



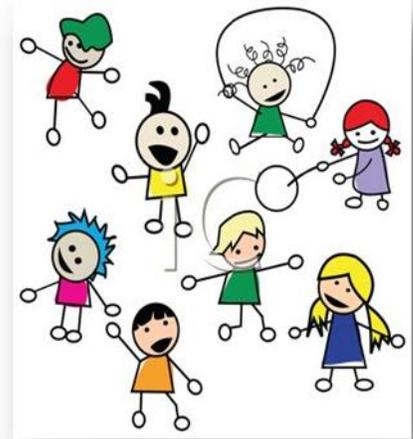
a program of March of Dimes Canada

GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER

Newsletter

May/June 2016

I HOPE WHEN THIS NEWSLETTER REACHES YOUR MAILBOX THE NICE WEATHER IS UPON US! This is the time of year when we can get out in the fresh air and make the most of the easy days. Easy days are the days we don't have to don boots, wear heavy coats, worry about sliding, falling or find the air just too cold to enjoy. Easy days are the days when you can slip outside whenever the notion strikes you. It's feeling the sun on your skin, enjoying the shade, or singing in the rain. We have more opportunities for activity in the easy days so I beg you, with great respect as always, that you make the most of these wonderful weeks. Throw open your windows, enjoy the birds, wonder at the sunsets and make enough summer memories to share time and time again. Until we meet again in our newsletter in September, my wish for you is that you summer well, my friends. - *Ceska*



UP COMING EVENTS >>> *Mark your Calendar...*

Brown Bag lunches at Harcourt Church For some of our members I know, these lunches are the best part of being a member in our group. We use a bright, sunny room on the lower level of Harcourt church. It is wheelchair accessible from the nursery school doors. This friendly event happens the third Tuesday of every month at noon, except for July and August. We have a speaker or program of interest for our members. Please check out our website to see what's been planned for each month. Please join us for a couple of hours of friendship and support. Be sure to bring your lunch. We supply the coffee, tea and cookies. Our convener makes announcements and shares news of interest to our members. Then, after our guest speaker/presentation, we divide the room into two. Stroke survivors meet together in one area, caregivers and friends in another. From the response we've received our members appreciate this time for casual conversation with others who share their experience and concerns. Remember, this happens at our regular third Tuesday lunch meeting. We meet on the lower level of Harcourt Church, the Edinburgh end of Dean Ave. We begin at 12 and go to 2:30. Everyone is welcome. Come with a friend or come alone-you won't be a stranger for long. We hope we'll see you there.

Walk 'N' Roll happens April 30, 9-11 a.m. at Stone Road Mall. If the date has not passed by the time you get this newsletter, we encourage you to join us at this fun, fund raising event. If the day has gone by there is still time to donate to our Chapter. Please call 519-822-5111 for more information. Your donations make a difference to the programs we can offer stroke survivors and caregivers in our community. Thanks for your support.

Survive & Thrive Caregivers meet every month for an hour or so of casual conversation and support. It's good to have people listen...people who understand where you are coming from. This happens the 2nd Thursday of every month from 1-3. We meet in the games room at Arbour Trails in the Village by the Arboretum, 33 Bayberry Drive, just off Stone Road, east of Gordon. For more information, or to let us know you are coming please call the office. Caregiving can be an exhaustive road to travel and the support of others on the same path can make such a difference. Some of us have been in this role for quite awhile while others are new to the experience. Joining for a couple of hours of conversation can make quite a difference to your week. If you cannot attend the caregiver meetings, or need some personal time with a caregiver other than at the meeting, please leave your name, a brief message and your phone number at 519-822-5111. Carolyn or Joan will return your call.

It wouldn't be summer without a Pic Nic! Pic nicking is the ultimate way to enjoy the light luncheon foods of summer. Of course, we hope you have the opportunity over summer to go to more than one pic nic. But OUR pic nic, our annual summer lunch together, takes place on Tuesday, June, 21. Yes, it takes the place of our June monthly meeting. The time and place remain the same but you can toss the brown bag and instead enjoy summer pic nic fare. Cost is \$10.00 p.p. This event is partially subsidized by the chapter so that everyone can come and enjoy this lovely event. We need to know well ahead of time how many are planning to attend so we can let the caterer know. It's best for organizational purposes if you can pay before June 10 so we can make plans for how many are coming...but we will also accept payment at the door. We encourage you to come dressed for the occasion. Don't miss it. It is our last get together until September!

Linking Survivors with Survivors – Oh the work we do!

Several years ago a few dedicated volunteers had an idea. That idea was to reach stroke survivors and caregivers right at the hospital. Creating the *Linking Survivors with Survivors* project has proved to be a valuable resource within Waterloo Wellington. This past year our 13 dedicated volunteers visited 278 new stroke survivors and caregivers providing knowledge, hope and valuable coping skills that only another stroke survivor or caregiver can give. A big thank you to the Hospital Peer Mentors: Dan, Cathy, Nick, Kathy, Edith, Su, Tony, Shirley, Dennis and Rosa. Community Peer Mentors: John, Ev, Rita, Yvonne and Dorothy who spent 250 of their volunteer hours providing support to residents in our community. We always need new volunteers for this program to reach more survivors and to keep this program strong.

If you would like to join the LSWS team please contact Barbara at bmoore@marchofdimes.ca

Learning from the Best. The 2016 LIVE Conference (Leadership in Volunteer Education) took place in Niagara Falls, April 5-8. Two of your executive members and two stroke survivors from our Chapter attended. These conferences are always chock-a-block full of interesting and entertaining events aimed at the world of stroke survivors and their carers and this one was no different. Sessions covered such topics as Mindfulness, the comparison of hospital to home practices in Australia and Canada, planning trips, financial training and corporate standards, creating stroke awareness in younger people and Social Media opportunities. There was time for

recreation as well. The dinner theatre, featuring live music and song, was a colorful, exciting, action packed evening. The food was fantastic and the show was such fun. There was so much energy in the room it spilled over to the busses on the way back to the hotel! It was a perfect evening spent with both new and old friends in the stroke recovery world. Attendees at the conference included chapter representatives from as far away as Calgary, British Columbia and New Brunswick. It gave your representatives an opportunity to learn how other chapters operated, what they did or did not do compared to Guelph Wellington, and what we could offer our members to enrich their relationship with our Chapter. Sponsored and organized by March of Dimes, the conference consisted of four days packed with educational sessions, learning opportunities and relationship building that can only enhance our chapter experience here at home. The staff members of March of Dimes were excellent hosts and they went over and above to make sure the participants' experience at the convention was a positive one. They could not have been more helpful...or more fun...if they had tried. Our thanks to Keith Rashid of March of Dimes and his team for a valuable week of learning and knowledge for stroke recovery.

Folklore of the Cannabis Plant

There has been a lot of talk about cannabis, often referred to as medical marijuana, in the news lately. This article below (condensed), sourced from the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) and Canni-Med, will provide some background information about the hotly debated plant and its use. For more information or to read the complete article go to www.carp.ca.

While the medicinal benefits of the cannabis plant have been a hot topic recently, the benefits of the cannabis plant have a long history dating back thousands of years.

Cannabis can be found referenced in ancient Chinese writings regarding its use as a treatment for many ailments including gout, rheumatism and absent-mindedness. The ancient Egyptians used cannabis for relieving hemorrhoid pain and inflammation, and it is documented that the people of ancient India used it for treating insomnia, pain and during childbirth. CBD and THC are two of more than 60 compounds with medicinal benefits found in the cannabis plant and laboratory research to study their potential efficacy as a contemporary medicine continues.

The first and largest study to look at the long-term safety of medical cannabis use by patients suffering from chronic, non-cancer pain was recently published in the Journal of Pain. In this trial, patients were given access to herbal cannabis containing 12.5% THC and were followed over one year. The researchers found that patients with chronic pain, who used cannabis daily for one year, when carefully monitored, did not have an increase in serious adverse events compared to pain patients who did not use cannabis. The cannabis users also reported a significant improvement in quality of life and reduction of their pain. Research is undergoing.

(Ed. note. While cannabis may be a viable avenue of pain control for some, we advise, as with all medications, that you consult with your doctor.)

CHAPTER NEWS:

Our Chapter Executive meetings are usually held at 9:30 a.m. on the first Thursday of each month. If you wish to bring a matter to their attention please contact one of the executive or telephone the stroke resource center at 519-822-5111

IN MEMORIAM...did you know? When a friend or someone you love has died, you might wish to make a donation in their memory. If our Stroke Recovery Chapter is your organization of choice, please know that we are NOT the same as Heart and Stroke. We are linked with March of Dimes but, to make sure your tribute goes to the GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER of Stroke Recovery, please indicate that on your donation. The local chapter receives the donation from the March of Dimes *only* if the chapter name is clearly noted. www.marchofdimes.ca makes it easy to donate online! *Thank you.*

In Memory of the death of her husband Ed, our thoughts and condolences go to Glad Green. Glad has been a longtime member and volunteer for our chapter and we are sorry to hear of her loss. Ed passed in March of this year.

Membership has its Benefits. Membership remains at \$20.00 per person or per family once again. Membership in the chapter is not a donation and therefore a tax receipt will not be issued. We do appreciate any donation you choose to give above \$20.00. However, please know that we do not turn anyone away. If the cost of membership is difficult, call the office and talk with Mary. Your conversation and situation will, of course, be kept confidential. Your presence and your recovery are important to us.

We are a good Chapter. You can be proud to be a member. Thank you for your support.

Leahy Family in Song. The spring outing for our Chapter took place April 2 at the River Run Centre in Guelph. What a toe tapping time! The River Run Centre, on the banks of the Speed River, is a beautiful venue for live performances. In the heart of downtown Guelph, it's easy to get to by private or public transit. Our thanks to Jen Raftis for arranging such a great outing for our members. If you weren't able to attend don't worry, Jen is working on some outings for fall so perhaps you will be able to take part in one of her offerings for that season. Stay tuned for details! You can always check our website for the latest in information or simply call the office at 519-822-5111 to find out what's happening in our Chapter.

Student Befriending a Successful Program. Our Chapter's Student Partner Program for stroke survivors has been one of our most successful and rewarding benefits available to members. We are delighted to tell you that because of the large number of stroke survivors and families interested in having a university student partnered with their stroke survivor, and after a lot of work by the executive Co-chairperson, Carol Miller Hall, who has been revamping the program, as of this passing month, we will now have two new assistant co-coordinators. We welcome Nicole Raftis and Nora Coulter to this exciting program. We hope to have a total of four coordinators in place to maintain the program. If you are interested in taking part in the program as a volunteer please contact Carol at the email below.

Each spring, some of our student partners graduate from the University of Guelph and go elsewhere to further their lives. Our objective has been to replace them with mature and specifically trained volunteer new students. The program's leaders have become involved with quite a few such university students, and the fall program looks very promising. The student partners and stroke survivors spend time every week working on hobbies, puzzles, exercise, exploration or in interesting conversation. A visitor, soon to be friend, can make such a

difference to someone trying to adjust to their life as a stroke survivor. If you are a stroke survivor or caregiver who knows someone who could benefit from being part of this exciting program or if you would simply like more information, please use the following email: ssbefriendingprogram@gmail.com.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR:

RECIPE FOR MOTIVATION...Just do it, try it and the action itself will motivate you.

Instead of finding motivation, let the act of doing or trying be motivating in itself. You just never know what might inspire you and encourage you to try something you had been resisting, pondering or thinking about for so long that it had become stressful... Just give it a try!

Often times obstacles, real or imaginary, stand in the way of something we really want to do. But sometimes, simply by the act of doing, we motivate ourselves to do even more!

What are some of the things you do that motivates you without realizing it? It could be a job you enjoy, a hobby, meeting with old friends, making new friends, helping someone or volunteering. Perhaps it is family time, travelling, gardening, painting, reading, singing or exercising. It might be a walk in the park, fishing, spirituality or meditation. This list could go on and on. *Doing* the things we enjoy is very motivating in itself. So, if there is something you haven't done for a while maybe it is time to let the *idea* motivate you into doing it!

Motivation gives us purpose and reason for waking up in the morning and having a fulfilling day. Our peer support meetings are meant to inspire us to try things we haven't done for a while or to do them in a different way. Our meetings are to support and encourage one another. They are meant to EMPOWER ONE ANOTHER - AND YES, MOTIVATE!

Sometimes life gets us down and motivation is hard to find. Well, let me tell you, sometimes you have to let motivation find you! Our circle sharing is a great place to explore ideas and possibilities.

My message is that when the opportunity presents itself but you feel you need a little push, let the act of *doing* motivate you. That positive energy will in turn encourage you further to enjoy and do the things that enrich your life every single day.

I am challenging myself to put on my two old friends, my running shoes, every morning and let them take me for a brisk walk. Hopefully after I do this I will be motivated to do this every day. I'll let you know how I did when we get together again this fall!

I wish you an enjoyable summer and look forward to seeing everyone at our September peer support meeting.

“Life stands before me like an eternal spring with new and brilliant clothes”

Carol Miller-Hall, Co-Chair

The lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer... Although we break for summer, your needs do not take a summer vacation. If you need information, have questions or wish to speak with a

member of the executive, please call the office, 519-822-5111 and leave a message. Someone will get back to you. Your chapter is here to support you all through the year.

MEDICAL CORNER

-Ruth Tatham M.D.

An article appeared in the Globe and Mail of March 22 of this year, looking at diseases of our blood vessels, both artery illness causing strokes and/or heart attacks. The subject dealt with was the role of pharmacists in aiding patients dealing with either (or both) of these conditions. The cause of arterial disease in both locations is often very similar.

Many pharmacies have permanently-located machines for customers to check their own blood pressure. I used to be skeptical about these, in case they were not checked regularly, and might not provide accurate B.P. readings. However, I am reasonably re-assured that the pharmacies have this checked regularly, and, indeed, it is a fine way for the average customer to get an accurate self-reading.

The article points out several important things: a survey has shown that 25% of Canadians newly diagnosed with hypertension (high blood pressure) will fail to fill their prescription for the medicine just prescribed by a physician to control their blood pressure. I have found all too often that I had prescribed such medication, and yet the patient's blood pressure is no better on the next visit. So...it took only the obvious questions "Did you fill the Rx and did you take the pills?", and I learned in dismay that the prescribed medication was too expensive, and the patient could not afford it! Thus, there was no way the risk of stroke or heart attack could have been reduced. Older patients, if the Rx is "covered" by the government's drug plan, were far more likely to get the Rx filled and then take the medication. Obviously, we need a comprehensive drug plan such that necessary medications are really available financially.

The next point is "Have you taken the prescribed medications accordingly to the directions for it?" A good pharmacist will take time to assess whether the patient is capable of following directions re Rx's...if in doubt, the pills and tablets can be prepared in "bubble packaging", labeled according to the day and hour for its use. (The above survey has shown that 50% of Canadians with chronic diseases don't take their medications as prescribed!) Many hospitalizations are caused by medication related situations...which raises the health costs for Canadians to an estimated \$7-billion to \$9-billion annually. A further finding is that many patients don't renew their prescriptions right after their current supply runs out. If the pharmacies have an automatic patient contact centre whose staff phones to remind the need for a renewal, there is a marked reduction in patients slipping out of good control of their ailments.

Most pharmacists are glad to talk with patients about their medication, the uses of such for the ailments in question, and the side-effects to be dealt with. There seems to be a much better cooperation between prescribing physicians and pharmacists than there used to be, but we all have to remember that no medications can help reduce your risk factor or reverse any of your symptoms if you don't really take it, and take it exactly as prescribed and for the reason it was prescribed. Many pharmacies have a designated pharmacist or assistant who can discuss care for

a diabetic because of training, or advise means of stopping smoking, or dietary means to help with weight reduction. Self-education is the path to better self-health care!

RESEARCH CORNER

-Ruth Tatham M.D.

We have already mentioned that we seem to be seeing a larger number of young people in our area enduring strokes; this observation was highlighted by the feature article in the March 2016 Newsletter of the Toronto Central Chapter of Stroke Recovery Canada.

There, the case was discussed of a 41-year-old man in Maryland who endured a severe stroke affecting the left side of his body. Although he has persevered and has accomplished considerable rehabilitation, he continues to cope with multiple difficulties in performing daily activities ever since that stroke two years ago. In his case, the stroke was a bleeding directly into the brain tissue...such hemorrhagic strokes cause less than 20 percent of strokes...the majority of strokes result from blood clots inside arteries supplying oxygen and nutrition to the brain; this is true in younger stroke victims as well.

We in the Guelph/Wellington area have become involved with more stroke survivors under age 50 in the last couple of years. Interestingly, more are men than women. What are the reasons for this situation?

The American man described in the Toronto newsletter highlights some of the well known risks for stroke...markedly high blood pressure, smoking, obesity. There are other recognized risks, such as heredity and race...black men are especially endangered...such risks are not under the control of the people involved, but many risks, as you have often read, or been told, can be reduced. Diabetes is one of these.

We emphasize one sentence in the Toronto article: "This is not to say that stroke is becoming a disease of young people." It is to say that obesity, uncontrolled by medication and lifestyle hypertension (high blood pressure), and diabetes can be altered. And the best time to alter the effects of these conditions is early in life. High blood pressure is the commonest cause of strokes, and most of us do NOT have symptoms of our high blood pressure...only a medical testing of your blood pressure may be the way you find out!

I am 85. I have had known hypertension, on medication, since age 40...and, mercifully, I have as yet not had a stroke. I am one of the fortunate ones who found out early that my family's history of high blood pressure afflicted me, too...and something could be done about it...and was!

STROKE RECOVERY CANADA-GUELPH WELLINGTON CHAPTER
Resource Center - Unit A-5 -100 Crimea Street, Guelph, Ontario. N1H 2Y6

(Our hours vary. Please visit by chance or call before you visit.

Phone messages are picked up regularly.)

Phone: 519-822-5111 **Email:** strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com

Website: www.strokerecoverygw.ca **Facebook:** [strokerecoverycanada-guelphwellington](https://www.facebook.com/strokerecoverycanada-guelphwellington)

TO UNSUBSCRIBE TO THIS NEWSLETTER EMAIL strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Co-Chair-Al Raftis

Co-Chair & Liaison w/Student Partner Program - Nicole Raftis, Carol Miller-Hall

Secretary - Lorraine Holding

Resource Center Coordinator / Co-Treasurer - Mary Drennan - 519-822-5111

Medical Advisor - Ruth Tatham M.D

Medical Advisor - Pat Kandel M.D.

Visibility & Communications Coordinator - Francesca Brennan

Survivors with Survivors Liaison - Dave Huson.

Hospitality/Brown Bag Lunches - Carol Miller-Hall

Newsletter Editor - Francesca Brennan

VOLUNTEERS

Co-Treasurer - Christine Forsberg - 519-822-5111

Community Recreation Coordinator-Jennifer Raftis

Name Tags - Marg Coffin

Telephone - Brenda McManus

Hospital Visitors - Kathy Prentice, Su Gillis and Edith Dennis.

Resource Center Volunteers - Christine Forsberg, Janet McCallum, Leigh Ponting, Pat Kandel, Ruth Tatham

Caregiver Liaison-Carolyn Cattran & Joan Bowland

To reach any of the above people please call the office number 519-822-5111 or email strokerecovery.guelphwellington@gmail.com.



As always, our thanks go to the following for their support and assistance. Our Chapter depends on companies, organizations and individuals for our very existence. Our thanks are sincere.

McNeil Consumer Healthcare and Hammond Manufacturing for their support in the preparation and distribution of this newsletter. Guelph Community Foundation, City of Guelph Wellbeing Grant, Richardson GMP, Tambro Construction, Eden House and giving individuals who wish to remain anonymous. We definitely could not reach out to the number of people we do without your generous help.

Check out our website and follow us on Facebook!