

# Niagara Region's Living Wage

With the annual cost of household living expenses for a Niagara region family of four conservatively pegged at over \$65,000.00, the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network has calculated the hourly wage necessary for families to meet these expenses, otherwise known as a 'living wage', to be \$17.47. If an employer provides a comprehensive benefits package, including life and disability insurance and dental, vision, and prescription drug coverage, the living wage is lowered to \$14.47 per hour.

The Network recently released a new report, 'Calculating the Living Wage for Niagara Region, 2016', which outlines the full methodology used. The report is available on its website [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)

A living wage reflects what two full-time earners in a family need to be paid based on the actual costs of living and being included in a specific community. It is an evidence-based hourly rate at which a household can meet its basic cost of living needs, once government transfers have been added to the family's income and deductions have been subtracted. Included in the calculation are food, shelter, clothing, transportation, child care, non-OHIP medical insurance, continuing adult education, and items that allow for fuller participation in society, such as communication, family leisure outings, and local recreation.

Providing wages that allow a family to meet its basic household needs is one important tool to address cost of living challenges in Niagara region and should be top of mind of all employers to consider implementing. However, the reality is that many Niagara businesses are struggling themselves to stay afloat, so other solutions must also be considered to help make life more affordable for workers, such as improved access to lower cost housing, transportation, and child care options.

## DO YOU HAVE A POWER OF ATTORNEY?

Powers of Attorney (POA) designate a person that you would like to make decisions on your behalf if you become unable to do so.

A Power of Attorney for Personal Care covers decisions such as health care and medical treatment decisions, housing, clothing, diet, safety, etc. A Continuing Power of Attorney of Property pertains to your property and financial affairs.

A will makes it much easier for your loved ones to sort everything out when you die. Without a will the process can be more time consuming and stressful. If you don't write a will, everything you own will be shared out in a standard way defined by the law, which isn't always the way you might want. It's easy to make a will and it will save your family unnecessary distress at an already difficult time.

**Join us for an informative session on Power of Attorneys and Wills on Wednesday, November 2, 1:00-3:00pm, Bridges CHC, Port Colborne Site, Community Room.**

**It's something everyone needs to know.**

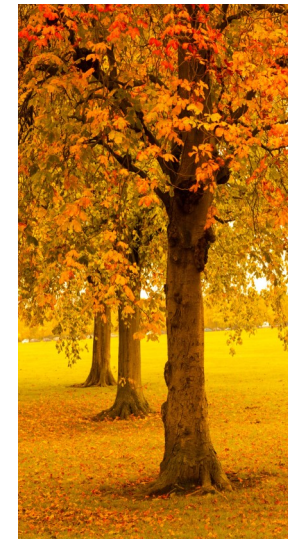
**The session will be led by Justice Niagara. There is no cost and pre-registration is not needed.**



# Bridges Community Health Centre, Port Colborne Site COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

## September - December 2016

### Vitamin G, A Prescription for Happiness



We are a culture obsessed with happiness. Just take a look at the self-help section of any book store, perform a Google search on happiness, or consider the millions of North Americans using anti-depressants and you will see that our cultural landscape is rife with tools and instructions on how to be happy.

Of course, there are legitimate reasons to be unhappy. And no one wants to minimize the debilitating effects of depression; it can be a crippling mental illness. But unhappiness does not equal depression and it's important to recognize the difference.

So why does happiness remain elusive for some? One reason is what researchers from around the world confirm as the human brain's negativity bias.

It turns out our brains are hard wired to focus on the 'nasty.' Apparently it's a primal instinct that kept us safe when roaming the savannahs hunting for our survival. But in today's context, walking around in a post millennial world with brains that are more stimulated by negativity than positivity, this primal instinct can wreak havoc with our personal lives and even interfere with our ability to reach our goals.

That is not to say walking around in a perpetual state of happiness is a realistic option either. Unhappiness is actually part of a full and rich life. The key is to strike a healthy balance between the two.

Fortunately there are tools that can increase our happiness quotient. And even better, they are free and accessible to everyone. Keep in mind though, changing your way of thinking requires a consistent, ongoing effort. But like any muscle, if exercised regularly, you eventually see results.

The idea of an "Attitude of Gratitude" is not a bunch of hooey either. It caught the attention of psychology researchers around the turn of the century and there is real science that supports its benefits. When practiced, gratitude contributes to one's overall sense of wellbeing, improves emotional health, and leads to deeper relationships to better sleep and less physical pain.

If this sounds like a prescription you can use, sign-up for your dose of "Vitamin G" this fall when our Social Worker Len Dykstra, also dubbed Mr. 'Grati-Dude', tears out his "prescription pad" on **Wednesday, October 19, 4:00-6:15pm** and offers strategies & techniques on how to incorporate an "attitude of gratitude into your life.

**Welcome to the  
Fall 2016  
newsletter!**

**We have a  
number of  
programs and  
workshops open  
to the entire  
community at no  
cost. Some are  
tried and true and  
a few are new.  
Flip the page and  
see what's right  
for you!**



**September 26 -  
October 1, 2016**

**Community Health  
and Wellbeing Week  
Celebrating Our  
Community Roots!**



Follow Bridges CHC on  
Twitter or "Like" us on  
Facebook

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177 King Street  
Port Colborne, ON L3K 4G5  
289-479-5017



Fort Erie Site  
1485 Garrison Rd.  
Fort Erie, ON L2A 1P8  
905-871-7621

## HEALTHY EATING & NUTRITION PROGRAMS

**ASK A NUTRITION EXPERT:** Drop in to this monthly session and talk with a Registered Dietitian and get answers to your nutrition questions. Forget the fad diets; get advice on managing weight for a lifetime. Bust nutrition myths and get sensible advice on meal planning. **First Wednesday of the month (September 7, October 5, November 2, December 7); all sessions take place from 3:00-4:00pm.**

**EAT SMART FOR YOUR HEART:** Join a Registered Dietitian in this workshop and discover foods to eat for a healthy heart, learn about the Mediterranean diet, and understand food labels. This program is helpful for people with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, heart problems, or for anyone who wants to keep their heart healthy. **Wednesday, October 12, 10:30am-12:00pm.**

**GROCERY STORE TOURS:** Join our Registered Dietitian at a local grocery store. Discover how to make healthy food choices, read food labels and shop on a budget. **Please call to register for our next tour.**

**LET'S GET COOKING:** A monthly cooking class focused on basic cooking skills and preparing quick and tasty low cost meals. No cooking experience necessary. **Thursday, September 29, October 27, and November 17, 3:30-5:30pm.**

## GROUP EXERCISE PROGRAMS

**GENTLE FIT:** The class starts with a seated dynamic warm up, followed by strength exercises for the upper and lower body through the use of light hand weights, Therabands, and two lb. medicine balls. All exercises are completed in a chair or standing holding onto a chair. Balance exercise training and a full body stretch are also included. **Classes take place every Tuesday, 9:00-10:00am.**

**BACK TO BASICS:** Following a dynamic warm up to increase blood flow to all muscle groups, participants will complete a series of exercises either sitting in a chair or standing holding on to the chair to strengthen upper and lower back muscles, as well as abdominal muscles. Some classes are done in a circuit fashion with light cardio to increase heart rate. Full body stretch at the end of class. **Classes are held every Thursday, 9:00-10:00am.**

**MINDFUL MOVEMENTS:** A unique style that adapts yoga type positions and movements. The creative use of a chair replaces the yoga mat and becomes an extension of your body. After an initial warm-up, we perform a series of movements that build support and stability. Suitable for all ages, fitness levels, and physical conditions. **Classes take place every Thursday, 10:00-11:00am.**

## SOCIAL DROP-IN

**COFFEE CLUB:** A weekly drop-in social group for adults of any age. Come by for a coffee or tea and a light snack and meet new friends. **The group runs every Monday, 2:00-4:00pm.**

## HEALTHY MIND & BODY PROGRAMS

**MINDFUL LIVING:** A mindfulness-based approach to coping with daily living stress has been proven to be particularly helpful for people living with chronic pain, anxiety, or depression. **An info session will be held on Friday, September 16, 1:00-2:30pm** for anyone interested in learning more before signing up for the program. **The seven week program runs on Fridays, starting on October 7 through to the end of November, 1:00-3:30pm.**

**VITAMIN G, ADOPTING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE:** People who practice gratitude tend to be more content and at peace, less stressed, relaxed and generally more appreciative. Learn how to adopt an "attitude of gratitude" in this informative workshop. **Wednesday, October 19, 4:00-6:15pm.**

**QUIT SMOKING:** Two-part program that provides strategies and tools to support your quit attempt; four week supply of nicotine replacement provided to eligible participants. **Monday, November 7 and 14, 10:00-11:30am;** participants must attend both dates.

**THE "D" WORD... DEALING WITH DEPRESSION:** Over two million Canadians suffer from a depressive disorder. Depression can be a crippling mental illness that interferes with work, family life and a person's overall health and wellbeing. The good news is that there are many things people can do to minimize its effects and even lift them out of depression. Join our Social Worker and Community Nurse to learn more about the strategies and techniques that you can take to counter depression. **Wednesday, November 16, 4:30-6:30pm.**

**SURVIVING THE HOLIDAY SEASON WELL:** This workshop is for people living with struggles that seem to present themselves more so during the holiday season, such as grief and family relationships. **Friday, December 9, 2:00-4:00pm.**

## DIABETES EDUCATION

**DIABETES HOT TOPICS:** A monthly presentation discussing diabetes related topics to help improve self-management of diabetes. **Thursday, September 15, October 13, and November 10, 3:00-4:00pm.**

**KEEPING DIABETES AWAY:** This workshop will focus on nutrition and lifestyle management strategies to help you delay or prevent the development of diabetes. Three sessions available: **Tuesday, September 13, 1:30-3:30pm, Tuesday, October 11, 1:30-3:30pm, and Tuesday, November 29, 1:30-3:30pm.**

Have you signed up for Niagara Ride Share yet?  
If not, what are you waiting for?

Learn more at [www.niagararideshare.ca](http://www.niagararideshare.ca)



It's FREE and simple to use!  
Help spread the word - "like" our page on Facebook



We are a designated Good Food Organization



Proud participating member of the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network [www.wipeoutpoverty.ca](http://www.wipeoutpoverty.ca)