mind. Not long after, the two boys joined a train of children destined for England.

the Allies in the war trials being held in the U.S. His brother became a U.S. citizen and lived in Detroit. In 1988, Nicholas's wife found the forgotten trunk in the attic. She questioned him until he confessed what he had done. Nicholas Winton appeared on radio with an audience-filled studio to tell his story. He was asked if he knew what had happened



*Alvin Abram is the author of many books including *Why, Zaida? Stories I Wrote*, *The Unlikely Victims*, *An Eye For An Eye*, *The Minyan*, and *The Dead Don't Weep*.*

www.alvinabram.ca

GoodNews Toronto

next issue

August 31st

The New Bloor Festival

ANTHONY KISSOON

On Saturday, July 24th, the streets of Bloorville (Bloor between Lansdowne Avenue and Dufferin Street) closed to host one of Toronto's most amazing festivals — The New Bloor Festival. One event in particular caught the interest of many. "Represent!" — as it was so aptly named — was a mixture of community organizations such as AK, Studio 32, UforChange, The LOFT, Under The Radar, and CONC coming together to infuse the wonders of hip-hop culture into the day's festivities.

The main attractions included live performances by both independent local youth as well as tenured artists, alongside live graffiti and mural painting. One piece that received much attention was the large mural painted on a delivery truck owned by Furniture Emporium, a local business that had donated the "wall space" to the event. The truck can now be seen around

the city still emblazoned with Jose-Gabriel Sandoval's art.

The weather was not as favourable as many had hoped, but that dampened neither microphone nor spray can. Organized by Anthony Kissoon and Jose-Gabriel Sandoval, the event allowed the participating artists the opportunity to express the beauty of the culture while offering exposure to the supporting local businesses. All involved in the event were awarded certificates of congratulations from the Mayor's office, acknowledging their hard work and community participation. Among other supporters and sponsors of the event were Long & McQuade, I Respect Music of Canada Entertainment, and yours truly, Good News Toronto. If you missed the festival this year, you will not want to miss it next!

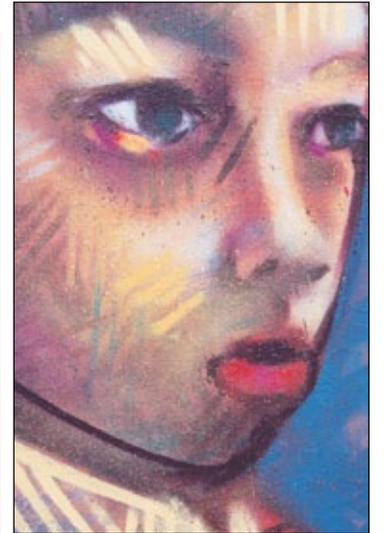
Anthony Kissoon is a contracted creative director actively involved in community based programs all across the GTA



Anthony Kissoon and Jose - Gabriel Sandoval, organizers of "Represent"

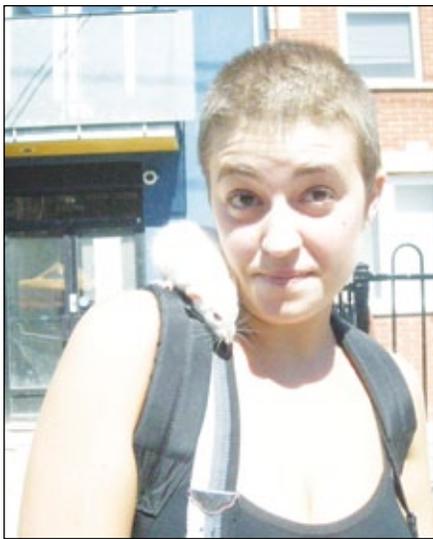


Jose - Gabriel Sandoval painting the delivery truck



Art by Javid from Under the Radar

Summer in Toronto



Rosy getting a free ride on Sydney's shoulder



One of the Tall Ships sailing by the harbourfront



Keely Sherman happy to receive a hug during the Free Hugs Campaign in Kensington Market



An abundance of produce in Kensington Market

Stir Me

*The way you stir me
with your smile
fills me to the brim.
Stay a little longer
and let me drink you in.*



© 2008, Veronica Dimofski

Veronica Dimofski is an emerging screenwriter who also enjoys expressing her creativity by writing coffee poems. Vdimof@hotmail.com

Beyond Book Smarts

Literature for Life founder serves the underserved with words.

TAMARA SHELLY

Josephine Altilia is affectionately called “Jo” by all that know her, even if they don’t know her very well. Before meeting her, the moniker tells you that she is down-to-earth and approachable. Some might associate “Jo” with the common phrase “The Average Joe,” but after meeting her, it becomes obvious that she is anything but.

Jo Altilia is the founder of registered charitable organization Literature for Life; an organization committed to engaging at-risk young families in building a culture of literacy and learning to overcome systemic barriers, thereby investing in their own and their families’ future.

Literature for life is a testament to Jo’s dedication to marginalized women and youth. Jo founded the organization to help engage young mothers in social change and leadership through the power of the written word to build better futures for themselves, their children, and their communities.

Jo’s background as an

advocate for underprivileged youth and her understanding of the link between literacy, community, and good mental health is extensive. Over the last nine years, their program has worked with over 1,600 at-risk mothers and ten social services agencies in Toronto’s thirteen priority neighbourhoods, raising literacy levels of both mother and child.

The young mothers begin to see language as a tool to express themselves. They become empowered through reading, writing, and discussions, finding new ways to solve problems and learning to be proactive in their lives instead of reactive

Understanding that the key to literacy is not simply teaching people how to read, but in creating a love of reading and building a culture of literacy and learning for at-risk families, Literature for Life held its first *Women with Words* reading circle at Jessie’s Centre for Teenagers. Each week, pregnant and parenting teenage girls meet at various shelters and youth centres throughout the city

to read and discuss novels with trained facilitators, including Jo:

“The young mothers begin to see language as a tool to express themselves. They become empowered through reading, writing, and discussions, finding new ways to solve problems and learning to be proactive in their lives instead of reactive. They begin to understand that their voices and stories have value and meaning which leads to increased self-esteem, a renewed interest in literacy, and learning, as well as an investment in their community. They pass these values on to their children who are then better prepared to attend and do well in school, less likely to become involved in counter-productive activity.”

Since the initial pilot in 2000, the reading circles have grown to eight, partnering with various community organizations across the city.

In addition to reading circles, Literature for Life produces a magazine called *Yo’ Mama* written by young mothers for young mothers with over 20,000 copies distributed annually and 35 young mothers employed as writers, editors, and other various roles.

Jo’s vision has been rec-



Josephine Altilia, Rose Patton and spoken word artist Dablia Eagle-Ellis

ognized and rewarded by the Mayor’s Community Safety Award, YWCA’s Woman of Distinction, Canada Post’s Community Leadership Award for Literacy and, most recently, with a Toronto Community Foundation Award and recognition as one of Toronto’s “Vital People.”

Jo’s dedication to young at-risk families is tireless. In addition to the necessary board meetings and networking needed for the growth of the organization and a Women with Words reading circle with Humewood House each week, Jo also has a family of five and serves as a mentor, all while continually trying to raise funds towards Literature for Life

programming. This month she will be balancing many of those responsibilities as she raises funds for the organization with the annual Literature for Life Summer \$1 Book Sale, taking place on her own front yard on August 15th, 2010. Thousands of titles and hundreds of genres will be available for readers of all ages at the cost of only \$1.

For more information about Jo Altilia, Literature for Life, and the Annual Summer \$1 Book Sale, visit: www.literatureforlife.org

Tamara Shelly is a freelance writer and PR specialist. Her passion is revealing the cultural gems found within the city of Toronto.

Kids Boogie Too...with Melissa Donheim and Pepper

LESLEY BREWER

These are the thoughts of Melissa Donheim, a successful and dynamic children’s entertainer.

I think that everyone has the potential to be someone’s hero. I have been blessed with loving people and heroes in my life; people who encouraged me, even when I showed indifference. I am forever grateful. Now it’s my turn. I strongly believe that it’s not one individual or family that raise children, it is the community.”

Melissa was a rebellious teen and a high-school dropout who bounced around for a time, uncertain of which direction to take.

At 20, with the defiant teen in the past, the young adult sought to complete high school, which she did at the City Adult Learning Centre.

At 23, Melissa enrolled at a college and completed training to become an animal care worker, but soon realized she was unable to separate her deep love for animals from the realities of injury, illness, and death. That phase

having ended, her journey to become the children’s entertainer she is today inched ever closer.

I have been blessed with loving people and heroes in my life; people who encouraged me, even when I showed indifference. I am forever grateful

In the years immediately following her completion of college, Melissa was employed as a nanny. While employed in this field, an amazing thing happened: one of the mothers, a well-established producer, began sowing the seeds of independence by helping Melissa become aware of her own potential and opening her mind to possibilities. This woman allowed Melissa to plough through her basement and take whatever she thought she could use. It was here that the puppy puppet Pepper was unearthed, along with many instruments that Melissa continues to employ in her shows.

Still another mother let Melissa hold music classes in the basement of her house. Not long after, “Kids Boogie Too”

was born. And so the journey continued. Melissa acknowledges that both women were very encouraging and influential in her life and both played significant roles in taking her to the place where she is today.

Through it all, Melissa’s mom remained steadfast in her support and encouragement, and her beautiful, living hound Pepper provided motivation and unconditional love, so much so that the puppet was given her name.

There is no doubt that Melissa loves children! Her eyes seem to twinkle all the time, but put a child in front of her, and, well, those eyes of hers start to dance!

Imagine a party with a puppy puppet, singing and boogying, blowing bubbles, playing instruments along with the sounds of happy, giggling children. This is an environment where kids can explore new skills, build confidence, get exercise in a fun way, and make new friends.

As with all entrepreneurs, one of her biggest challenges is staying motivated and keeping to some kind of schedule. Marketing herself and her business is also something she can find

difficult at times. However, with her demonstrated effervescent personality and word-of-mouth endorsements, I am quite certain she will continue to do very well. Just being with Melissa is an uplifting experience; she always has a smile for those she knows and even those she doesn’t.

Melissa has been in business in earnest since 2008 and is a testament to how someone open to “hearing” and exploring a new path; following her heart and doing what she is passionate about is a channel for the flow of love everywhere she goes.

If you would like to learn more about “Kids Boogie Too” or would like to book a party or event, please call Melissa at 416-833-0942.



Lesley Brewer is a freelance writer who is an active member of her housing co-op. She lives with her fabulous felines, and loves all animals and nature



Pepper and Melissa Donheim keeping kids happy

Cyber Saviours

In this series, Winnie Czulinski features diverse Torontonians using their tech expertise to help improve quality of life.

CONNECTIONS FOR ALL AGES

Thanks to a very special team, the downtown neighbourhoods of Regent Park and St. James Town are reaping great tech benefits at the Yonge Street Mission on Gerrard Street East.

Shirley Kim, Julian Williams, and their YSM colleagues help “connect” local residents, ranging from three-year-old daycare denizens to seniors, through the long-running faith-based Mission’s TD Securities Computer Literacy Centre.

“It’s definitely filling a huge need, across the board,” says Shirley, YSM’s computer education facilitator. “This is an amazing community. And you can totally make technology relevant to any age group you’re working with.”

Under the eyes of the YSM team Computer Literacy Centre team, children joyfully interact with colours, numbers, and letters. Youth immerse themselves in projects like designing magazine covers and movie-making. One recent engineering and technology design project for Grade 3 and 4 girls also exposed them to careers in IT (Information Technology). “I see that as a need in our community, to really empower and educate girls in those areas.”

I get my greatest joy from seeing kids come back for the next class, and seeing that they’re hungry for more, and are using the skills they’ve developed

There’s a strong focus on after-school programs, for Grades 1 to 12. Amongst the basics and advanced subjects, Shirley also helps teach internet safety/security in creative ways, with parents involved in the process.

“With adults, there’s a huge need [for computer education], because they’re the leaders of the families of the kids we’ve worked with in the last ten years,” she says. At the YSM, adults learn skills from MS Word and PowerPoint to digital



*Julian Williams and Shirley Kim of the Yonge Street Mission
Photo by Dennis Hanagan*

media and troubleshooting, and seniors embrace games, puzzles, and communicating with kin far away. Accomplishments in the 50-computer Centre are celebrated.

Shirley, who has a background in Human Resources, economics, IT, and adult education, went on an overseas tech-teaching mission trip with her church several years ago.

“It opened my eyes to how important computer education is, in being able to function in this world. It can be very empowering and life-changing.”

The YSM offers projects like inter-generational digital storytelling collaboration. Here, the partnering of seniors with youths brings decades of life stories to life through multimedia, with a major showing at the end.

In using existing plans or creating her own lessons, computer education facilitator Shirley “brings a bottomless pit of energy and enthusiasm and creativity to work every day,” says Julian Williams, YSM’s computer education coordinator.

Julian, who has been at the YSM four years now, supervises a staff of 3 and a volunteer team of 25 to 30. He has many years of experience working with children, camps, city youth, and neighbourhood groups.

“For me, as a program coordinator, just being able to watch the regular improvement is

very rewarding. I get my greatest joy from seeing kids come back for the next class, and seeing that they’re hungry for more, and are using the skills they’ve developed.”

One of the things I have found that is most meaningful, and what applies to children and adults as well, is just being told, ‘Try it – you can do it’

Young adults who took programs there as children return to help other youngsters. As well, some high school volunteers at the YSM put in many times the hours required for community credits.

Shirley and Julian work with other community agencies, schools, and libraries, as well as homes. That’s because the YSM, with users’ completion of some of its courses, provides free refurbished computers. To date, at least 1,600 families in the neighbourhood have received them.

The YSM’s computer programs and accessibility for all ages are plugging local residents into a world of connections, confidence, and competence. Julian says, “One of the things I have found that is most meaningful, and what applies to children and adults as well, is just being told, ‘Try it — you can do it.’” www.ysm.ca/

Winnie Czulinski is a Toronto-based freelance writer and radio personality

Buckling up isn’t just for Kids

BY RANGER ROSS

Gael Ross, my owner, has always had animals’ best interests at heart. But now she has branched out beyond her own animals with a program to help all pet owners and their pets. I am proud to be the official mascot for her new initiative.

BARC (**B**uckle up **A**nimal **R**estraint **C**ontrol) is an initiative she has spearheaded under the auspices of the Toronto Police Services’ 32 Division Community Police Liaison Committee (CPLC). It is supported by the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program, of which I am a retired member. I served for five years, visiting Villa Columbo.

Did you know an unrestrained pet can cause you to lose control of your vehicle? Unrestrained animals can become projectiles during sudden stops and accidents. This can cause them to be injured or killed as well as causing injury or death to the human occupants of the motor vehicle.

Animals should be restrained in the backseat or back compartment of your vehicle

For example, you have to come to a sudden stop. You have control of your vehicle, thanks to safety features like ABS brakes and Stability Control. Unfortunately, an unrestrained pet in your vehicle goes flying and hits the back of your seat, causing you to lose control of your vehicle and create an accident situation slamming into the car ahead of or beside you. That’s why Gael always makes sure that I am wearing my seat-



Gael Ross

belt whenever she takes me in the car.

Whenever your pet is in the vehicle there is a risk of the one of us becoming a projectile. It is too late to restrain an animal **after** an accident.

Animals should be restrained in the backseat or back compartment of your vehicle. Using the front seat can put us at risk of being injured by the airbag. Animals should never travel in the back of a pick-up truck.

Pet stores provide a wide variety of animal restraint systems to protect me — and your best friends as well:

- Vest harnesses
- Animal barriers
- Tethers
- Travel crates
- Animal booster seats

You wouldn’t think of driving with an improperly restrained child. Why would you drive with an unrestrained pet?

It takes no longer than doing up your own seat belt. After a few times, we get used to it. I actually look forward to it, as I know we are going for a ride in the car!



Ranger Ross is a retired therapy dog and has started a new career as the mascot of the BARC program. He can be reached at ranger.ross@sympatico.ca

If you are not sure what to do with your old computers please refer to our April 2010 issue of Good News Toronto in which Jon Alexander informs us of some meaning ways to recycle them so that others can use them.

<http://www.goodnewstoronto.ca/pdf/April2010.pdf>.

Summer-Thyme Lime Refresher



KATHLEEN BETTS AND
NURAMINA IBRAHIM

For *Good News Toronto* readers who sing out loud the tunes of Summertime, or for those who prefer to hum in their heads, this thymely refresher is just the juice to cool, calm, delight, and quench you with what you need to feel fabulous. This one's as easy as a cool summer breeze...

The Few Fine Ingredients You'll Need:

- Fresh sprigs of thyme (approx. 20 g)
- 6 fresh limes
- 3 or 4 cups of water
- honey (to taste)

Simple Steps:

1. Snip fresh sprigs of home-grown thyme from your glorious garden or power walk down to your green grocer to get a fantastic cardiovascular workout for the day and pick up some thyme while you're choosing the freshest lovely limes they have in store. Be sure to drink plenty of water on your walk and sing "olé olé, olé olé ... feeling hot hot hot" along your route to entertain yourself — and others too.

2. Back home, invigorated from the exercise and ready to concoct, rinse the fresh herbs and change the tune in your head to think with a smile of how thankful we are to have thyme on our side. Boil the herbs whole on their stem in approximately 6 cups of water and allow to cool with the lid on the pot to lock in the essence and the natural nourishment.

3. With careful attention to the toning benefits to the biceps, squeeze the juice from

the luscious limes and, once assured no seeds seeped in, pour it along with the pulp and the cooled steeped thyme into the blender jug.

4. Blend the mixture on high for up to 90 seconds. You can do a little dance or some extended arm rolls or even lean in on the counter and do 20 or so push-ups to take full advantage of the time passing. Add honey to taste and blend again for a few more seconds.

5. With tantalized taste-buds, and adoration for the goodness in it, pour your limey libation through a strainer into the perfect pitcher and prepare to be refreshed. If foam from the blending slipped through the sieve, skim it off the top before indulging in or sharing your summer-thyme sensation.

6. Quench your thirst.

Have one glass a day along with any meal, or all on its own. It's thyme to enjoy. As the summer weeks and the summer fun continue, we like to think of how thankful we are to share with our friends the goodness of the Earth and the goodness of the people. For more fountain-of-youth tips and recipes, contact Nuramina at nuramina@rogers.com. If you have tips you would love to share with GNT readers, that's even better. We'd love to hear your suggestions for loving life one smoothie at a time and one act of kindness at a time.

Kathleen Betts is a mother of four, freelance writer, and entrepreneur

Nuramina Ibrahim is a health and fitness guru who enjoys sharing her fountain-of-youth secrets for energetic living

Green and Lean

In this monthly column Dr. Martin Kijazi discusses how we can be active participants in creating a healthy environment.

GREEN SPACES

Forests and trees are a crucial part of life on Earth: they maintain diversity of living things, clean the air and water, provide basic human needs, and contribute to culture and recreation. Almost half of Canada's land is covered in forests, but, according to Statistics Canada, 80% of the population lives in urban regions, where tree cover can be sparse. Special care is therefore needed to maintain and enhance urban tree cover for urbanites to accrue the benefits of trees. Alongside lawns and gardens, trees within a city, often referred to as the urban forest, comprise one of the most important green spaces. They contribute greatly to the image, health, and quality of life of the cities.

According to the Eastern Ontario Urban Forest Network, Canada's cities are about 19% forested. While this may seem significant, the expert recommended amount of tree canopy (the percentage of leaf coverage of a city) for a healthy urban forest is 35 to 40%. Urban air is often quite polluted because of emissions from motor vehicles, factories, power plants, and furnaces, so extensive tree cover is needed to clean the air. In particular, trees' leaves absorb nitrous oxides, sulphur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and ground-level ozone, which are contributors to air pollution in Toronto and other large cities.

Cities are prone to large amounts of storm runoff (excess water that cannot be absorbed by soil) because of the abundance of paved roads and other impermeable surfaces. Runoff carries pollutants into local water bodies and hastens soil erosion. Trees and their roots help keep our water clean by retaining large amounts of water and reducing erosion and runoff.

In addition, trees pro-



In the summer, many Torontonians flock to various parks to enjoy great many festivals under the shade of trees

vide shade in the summer and serve as a shelter from the wind in the winter, which helps to reduce energy needed to heat and cool buildings. There are also less obvious benefits to having trees in the city. For instance, many studies have shown that the presence of trees can improve the aesthetic image of an area and help build stronger, safer communities. Some studies have shown that green settings have psychological benefits, including improving concentration in children with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and improving recovery rates and times for hospital patients with window views of trees.

Given such benefits, we can all contribute to growing urban trees. Is your residential area deprived of trees? Urban Forestry Services plants trees on city-owned street allowances in front of residential properties for free. To order your free tree, download the residential street tree planting brochure at http://www.toronto.ca/trees/pdfs/FreeTree_Final.pdf, or call 416-338-TREE (8733). Also, Toronto's local non-profit group LEAF (Local Enhancement and Appreciation of Forests) is dedicated to improving Toronto's urban forest, offering Toronto residents sub-

sidized backyard tree planting. The service includes on-site advice on appropriate species and planting location, a 1.2 to 1.8m tall native tree, and the planting service. Native shrubs are also available. And if you have a great green space idea for your community you may qualify for a grant! The Toronto Parks and Trees Foundation has a Community Grants Program, an initiative to support charitable community organizations that are actively involved in sustaining and enhancing Toronto's green spaces. The Foundation makes small grants for a diversity of park-based projects and community group undertakings (visit <http://www.torontoparksandtrees.org/grants.htm>).

Consider all these options to maintain and enhance the vitality of green spaces of your residence, your community, and your city. In doing so, you will also improve the image, health, and quality of life of the city in which you live.



Dr. Martin Kijazi is an Environment Researcher & Educator currently working for the University of Toronto. He is also actively engaged in environmental activism and advocacy

Toronto is extremely lucky at this time of year to be host to a plethora of farmer's markets. Be part of your community near your home or work as you mingle with friends, neighbours, and colleagues, support our local farmers, and get the rich benefits of delicious local fruits, vegetables, cheeses, and meat, and other treats. What a wonderful way to enjoy our city in the summer. For locations nearest to you visit the community section of our website www.goodnewstoronto.ca

Cuddle Up and Read

In this monthly column, Etta Kaner shares some of her favourite children's books written for a variety of ages.

Dear Readers,
Summer is often a time when we get a chance to break from routine and do something different. So, instead of reviewing books in this month's column, I'd like to talk about the reluctant reader. In

previous columns, I've made suggestions about how you can encourage your child to become an avid reader. Perhaps you've tried some or all of these and none of them seem to make a difference. Well, the first thing I would say is, "Don't give up." Keep trying. Be consistent and persistent. It takes longer with some children to develop that love of reading. You might also want to try some of these ideas.

1. Give your child comics or graphic novels to read and read them together.

2. If you go on a trip, have your child help you plan the trip by reading information on the internet or in travel books. During the trip, assign your child the task of reading maps, street signs, and store signs. Give him/her lots of praise for being so helpful.

3. Take your child grocery shopping and give him/her the job of getting items that are packaged and require reading.

4. Find non-fiction books that match your child's interests. Just be sure that the text is at a level that your child can read and understand with relative ease.

5. Read chants, poems, and limericks out loud with your child.

6. Do some cooking together. Have your child read the recipe in order to gather the ingredients as well as make the dish.

7. Read the sports page of the newspaper to find out what your child's favourite team is doing.

8. Read movie reviews together to determine what movie you're going to see.

9. Read joke and riddle books together.

10. Listen to books on tape and afterwards give your child the book to read.

11. Find plays that you and your child can read. You can each take on several parts and

change your voices according to the character. There are lots of plays on the internet under Reader's Theatre.

12. Get your child a building, science, or sewing kit that requires the reading of instructions in order for the project to be successful.

You may have noticed one factor that all of these ideas have in common—your involvement. If you want your child to become interested in reading, you have to demonstrate how pleasurable and useful an activity daily reading is. Happy reading!



Etta Kaner is a teacher and children's author. Her most recent book is *Have You Ever Seen a Hippo with Sunscreen?*



Illustration by Ashley Nitkin

Azraa's Kids Column

Each month Azraa Janmohamed discusses timely topics relevant to teens

Since childhood we have heard of queens, kings, princesses, and princes — whether it be from the fairy tales we loved as kids or through the media. They always seemed to have the perfect life, where everything works out for them. Princess Aurora is awakened by her Prince Charming; Queen Elizabeth holds some of the best and most priceless rocks in the world. No

matter where they go, royalty are treated with respect, and people travel from far and wide to catch a 30-second glimpse of them.

Once upon a time, the royal family had much more say in the lives of the people who lived in their territory. Today, however, countries that were once ruled by the royal family now have prime ministers and democratic forms of government; so why

is having a queen necessary if the majority of the duties left to them are purely ceremonial?

In our lifetime, having a queen has seemed to have been more for tradition's sake, and I never understood her importance. It was not until recently that I understood that although the Queen's roles may seem frivolous, it is the impact she has that is worth the title.

This past July, the Queen visited Canada, and I happened to be downtown with some friends that day. We ran down the street like crazy to get to Queen's Park to see her. As fate had it, we missed her by mere minutes, but the impact of her presence hit us with a bang.

Hundreds of people had seen five teenagers running down the street, cameras swinging from their wrists, wide smiles on their faces. Upon seeing us, they calmly informed us that we had just missed the Queen, and showed us the pictures they had of her. These absolute strangers shared their time and recounted their experience to us. Although we had not seen it firsthand, these people helped to make the Queen's visit as tangible as possible for us.

The Queen's short trip to Canada may have been ceremonial, but the affect she had was not. She brought together people of different ages, ethnicities, and from different parts of Canada. The people who had gathered for hours outside Queen's Park were

proud to be called Canadian, and proud to call her our Queen.

Maybe the official roles of the Royal family are not as important in today's world as compared to the past, but the bearing she has is just as strong, if not stronger. Many years ago, people looked up to the Queen to make day-to-day life decisions; today we look up to her with a sense of pride and patriotism. The activities in which royal family participates may appear to be frivolous, but in fact they are powerful and wide-reaching, bringing the people of nations together.



Azraa Janmohamed is a Grade 10 student attending high school in Toronto.

To respond to Azraa please e-mail her at info@goodnewstoronto.ca



Rhyme AND Reason

Each month Jennifer Hicks and Paul Kralik regale us with a different perspective on current issues

“Paul, look.” His eyes follow my finger.

We’re enjoying the neighbourhood goings-on as we begin our morning walk.

“Oh yeah, I noticed that that house was for sale. I wonder what they’re asking for it. Maybe I could show it to one of my new clients.”

“No, not that,” I say. “See the cop sitting there by his bike just past the stop sign?”

Paul smiles and shakes his head. “Ohhhh ... that’s tricky!”

The police officer is concealing himself strategically in the foliage just far enough away from the stop sign at the T-intersection. It’s pretty clear that he’s waiting to catch cyclists who routinely ride through the stop sign. We’ve both seen it happen hundreds of times.

I laugh agreeably and turn around. “Look, here comes a cyclist. Let’s see what happens.”

Paul gets a little thrill at the prospect of witnessing someone being pulled over. He’s always had this fascination with police activity, and so I’m humouring him by taking the time to gawk at someone’s potential misfortune.

“He doesn’t seem to be slowing down, that’s for sure. There he goes!” Paul’s voice becomes more enthusiastic as we watch what happens next.

Sure enough, the cyclist, a bike courier, whizzes through the stop sign without hesitation, and immediately the police officer jumps out from behind the shrub and onto the road and brings the surprised cyclist to a quick halt.

“He’s gonna get a ticket. Remember that email I sent you last week with the fines for cycling infractions in Toronto? It’s an \$85 ticket for failing to stop at a stop sign.” I sigh,

feeling sorry for the cyclist. “Let’s go.”

Putting his arm in front of me, Paul says “Okay, just wait a minute. Look at all those cyclists coming. I have to see what happens!”

As a line of about six cyclists whizzes down the street and straight through the stop sign one by one, the officer lets three bikes go by, then inexplicably he pulls two over at once.

Somewhat bored with this, and not willing to be a spectator of others’ misfortune, I begin walking away. Paul catches up. “You know, I rarely stop at that stop sign when I’m cycling. I’ll have to be careful from now on.”

We carry on walking towards the next intersection. “Oh, I just remembered, I need to buy some stamps.” Pointing to the convenience store, I say, “Do you want to come in with me?”

Paul pulls out his cell phone, “No, I need to make a call. Go ahead, I’ll wait outside for you.”

With stamps in hand and the phone call completed, we wait for the light to change so we can cross the street. I lean down to pet a passing dog and hear Paul start laughing.

“What’s so funny?” I ask as I stand up to look at the source of his amusement.

“That bike cop was busting people down the street, but he didn’t stop before turning on a red light! Unbelievable!”

“Did he use a right turn hand signal at least?”

“Nope! If that were you or I, we’d be fined \$85 for failing to stop AND \$85 for failing to signal the turn.”

A gentleman standing at the lights with us offers, “I guess you didn’t hear shouting down the street. That purse snatcher

that’s been around for the last few weeks was in action and the cop was there and able to intervene just at the right time. He’s a hero if you ask me!”

Paul and I look at each other and then reflect on this little life lesson.

I whisper to Paul, “Less judging and more compassion, huh?” He squeezes my hand tightly in agreement.



Paul Kralik is a Secondary School Teacher at Northern Secondary and Jennifer Hicks is a Speech-Language Pathologist and Brown Belt Nia Instructor

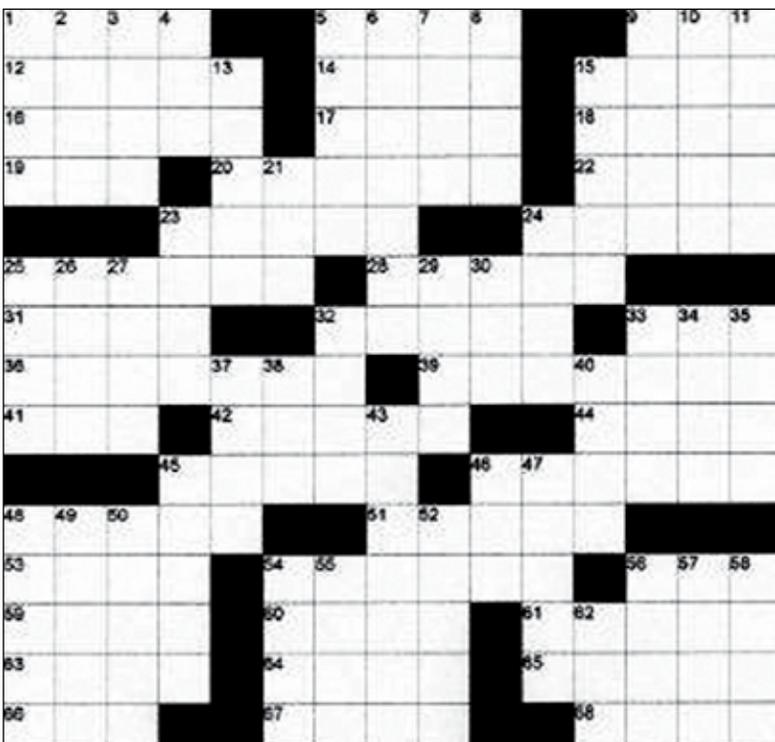
The most effective and successful people recognize a simple fact: that in virtually every aspect of life, a successful situation is based upon a cooperative partnership of two or more people. People get things done by cooperating, not competing. When put to the test, there is always enough to go around

from Living The Field



Alixe MacRae is a passionate puzzle fan and creator, who believes in more Canadian puzzle content

Torontocentric Crosswords by Alixe MacRae



August in Toronto			
ACROSS		DOWN	
1	Corduroy feature	1	See 9A
5	Plasm prefix	2	NB Town at Fundy Nat'l Park
9	With 1 D, August long bonus	3	___ bag, kid's treat
12	Run off to wed	4	Nonword opposite of inept
14	Armoured vehicle abbrev.	5	Roast master
15	Old Norse answer	6	May be creepy
16	Overact	7	GWTW setting
17	Detective authour	8	Grand Ole place
18	Honey source	9	"Don't cry for me..." singer
19	Half a chocolate bar	10	Lightfoot's railway worker
20	Margin of freedom	11	Frock
22	Off road transport means	13	Sniggler
23	Popular glass edge	15	Form
24	Neuters	21	Famous apple eater
25	Remove doubt	23	Hot cross e.g.
28	Make joyous	24	Leaf support
31	With 46A and 54A, August honouree	25	Slightly open
32	Beginning of G Stein poem excerpt	26	"You're nobody 'til ___ body...."
33	Telephone number 6 button	27	Avoid
36	"So droll"	29	Mr. Chaney and others
39	Old European personal celebration	30	Generic name for Aspirin abbrev.
41	Stimpy's pal	32	Culture prefix
42	Tropical plants	33	Year statue of David was erected
44	To quote	34	Familiar form of Nathaniel
45	World's hottest pepper	35	"Hear ye"
46	See 31A	37	Entry in a list
48	Blossom	38	Fuzzy surface
51	Class of organic compounds	40	Ontario "green" rebate program
53	Roof part	43	Personal trainer command
54	See 31A	45	Canadian captain of Black Hawks
56	Gehry gallery	46	Beach Boys' little car
59	Rick Moranis movie"....I ___ Up the Kid"	47	Ms. Witherspoon
60	___ Vera	48	Style of jazz
61	50's school punishment tool	49	Song syllables
63	Implement for water-borne travel	50	Not hidden
64	John ___ McDougall, past Auditor General	52	Cineplex loyalty program
65	Way to submit Revenue Canada taxes	54	___ Spring Island
66	Previous Ontario tax	55	Imperial Legions of Rome abbrev.
67	Family ___, ancestry	56	Operatic solo
68	Ring	57	Word with bladder or stones
		58	Subsidiary of GM
		62	Team on BMO Field

Answers on page 14

Summer Camp: Something beyond Fun and Games?



Diana (far left) leading 120 youth campers in Youth Leadership Camp 2009, Muskoka, Ontario

JENNIFER YIM

With summer in full swing, camps are on all throughout the GTA, offering different types of activities and skills that one can learn during a period of three to four days. Camps have been a large part of our summer memories, but how many of us can say that we have organized camps that have benefited thousands of teens? Diana Lam can.

This summer marks Across U-hub's 11th annual youth leadership training camp (www.acrossuhub.com). It also marks Diana's 11th year of volunteering and her 5th year as its camp director. Throughout 11 years, Diana has transformed from a mentee to a mentor to many youths. During her transformation from a camper to the camp's director, she has learned how to be open-minded while exercising discernment when exposed to different opinions, knowledge that she continually passes on to young volunteers. Despite her full time job, she manages to spend countless hours throughout the year preparing for the annual leadership camp. Volunteers describe Diana as "a natural leader, always challenging us to not settle for anything less than our full potential." However, when asked if she ever imagined that she would become a camp director, Diana laughed and replied, "Ten years ago I didn't even think I had leadership qualities, much less be capable of directing a leadership camp."

Diana immigrated to Canada in Grade 6, making it difficult for her to make a connection as to how to become a future leader in a community like Toronto, with such diverse backgrounds and perspectives on issues. Diana was in her first year of university when her friend suggested that they attend Across-U-hub's youth leadership training camp targeted towards high school and university students. She said yes with not much thought beyond "at least it's something to do this summer."

The everlasting vision has been to let youth believe that they have the power to do anything when given a platform

This leadership camp far exceeded Diana's expectation of "just something to do." Across U-hub's vision for youth leaders is not defined by academic strengths but by tangible skills such as interpersonal, team-building, and being a well-rounded individual. The camp always focuses on a current global topic, such as the Olympics theme in the summer of 2008, for young campers to become globally conscious citizens and make a positive impact on society. This year's camp (Aug 29- Sept 1) will focus on the G20 conference that just occurred in Toronto and its global impact.

Diana's own experience in camp also came with self-revelation. Through high rope activities and team building

games in camp, mentors challenged Diana and the rest of campers to step outside of their comfort zone, both physically and mentally. Campers formed trusting friendships, feeling comfortable enough to share their views on social issues and struggles in life. Encouraged by the leadership and passion Diana observed in the camp's volunteers, she soon joined Across U-hub as a committed volunteer. The rest is history.

When Diana was asked for her vision of camp in the next ten years, she said thoughtfully, "The everlasting vision has been to let youth believe that they have the power to do anything when given a platform. I myself experienced this empowerment and was encouraged to start searching and chasing after my dreams. I still haven't found it yet, but having the courage to search is something that I want others to experience." As a volunteer working with Diana, I can testify to seeing Diana living out her passion everyday by helping youths realize their dreams.



Jennifer Yim is a university graduate in Biology from the University of Western Ontario and is currently volunteering at Across U-hub

Gaining Perspective

Each month Brian Bauml offers us opportunities to look at ourselves in new ways.

IDEAL OR AUTHENTIC — IT'S YOUR CHOICE

I run a reading group for parents, and one book we were discussing — Alfie Kohn's *Unconditional Parenting* — has as a central tenet that parents should strongly avoid praising their children, and that if praise is given it should be short without being maudlin. As parents discussed their initial impressions of the book, many said something like, "After reading this book I immediately noticed how much I praise my child, so now I try to stop myself from doing it so much." My question to the group was, "So, this book changed how you praise your children. However, I also hear you saying that avoiding such praise seems out of place for you. Which is better for our children: an ideal parent that follows advice from a book, or an authentic one that follows their own instincts, regardless of what others think?"

This, of course, has much broader implications beyond parenting. It applies to most any role we can think of — boss, employee, spouse, child host/hostess, etc. It's not that being ideal or being authentic are diametrically opposed to each other, but as human beings, I think we struggle with this idea of ideal roles at the expense of our own authenticity.

Believe it or not, the ideal action is much less courageous and much less responsible than the "authentic" action. By attempting to be the ideal parent or boss, we are simply taking on pre-existing attitudes and behaviours that are not necessarily ours. We adopt a way of being that is not ours in order to "smooth things over" or to influence or control others. This often leaves us confused and disillusioned when things do not work-out as we have expected them to.

In our culture it is much easier to read a book or internet site or watch TV to pick up ideal ways of being than it is to access our own

emotions and feelings to determine what we really want. We are programmed at an early age to look to others more than to look at ourselves in terms of how we should behave. As such, accessing ourselves and our true feelings becomes a much more difficult process for us. Authenticity requires that we take responsibility for our own actions — no one else can influence how we really are authentically, and that it is a very tough burden for many people.

Moreover, being authentic requires much more from us in our contact with the outside world. If I authentically do not like something, wish to make a complaint, or even dismiss someone or something out of hand, I generally need to take responsibility for how my authenticity impacts the environment around me (not doing so gets into the realm of anti-social behaviour and is beyond the topic of this article). That means I need to "stick around" for the affects of my authentic behaviour.

What is worthwhile to note, however, is that authentic behaviour is the best way to inspire confident behaviour. When people know that their behaviour is grounded in who they truly are, they tend to become more empathetic and confident in the actions that they take. People begin to exercise what is truly within them, and while what is truly authentic may not be completely ideal, when behaviour is accompanied by the empathy, compassion, and confidence that comes with authenticity, we end up making the world a much more ideal place anyhow.



Brian Bauml is a Gestalt Psychotherapist practicing in Leslieville. He can be contacted at 416-907-6085 or through www.TorontoTherapySite.com

Food and Culture

Continued from page 1

Italy after the war. He met my mother thanks to Fr Ricardo at St Francis Church who introduced

them. My father serenaded her with his mandolin and flowers until she relented”, says Roberto. How romantic!

His father owned a number of barber shops and encouraged

his children to embrace the Italian culture and language.

So how did Grano come about? Well, Roberto’s first job was as an aftercare officer at a catholic school and later as a corrections officer at the Vanier Centre for Women. Then he became involved in food and wine importation. He married Lucia in 1985 and opened Grano the following year, starting off small and evolving into the restaurant that it is now.

Roberto’s work has not gone unnoticed. In 2006 he won the Jane Jacobs Prize, which celebrates Toronto’s “original, unsung heroes

And so, like his father, Roberto feels it’s important to keep the Italian culture fresh and alive in Toronto and runs Language and Linguine courses, wine maker dinners, and concerts. The restaurant’s motto is “*Non si vive di solo pane,*” which means, “One does not live by bread alone.” Grano itself means grain — they make their bread there.

It’s not only the Italian culture he wants people to engage in, it’s culture in general and

what’s happening in the world.

The Grano speakers series is now in its 6th year where leaders in business, government, academia, and the media can meet to discuss world events. They are also embarking on a number of discussion series for the autumn of 2010 to celebrate Toronto’s 150th anniversary.

While I was chatting with Roberto, I asked about the way the restaurant is decorated. The walls have wonderful paintings, Italian movie posters and colourful Italian plates. He tells me that his wife Lucia is an artist as well as the chef (very talented in both) and they also encourage artists to put their work up free of charge. Their payment is celebrating art and the art keeps their walls decorated.

There is a lovely fountain in the courtyard and there they have a private room that community organizations and social and cultural groups can also book free of charge.

Roberto’s work has not gone unnoticed. In 2006 he won the Jane Jacobs Prize, which celebrates Toronto’s “original, unsung heroes.”

Next year the restaurant celebrates its 25th anniversary and you can see why it’s a success: from the moment I walked into their restaurant I felt welcome. As a successful owner of a popular restaurant, he could have been arrogant but he wasn’t. He cares about food, culture, Toronto, and, most importantly, people.

So how is Grano going to celebrate its big birthday? Well, Roberto is already planning a big party.

“We’re going to have a smaller dinner discussion series and then we are having an open house in May where we will invite the city to come and say hello,” says Roberto with a smile.



Aisling Riordan is an award-winning journalist from Ireland. Currently, she works as Program and Marketing Coordinator with Diaspora Dialogues, an arts organization in Toronto

Toronto Tidbits

- Did you know that there are Tree Tours of Toronto? <http://www.treetours.to/self-guided-tree-tours>
- Did you know that Toronto is as far south as the French Riviera?
- Did you know that Toronto has the only real castle in North America? <http://www.casaloma.org/Main/MainDyn.asp>
- Did you know that one quarter of Canada’s population lives within a 160 km radius of Toronto?

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Crossword answers

1	W	A	L	E		5	E	C	T	O		9	E	N	D					
12	E	L	O	P	E	13		14	M	R	A	P		15	S	V	A	R		
16	E	M	O	T	E		17	C	A	R	R		18	H	I	V	E			
19	K	A	T		20	L	E	E	W	A	Y		22	A	T	V	S			
					23	B	E	V	E	L		24	S	P	A	Y	S			
25	A	S	S	U	R	E		26	E	L	A	T	E							
31	J	O	H	N				32	A	R	O	S	E		33	M	N	O		
36	A	M	U	S	I	N	G		37	N	A	M	E	D	A	Y				
41	R	E	N	T		42	T	A	R	O	S		43	C	I	T	E			
					45	T	E	P	I	N		46	G	R	A	V	E	S		
48	B	L	O	O	M			51	E	S	T	E	R							
53	E	A	V	E				54	S	I	M	C	O	E		56	A	G	O	
59	B	L	E	W				60	A	L	O	E			61	S	T	R	A	P
63	O	A	R	S				64	L	O	R	N			65	E	F	I	L	E
66	P	S	T					67	T	R	E	E			68	C	A	L	L	

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