

Street News

VOICES FROM
OUR STREETS
WINTER 2011/12

START ME UP
NIAGARA

For Richer...For Poorer

by Susan Erskine-Fournier

Welcome to my humble home, you seem to be in awe
I'd offer you a chair to sit but all I have is straw.
I'd offer you a spot of tea to warm you while we chat but I haven't any water or heat here in my flat.
My apologies about the rain but the sky it seems to leak.
It's a tiny inconvenience of living here out on the street.
Well... there really is no answer as to how this came to be, I only know it's not the life I had in mind for me.
I'm not the empty shell you see just wasting life away, I'm just like you - I'm human-
getting by from day to day.

Yeah... I once was a good neighbour until times just got too tough.
No matter how much work I did - it never was enough.
No matter how I tried to save - I grew further into debt.
Now the lessons learned here on the streets, I'll never soon forget.

Oh... like the coldness of the pavement and how closely it compares
to the coldness in the eyes of those with condescending stares.
They never seem to realize it could be them instead of me...
But the human pride is ruthless and shows little dignity.

What if it was them you ask?
I'd never pass them by. I'd take the time you took with me to look them in the eye.
I'd give to them the hope you gave to get me through the day.
I'd share with them my riches.
I would never look away.

Why?
Because you came to me in kindness, not in sympathy - a gentle act of friendship, a tender generosity.
You encouraged me to try again to get back on my feet
so I'd be there for whoever takes my place here on the street.

Sure... I may lack the simple luxuries that other people share
but the greatest wealth I own right now is knowing that you care.
As for richer - as for poorer, wealth is measured not by shame,
but by the human spirit of which we're born one in the same.



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Street News

VOICES FROM OUR STREETS

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Start Me Up Niagara

Working Together...Moving Forward

Working with individuals whose
lives have been affected by mental
illness, addictions, unemployment
and homelessness to develop self
sufficiency by providing
opportunities to earn income,
improve health and integrate
into the community.



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Before I became a
Buddhist, I worried
about my life.

Now I worry about
my next life.

- Wes Nisker

In Memoriam

THESE PEOPLE WILL BE MISSED THIS CHRISTMAS.
THEY WERE SUPPORTERS AND FRIENDS.
MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.

Carmen Mauro
Bill "Liam" Allen
James-Tubby-Currie
Kenneth Robertson
William Flatley
Gregory "Bam Bam" Taylor
Mark Dwyer
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Happy Holidays

There are many festivals going on this time of year; some of them are Diwali (Hindu), Channukah, (Jewish), Eid (Islam), Baha'ullah's birthday (Bahai), Winter Solstice (Interspiritual), Jul (Asatru), Christmas (Christianity), New Year's (Secular), Kwanzaa (African American) and Chinese New Year.

Wherever you are, have a safe and happy time. See you in 2012, the Year of the Dragon!

For Employment Help - Call Faye
905-984-5310 ext 15

For Housing Assistance - Call Kyle
@289-686-0639



Program Notes from Kim for 2012

St. Catharines Injured Workers Speaker School

The program that began October 13th is now on its Christmas Break. We will be meeting on January 12th for the final 4 classes. We have 11 individuals attending regularly. We are studying the history of injured workers and enjoying the practice of delivering speeches.

Preparations are also underway for the next Injured Workers Speaker School, which will begin in March of 2012. To register please call Kim at Start Me Up Niagara @ 905-984-5310 ext. 11

Skills of Success for Women

This program is now completed at Start Me Up Niagara. We recognized 9 women with certificates on November 29th. Closing comments indicated that everyone enjoyed the program and that they appreciated the knowledge and skill development that took place. The next program will be held at Genesis Court on James Street, St. Catharines, to begin on January 10th. To register please call 905-641-1660 ext. 27

Always thank you to
Silver Spire United Church
for your ongoing support
of Start Me Up Niagara.
The bridge of friendship
continues to grow as
we share vision in the
community.
Happy New Year



Fear and Loathing on Jones Street

by Rainbow

I've come to the conclusion that St. Catharines has 3 seasons. There's Spring. There's Winter. And, in between, there's Construction.

It started in early August, when the Powers That Be decided to annoy the denizens of Jones St. - a side street that's lucky if it gets ploughed twice in the same winter-by tearing up the street.

The official reason was to replace the aging sewer pipes, and the official letter said it would take 8 weeks to do it.

Yeah. Right.



Imagine having a variety of neurological and physical issues. Autism doesn't deal well with sudden changes, loud noises, too much going on at one time, or crowds of people. It also comes with sleep phase problems and being a natural night owl in a day world doesn't help. Depression skews one's perceptions anyways, and Arthritis.... just hurts.

These are the three most trying of the trickster gifts that the Creator has blessed me with.

And yes, they are blessings in their own strange way. Everything comes from the Creator. Everything happens for a reason. Even constant pain has a bright side. Pain is a teacher that forces us in no uncertain terms to value mental, physical and emotional health rather than taking it for granted. If we allow it to, Pain also teaches us Compassion, Patience, Humour and True Strength. The kind of strength that has nothing to do with long hair, Scandinavian good looks, 12 pound leather pants, 6'3" of muscles, or a very striking pair of blue eyes.

Sorry. That was a Kevin Sorbo moment. More about him later.

Now imagine waking up at 7 a.m.- that's if you managed to sleep the night before to begin with- to noise so loud it

literally shakes the house. The windows and doors rattle, the floor moves and things fall off tables. This happens almost every day for three months. (We didn't even get a letter about it until 4 days after it started.)

Sometimes you can't get into your driveway. Sometimes you can't get out. And that scary yellow thing that is literally almost as big as your house invariably parks itself right out in front. If you are parked in your driveway, you have to park on the street. If you are parked on the street, you have to park on another street. If you are parked on Russell Avenue (3 doors down from you), some yahoo takes exception to your presence on "his" (public) street, writes you a nasty note about having "no respect", threatens you, then doesn't even have the gumption to sign his name.

Parking at the Carlton Plaza, you might get towed. In increasingly cold weather that makes your bones ache, you have to negotiate a street's length of torn asphalt, gaping holes, huge trucks, extreme noise, shaking ground, construction workers, and various piece of



ironmongery that are bigger than you are all without benefit of sidewalks, because they took them too. I have a reclusive streak in me at the best of times so this was so not good. Needless to say, my nervous system overloaded, my immune system imploded, and I developed acute symptoms of every issue I have-all at once. For 3 solid months, I hurt. Worse, I stopped doing Qi Gong, figuring it would hurt worse. It was a supremely stupid move that I have since rectified.

Barely able to read and-horrors!- completely unable to write, I turned to my next coping strategy which is where Kevin Sorbo enters the picture.

I don't have a T.V. and I am extremely picky about the quality of my DVD's. I like Sorbo because he is very talented, funny, a highly moral man in a business that's not known for that, and because of the kind of characters he tends to play. Kevin is drawn to quietly heroic guys who are forced to choose between morality and the easy way, leaders who must rise to their nobility-or watch the world fall with them. I hadn't seen "Hercules" since it was first on 18 years ago, and I had never seen "Andromeda", so I bought both series and watched them through. Here is fun. Andromeda is not only fun but good-it is by far the best written science fiction series I have ever seen. Laughter and good writing attract me and laughter also has a way of putting things into perspective.

So I've got noise and ironmongery to deal with. At least I'm not a modest Greek demigod who's cursed with the sniveling, sneaking, Ares, god of war as my half brother, Hera, Queen of the gods as the ultimate wicked stepmother-and

neither of them will leave me alone. On top of which, I have to kick butt constantly because every idiot in Greece wants a piece of my 7 foot self. Not to mention that I'm saddled with the insanity of Michael Hurst as my best friend. (Ironmongery) What ironmongery? Herc scared someone on Geneva Street when he picked that yellow truck up off Jones St and threw it into their front yard.) Or , try having 3 strokes-and going back to the series (Kevin did!)

So I have to skirt potholes walking down a street that hurts my back because the ground is a little uneven. At least I'm not Paradine (an avatar of Space and Time) who gets stuck in a black hole for 303 years emerging only to find that my family, my girlfriend, my home planet and my government are all dead. I don't have to take 4 seasons of battling duplicitous Nietzscheans, corrupt politicians, evil races and my own crazy crew to even discover that I am Paradine. I don't have to take another 8 episodes to realize that this means that I'm actually the last Vedran (an extinct race of sacred beings) and right up to the last 20 minutes of the series I have no clue what to do with it. And here I am thinking I'm just a (human) starship captain. ("Potholes?" says Dylan Hunt, "Get real". I have to travel through the 8th dimension and a pocket universe just to deal with The Abyss!")

No. I don't really identify with Sorbo, Herc, or Dylan. But this is my article on coping. Get your own. Besides, several good things have come of this. My father has unexpectedly become a fellow Kevin Sorbo fan. Susan, Liz, Mary Jo and Kim have renewed my faith in friendship and in my abilities. I'm back with the Qi Gong. My Creator has renewed my faith in the Everliving Presence and, as you can see, I'm writing again. I was inspired by a fifth season two parter (Norse by Norsevest/ Somewhere over the Rainbow Bridge) of "Hercules" where our hero gets tangled up in saving the life of the only nice god-Balder-he's ever met in order to prevent Ragnarok (see my other article). It's appropriate to the Winter Solstice-and I love the irony of a Norwegian actor playing a Greek demigod opposite a Scottish actor playing a Norwegian god. I survived.

And, oh yeah- I have a nice, new, shiny road to look at. And its even got sidewalks. Now, if they could only stop messing with Welland Avenue.... ■



Occupy Awareness

by Kyle Kuzyk



Victor Hugo once wrote that "there was nothing as powerful as an idea whose time has come". Well it seems that the ideas encompassed within the "Occupy" movement are beginning to have their time now. It has been a long wait, but I think folks are reaching their breaking points and are incredibly unhappy with the current state of affairs.

What are the issues? Social inequality seems to be the most pressing issue and the reason for the civil demonstrations being acted out in public spaces across the globe. "We are the 99%" is the catch phrase they have adopted to get their message across. The reason for this phrase can best be explained this way; It refers to the vast concentration of wealth among the top 1% of income earners compared to the other 99 percent. The top 1 % of income earners have more than doubled income over the last thirty years. Between 1979 and 2007 the incomes of the top 1% of Americans grew by an average of 275%. During the same time period, the 60% of Americans in the middle of the income scale saw their income rise by 40%. Since 1979 the average pre-tax income for the bottom 90% of households has decreased by \$900, while that of the top 1% increased by over \$700,000, as federal taxation became less progressive. From 1992-2007 the top 400 income earners in the U.S. saw their

income increase 392% and their average tax rate reduced by 37%.

It is clear that the statistics point to a progression of social inequality. What was not clear was the aim of the Occupy movement, in fact, that would be the greatest shortcoming of the movement thus far. There was the idea of rallying around a single, clear demand for a [Robin Hood tax](#), a global march in support of the tax planned for October 29, but organizers got lost in the demands of all the protesters. What participants wanted were more and better jobs, more equal distribution of income, bank reform, and a reduction of the influence of corporations on politics.

So an idea's time has clearly arrived, but just how long it may take to play itself out is another story altogether. How long before this movement achieves critical mass? How long before more people wake up to the fact that they hold real power and can influence government and corporations? How long before governments and corporations understand that people are getting sick and tired of the injustice? For historical reference I suggest people look at the French Revolution (Google it to see the similarities). How long before someone makes the mistake of suggesting we eat cake?

Stay strong and stand together! Solidarity now! Solidarity now! ■

Baldr, the Shining One

by Rainbow

Baldr is the Norse (Scandinavian) god of light, truth, peace, goodness, wisdom, justice and the Sun.

And just so you know, his myth does *not* include 7 foot tall Greek demigods by way of Norway and Minnesota.

Like the behaviour of the Sun in Scandinavia (6 months of light followed by 6 months of darkness), Baldr's myth is both dark and scary, and surprisingly hopeful. This story contains unique elements that I have not yet found in other mythologies

If you notice, "Baldr" sounds a lot like his Greek counterpart "Apollo". They share many things, including the title " the Shining One," leading me to suspect that one may be a variant of the other. More likely, they are both variants-one Northern, one Southern-of another Sun god so old that s/he is lost to the mists of Time.

Various Scandinavian, Baltic and Germanic versions of 'Baldr' mean "brave", "good" "shining" and "day" and he is commonly spoken of as Baldr the Good. The Prose Edda says "...he is best and all things praise him...so bright that light shines from him..He is the wisest of all the Aesir (Norse gods), and the fairest spoken and most gracious; and that quality attends him that none may gainsay his judgements. "His mansion in Valhalla (Norse Heaven) is called Breidablik and "in that place may nothing unclean be."

Patience and Compassion were key to Baldr's character. He was so utterly pure, kind and gentle that "everything in creation loved him". This is unique in mythology, and is probably why 9th Century Scandinavians drove the new (to them) Roman Church nuts by equating Baldr with Jesus.

Mayweed, Daisy, white Marigolds, Midsummer and the runes representing Sun and Daybreak are sacred to Baldr-as is Mistletoe, the plant that killed him.

And this is how it happened:

Baldr and his mother Frigg are sharing some pretty scary dreams. Allfather Odin sees a prophetess Volva, who's prophecy, the Voluspa, foretells Baldr's death at the hands of his twin brother, Hodr. This will bring on Ragnarok, a battle to the death between

the gods and the forces of Darkness. (This terrified the Norse, who already had to deal with 6 months of it.) Ragnarok is another concept utterly unique to Scandinavia-no other pantheon has a similar story. But Volva sees beyond Ragnarok to a new and better world, where Baldr will be resurrected. Norse myth is older than Christianity and though resurrection is a common theme, Baldr or Christ being "the last god standing" in a remade world is unique to them alone.

Oden and Frigga are so disturbed by this that they make all creation swear never to hurt Baldr-except that they forget Mistletoe, who they deem too young and unthreatening. This turns out to be a fatal mistake when Loki the Trickster hears of it. Fashioning a spear of Mistletoe, Loki travels to Valhalla, where the gods are having fun drinking Mead and throwing things at Baldr.

Even Mjollnir, Thor's hammer, has no effect. Being blind, Hodr feels left out, so Loki cons him into throwing the spear-instantly killing the god of light. Enraged and grieving, Odin kills Hodr and asks Hel, goddess of the dead, to bring Baldr back.

Hel agrees-but only if all creation grieves for Baldr. This, all do, including Mistletoe, who's ticked off at being used. All, that is, except the giantess Thokk. When Odin discovers that "Thokk" is Loki in disguise he imprisons the Trickster. But the damage is done. Baldr is unable to be reborn until the world is. In the yearly cycle, Baldr dies on the Winter Solstice, the longest night of the year and is reborn at Spring Equinox. From this moment, Baldr is gaining strength until Midsummer.

Nanna , Baldr's wife, commits suicide on his funeral pyre, preferring to be with him in Niflheim (Hel's realm) than alone in Valhalla. Odin is said to have whispered the promise of resurrection in Baldr's ear as he lit the pyre.

Christianity reached Scandinavia so late that there are unbroken lines of Asatru (those who still follow the Aesir) to this day.



For a more Jungian interpretation, how about this:

Ignorance (Hodr) is blind. Chaos (Loki) is jealous of Order (Odin) and distrustful of Goodness (Baldr). Deceived by Chaos, Ignorance takes aim and kills what could have relieved its blindness. Mean spirited actions (Loki as Thokk) bring on a Dark Night of the Soul (Ragnarok) so harsh that it destroys any sense of Order (Odin), Love (Nanna), Family(Frigga)Law (Tyr) or Strength (Thor). But Light is always the stronger force. It melts the ice (Hel's realm) in one's heart. The old order (all the gods) is swept away as identifying with others' pain kills Ignorance (Hodr's death). Such a drastic change in perception opens one's eyes, and, seen through Compassion (Baldr's return) ones' entire world is remade.

As the adage goes, "it is better to light a candle than to sit and curse the dark." Good intent-followed up by good deeds-is our candle. Together, we can Bring Back the Light.

So Happy Hanukkah, Happy Eid, Season's Greetings, *God Jul* and have a safe and very Merry Christmas!

Information Bulletin: Tax Filing, Tax Credits & Tax Refunds

from Income Security Advocacy Centre

The way that tax credits are paid to low-income people in Ontario is changing. This information bulletin is to tell you about these changes and what you should know before you file your tax return.

If you have a low income – from work or from OW or ODSP – you may have had your taxes done early in the past to get a tax refund before Christmas.

The way this worked is that you could “sell” your lump-sum tax refund to companies that do people’s taxes in order to get the money up front. The company would do your taxes, estimate how much your refund was going to be, and give you that amount – minus their fee.

Then, when your refund came back from the government, the company would get repaid.

Mostly, the refund was for tax credits, like the Ontario Sales Tax Credit, the Energy and Property Tax Credit, and the Northern Ontario Energy Credit.

You no longer get these tax credits as a lump-sum refund at the end of the year. This means these companies will no longer give you any money up-front when they do your taxes.

That’s because the provincial government has gradually changed the way that these tax credits are being paid.

Since July 2010, the government has been paying these tax credits in smaller amounts every three months instead of as a lump-sum at the end of the year.

The goal is to give people with low incomes a more stable and steady source of income throughout the year. You would have received the tax credits in cheques or by direct deposit to your bank account. This money is exempt as income from OW and ODSP.

Starting in July 2012, the tax credit money will be sent out every month. This will be called the Ontario Trillium Benefit. Every month, you will either get a cheque or the money will be direct deposited into your bank account.

All of this means that there are no more lump-sum refunds for these tax credits and no up-front money for a company to give you now.

The problem right now is that some people still think they can get a lump-sum refund for these tax credits and are going to a company to have their taxes done. Or, they think that going to a company is the only way to get their taxes done.

Some of these companies are telling people that even though they can’t get a lump-sum refund, the company will still do their taxes for them. But people have to agree to:

Pay a fee for the company to prepare and file their taxes;

Open a “bank account” – which in this instance is owned by a cheque cashing company

Change their direct deposit with the Canada Revenue Agency so that future tax credits and tax-delivered benefits go into this “bank account”;

Sign up for a prepaid debit card that they can use to get the money that will go into the “bank account”;

Agree to pay the company’s fee, and another fee for the debit card, by letting the company take out money from this “bank account” once the tax credits start going in.

In at least one community, one company has been offering a \$25 store gift card as a way to persuade people to agree to this arrangement.

Getting your taxes done this way could cause problems and could cost you a lot of money over the long term:

All your future tax credits and tax-delivered benefits will be deposited into the “bank account”. This includes the provincial tax credits listed on the first page and the HST credit. But it also includes the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB). And it includes your federal tax credits and tax-delivered benefits, like the Canada Child Tax Benefit (the CCTB) and the National Child Benefit Supplement (the NCBS).

The company that did your taxes will be paid their fee first, as soon as your tax credits or benefits get put into this “bank account”. You might need this money to pay for rent or food – but the company will get paid first.

In order to access your money, you will have to use the debit card you got from the company. But this debit card will charge you a fee of \$2 for:

Every time you buy something with it;

Every time you use it to take out cash from a bank machine;

Every time you try to use it to buy something but are denied (for example, if there isn’t enough money on the card);

Every time you try to find out how much money is left on the card.

There is also a \$2 monthly fee for the “bank account” itself.

You’ll have to pay all the charges listed above to get access to all your tax-delivered payments for as long as the agreement with the company is in force.

You may have to pay other fees, depending on what it says in the contract.

You don’t have to agree to this in order to get your taxes done.

There are ways to get your taxes done that won’t cost you anything:

Contact your provincial MPP (see below) or a local community agency, or ask your OW or ODSP caseworker where you can get your taxes done for free.

Contact your federal MP for a referral to the Canada Revenue Agency’s Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, or check this website for the location of a free tax clinic near you: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/vlntr/nd-eng.html>.

Tax clinics run from February to April. Find your federal MP at this website: <http://canada.gc.ca/directories-repertoires/direct-eng.html#mp>.

You don’t have to get your taxes done now. It is important to get them done, but you have until April 30.

Information about the Ontario Trillium Benefit is at: www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/credit/otb/index.html.

A schedule of when tax credits get paid is at: www.rev.gov.on.ca/en/credit/benefitpayments.html

Taxes will be done free by Appointment only at Start Me Up Niagara:
Thursday March 11th and Wednesday April 8th
2012 9am-4 pm Call Kim @ 984-5310 ext. 11



Poetry...

A Healthy Mind is Precious

by Paul Shtogryn

There was a time, years ago,
When life was younger, and times aglow,
I suffer the headaches, the numbness, the pain,
Underneath was the depression wide but narrow,
Instead of my heart, my mind was it like a bow and arrow.
But times and meds heal the wounds, Now I'm calm, less tension, no tombs
My mind is calm, clean as a bell, no more hell,
You just don't know how a healthy mind can be precious and swell.

A Life

by John Langridge

When I was a child my days were filled with glee
I never imagined a time I wouldn't be free
I never imagined a life behind bars
A life without daylight
A life without stars
A life without my wife to hold tight
A life without my children to kiss me goodnight

Listening

Listening
Day by day
I absorb pain
Breathing somehow
Barely a tear
Always a scar.

n.i.

Nanna's Lament

by Rainbow

I will arise and leave Valhalla
The joys of Asgard are dead to me
Slain with the death of my Shining One
The flames that light his way to Niflheim
Shall be my passage also, for he is my Light
And we will laugh the loudest
For Ice and Snow are nothing to the Sun
They will melt in a rush of life giving waters
And Baldr the Good will stand alone
In a world remade- with me by his side

requiem for the living

by midc

resolve, then evolve
from revolutionary past
we must dissolve
me first not last
our perimeter of self worth
is approaching
fast decline
servitude
refuge in all the divine
searching humbly, honestly
for some crumb of truth
the heart says yes
the mind remains aloof
living life in a state of limbo
man needs to evolve, come full circle
begin your pagan pageantry

Where Am I?

by Nancy Thompson

Staring far away as the eye can see,
The sun is beaming on my face.
I feel the light cool breeze flow against my cheek,
My feet emerge in the soft sweet water,
The sound of a bug enlightens my ears.
The glowing ray of sun blankets the water
Like sparkling diamonds.
The calmness puts me to peace;
You ask where are you?
It's simple...I'm right here where I'm suppose to be,
Here with the Angels.

Old Familiar Smiles

by Geoff Ashcroft

When you're low and lonely and searching for a cure
Someone to relate to; someone who'll bring you cheer
friends who really miss you when you're far away
Those old Familiar smiles may be what you need today

So if you are a stranger in someone else's town
Lost and damp and lonely and just about to drown
Remember what I told you: that if you need a friend
Those old familiar smiles can put sunshine in your song

And if you are discouraged and cannot find your way
If you're just plain lonely and have no place to stay
New faces you might meet can never quite compete
It's those old familiar smiles that bring you off the street



Who would have thought Story Telling, Then and Now, a program offered by Start Me Up Niagara and supported by funding from the Government of Canada's New Horizon for Seniors Program, would lead to a group of 15 seniors and students making their own hand drums. The program was intended to improve communication for seniors through intergenerational exchanges. A group of seniors from the Niagara Regional Housing and students from Niagara College and Trillium College responded to the invitation to try something new through making native hand drums with traditional teachers Jackie Labonte and Bill Russ. A full day of teachings and creating our own drums. ▶ ▶ ▶



Jackie and Bill arrived with all of materials we would need to create the hand drums—frames-deer hides and the teachings. Teachings that helped us to understand the gifts we receive through communicating with each other and with all our relations in respectful and grateful ways. We worked in teams of two helping each other as we fit the hides over the frames, lacing them in the way we were shown to create our own unique drum with its own unique voice. A time when ‘then’ was brought forward to ‘now’.

But I’m getting a little ahead of myself. The Story started last fall when we were approved for funding to encourage intergenerational communication. The seniors at 15 Gale were on board and we were in search of the students we needed to include when we were invited to an event promoting a new leadership initiative spearheaded by two teachers in the DSNB called Give Where You Live. 30 agencies were asked to describe their programs that would give students (about 500) an opportunity to volunteer in the community where they live. Through a ranking system each agency received the involvement of about 15 students for their particular project. For us, Grade Sevens and Grade Eights responded to the Story Telling, Then and Now program. Students and Seniors came together in January, February and March to share in conversation, activities and stories.

We met in circle for the first time in January. It seemed important to have some warm up activities to encourage everyone’s comfort level. A circle of introductions soon became a circle of exercise led by Dan, the Wellness Coordinator at 15 Gale.

It didn’t take long for everyone to start having fun as a rigorous forty minute workout in the chairs had everyone enjoying or not their own level of fitness as a group. Our objective of sharing stories happened long before the opening remarks. A circle of introductions became a circle of exercise became a circle of friends.

Our objective of sharing stories happened long before the opening remarks.

We are going to highlight a few of the stories, in whole or in part, using some of the commentary; but not the full names of the individuals in keeping with the magic of listening and the wonder of the other.

One of the elementary students shares after listening to Anita’s story.

My partner, Anita, is at a wonderful age of 93. She grew up in a very large family. She has 5 brothers and 4 sisters. As she got older she married and had 7 children. 3 of them are boys and 4 are girls. She lived in Prince Edward County until she was 85. What an independent woman! This one story she told me took place years ago when she still lived in her hometown. Have you ever heard of a living mannequin? Probably not!

One day, Anita and her neighbour went to the town of Picton to go shopping. They went into a department store so they could “browse”. Anita is the kind of person who likes to get her stuff and go. Her neighbour is the complete opposite. She likes to take her time and look at everything. Her neighbour decided to try on some hats. Anita was pretty bored. While watching her friend, she just stood still. A random lady went up to Anita and touched her arm. Anita turned around and the woman screamed! She thought Anita was a mannequin. They all laughed so much!

Anita has had a life of laughs and troubles. What can you expect when you have 9 siblings, 7 children, and 90 grandchildren and great-grandchildren?

Anita is a wonderful woman. She reminds me of my grandma so much! I have nothing bad to say about her. Every time we talked I learned something! She’s a very independent, proud and wonderful lady! I’m so glad I know her.

And in another pairing a student wrote.

This is the story of Pauline . She has had a very unique kind of life. She was born just after World War II and her life was very difficult to live in. Every day she would have the same kind of horrible protein that she hated – canned meat. She was very close to her mom and loved to read books. Mostly due to the cost that she didn’t have TV to watch.

Her favourite series that she read was Anne of Green Gables. Pauline believes deeply in God and still goes to church to worship God. Her whole life she loved volleyball and even thought she wasn’t very good she loved to play it. Now she can’t play volleyball but she still loves it and watches it. She collects stamps and really likes crafts. She really likes arranging flowers

for weddings. Pauline worked at Women’s Place for six years and she loved every minute of it. She was very emotional when she was watching TV and found out about 9/11 and she was very emotional at her job.

It was very interesting to hear the responses of the participants to each other and the activities. One man said, “It makes me feel young again” another offered, “I feel hopeful talking with these young people!”

Some of the students talked about their experiences.

I thought this experience was a lot of fun. I learned a lot about other people. I met a lot of new people and even though they were older I found a lot in common with them. When we did the drum circle with the seniors today I didn’t know how it would end up, if it would sound like crazy banging. But it was really good. I had a lot of fun and it sounded amazing. The first time I came I was very nervous. I didn’t know anything about this program and I had no idea what to do. When we got there and I saw the seniors I still had no idea what were going to do and I was afraid it was all going to go downhill. But once I got used to the place it was a lot of fun. Yes I would do more volunteer work because I like helping people. I like seeing new people, learning about more people and helping people and animals.

The warm-up activities before we sat to talk and share, created a wonderful level of warmth and relaxation. The responses of the students spoke volumes. The seniors wore their happiness with smiles, laughter and words. To have conversation...

Stories give us such insight to other times and life styles. Our richest resource, people



to have people listen...to have the generations meld to the common denominator of friendship, lifted everyone's spirit, as indicated in the next student's comments.

An age friendly community to me would be a place where people of all ages would get along and treat each other as they would want to be treated. Nobody would be going around robbing banks and there wouldn't be any jails because everyone would be good. Everyone would be treated with respect and nobody would be making fun of each other. That's the kind of community I would like to live in.

Wouldn't we all like to live this way. Free to be ourselves in a caring community. Another student said the following.

I really enjoyed my experience here all together because it was really nice to get to know everybody and get to hear new stories and see how the generations have changed throughout the years.

In the age friendly community I would imagine:

Younger volunteers -

Easier access to things for people that have a disadvantage -

People of different generations interacting and talking more -

Having a hate free community -

Coming to Start Me Up Niagara was an amazing experience and we're extremely happy that we got to come.

All the stories in whole or in part created many bridges to friendship, understanding each other and having appreciation for those we may never have otherwise met. Times have changed since people lived closer in community with relationships intact and where care giving was as natural as breathing. The residents said how much they looked forward to

the arrival of the students and the conversations that for some, helped lessen isolation.

One day we invited Story Teller Dr. Heather Kilty from Brock University to offer a presentation to the group. We were entertained and mesmerized as Heather used personal experiences to share the importance of story telling in our lives, in our communities. There were so many stories

humorous and poignant, illustrating the value of community, friendship and intergenerational sharing.

This next piece is a little longer reflecting the ease of the relationship these participants experienced. Two young students teamed up to record their time with Alice.

One of the biggest things she likes about this century is the equality. The women had no rights back then



Alice is 91 years old and for the short time that I met her and talked to her she always smiled and was always happy to tell her story. She had a hard past including the death of her

oldest child and divorce to her husband. She worked her whole life as a single parent in a time where that was frowned upon and it was hard for a woman to get well paying work and still managed to put her kids through college. She's had a difficult past but still loved the world. She was a blessing to talk to and to get to know.

She was born October 4, 1920 in a log cabin on the outskirts of Albra Township near Dutton. Her father was a farmer and her mother a housewife like most women of that time. As a young girl living on the farm life was simple and taken one day to the next. It was a 150 acre farm near Fangol Ontario which is a few miles off of Lake Erie. For playmates on the farm they had seven horses, twenty or so cows and six or seven pigs. They also owned a small Shetland pony which was her favourite of all the animals. They used to ride her bareback everywhere.

Life was simple, though very different then what we know it as now. For one clubs were as common as umbrellas. They were used to hold the foxes off and

kill garter snakes. That was one of their chores as good as they were in the gardens they were a major problem in the house. As for the foxes, the men used to get together and instead of going to the bar they went out hunting the School was a long walk away and they used to ride their pony to get there. It was a one room school house with one teacher. The report cards were little cardboard sheets that they got every month. An inspector would also come once a month and sit with each student trying to help you and make sure you understood everything well. There were a lot of textbooks – spelling, reading, math – and mostly it was a lot of memorization. There was twenty minutes of exercising each morning before class. The school only went to grade eight then you had to go in to town to the high school.

Alice told a story of how school was thought of back then. She had an Uncle who as twenty two and he still was in school. In the winter he would go to the school house to get warm but as soon as it got warm he'd be out fishing and working. This was a popular way of doing things too!

There was also a girl who would help out at the school – sit and listen to the children read – who would stink because she wouldn't bathe all winter because there was no warm water to bathe in!

One of the biggest things Alice likes about this century is the equality. The women had no rights back then. Alice worked long and hard and succeeded in putting all her daughters through college. Alice is a rewarding person to get to know and I immensely enjoyed talking to her. She worked hard and was rewarded, in a time when it was much harder to do so. She's a real role model.

S *tories give us such insight to other times and life styles. Our richest resource, people. It wasn't our intention to authenticate everything in our exchanges, only to listen and hear the other.*

Again we move on to thoughts and reflections talking about an age friendly community. The next entry is from a student who expresses her thoughts.

"If there were to be an age friendly community, I think that there should be more parks and trails. Because elderly people need to be walking more. Also the kids and teenagers can have a place to play/hang out. The town would need acceptance towards the different ages. Freedom, trust, peacefulness are some of the things the town and people need.

During the past three days with different generations, it showed me that even though they





didn't have all the technology they still had an awesome life. I now understand better how things will probably go when I'm older. "

We move back into shared stories again as students talk about their experience with Lucille.

Today we sat down with Lucille and got to know her a bit. We got to know small things about her like her favourite things, how many siblings she has and what she loves most.

She grew up having a brother who was ten years older than she was. Most of her childhood experiences were spent playing puzzles, cards, and other games. She had a favourite doll, bear and blanket. Speaking of blankets, her mom would make them, repair clothes with a sewing machine and knit scarves. Also her mom loved to bake.

Lucille is a social person, who is a good listener. She loves to meet new people and has recently discovered senior people are nice. And she's a proud woman. She's proud of learning to hear, her church, learning activities and exercise.

Jamie and I are very glad we met her. Got to talk to her and learn about her generation and her life growing up. Lucille is a very nice, kind-hearted and funny person. It was fun getting to know her.

This story telling project was a great way to learn things about the people in our community. I loved every minute of working with new, amazing people. It was fun working with different generations. I definitely want to come back here and socialize with everyone. I want to volunteer a lot! I love everyone here and they were very welcoming and nice to me.

An amazing community would be everyone coming together and sharing their opinion. A lot more work would get done and a ton of voices would get heard. Younger generations need to listen to the older generations because they will learn a lot of information. If we all work together, everyone will get along better and be happier. In conclusion all of the generations should work together. It would be a lot better.

A student shares about time spent with Shirley.

Throughout these last few months, I got the chance to talk to Shirley. Shirley loves making cards, writing poems and music. As a teenager, Shirley loved having friends over on Friday nights and going to the community centre for dances on Saturday nights. One of her favourite birthday presents was a tape recorder from her mom. She also loved singing with her sister and in the school choir. She's never been a

big fan of technology, but would rather do small crafts like card making and crocheting. A few other things Shirley doesn't like are driving and as a little girl she only enjoyed reading. She now has 3 granddaughters, the eldest is now finishing high school, the middle child is turning 16 and the youngest is almost 12. It was interesting to hear about the various things she remembered, for example an icebox and rumble seats. I had a great time talking to Shirley and I hope I can hear more interesting stories about all the different generations!

Another student shares their time with Margaret.

While taking part in a wonderful storytelling program I got the chance to talk to a very interesting lady named Margaret. She was born and raised in New Zealand then later moved to St. Catharines, where she has been living for 22 years. When looking for a job in New Zealand, she knew exactly what she wanted to do, which was teaching. Unfortunately she wasn't able to find a job at that time. While travelling across Canada, making stops in various provinces, she stopped in Halifax and was staying with a friend. During the time she was there, she was able to apply for, and find a job! Margaret raised her family in St. Catharines, having 2 girls and 2 boys. As they grew up, they started to move and live in different areas. While living in Toronto, her son worked as a builder and her other son, while living in Australia worked in mines. Her eldest daughter worked as a nurse and her other daughter worked as a jeweler. Something Margaret would love to do again is go on a canal cruise. The boat only travelled 4mph, so you were able to jump off the boat and walk faster than it! She's not a big fan of the city, with all the buildings and cars, so she loves going to places like England and New Zealand, to look at the beautiful open fields and farmland. As you can see Margaret is a very interesting lady with so many stories to tell!

**Wendy relays the story she was told about Lily Dale:
*The True Story of the Town that Talks to the Dead.***

When I was a little girl I used to spend some of the summer in Lily Dale with Grandma and Grandpa and Aunt Martha and her son Billy and Sister Raada. My aunt was getting ready for the big assembly and didn't have any dress for me to wear. So she made me the prettiest blue satin dress I ever seen.

I guess I was really scared for me, talking about people who died in body but are still with us.

Anyway after that, didn't take much to scare me. I don't know why but my granddad scared me. My grandma told me not to go in their room upstairs up the hall – she sure didn't have to worry about that. Once I was in another bedroom, you wouldn't see me until it was light out. After I wet the bed, grandma put the potty under the bed.

I can remember my grandma washing my hands. And the honey toast she cut in fours.

Their house had a phone on the wall, you had to wind up. That was so cool, a piano that played on its own, only you had to use your feet.

When my grandpa died they had him in the living room for the showing. Right try to step in a house with a dead person. I can remember him playing the saw and spoons.

Again we come back to the students' recollections of their involvement with Story Telling - Then and Now.

My experience here at Start Me Up Niagara was amazing. From laughing and telling stories of the past to having fun with instruments in the drum roll. Even though we only had the privilege of being here for three days, everyday was fulfilling. Just because of the age difference, some may of thought it may be difficult or tough to relate or make connections of our history with each other. It turned out to be exactly the

**If we all work together,
everyone will get along
better and be happier.
In conclusion all of the
generations should work
together. It would be
a lot better**





opposite. Everybody seemed to connect instantly with whomever they were talking to. Sure times were different back then to how they are now but I think it is the feeling and greatest memories that we can truly and really relate to. This was a great experience, one of which I will remember always. The happy and joyous moments, the caring elders, to the welcoming people. All have been amazing. Thank you for this great experience.

To answer the question, "What would make an age friendly environment?" My answer summarized, would be caring and a jar of honey. When put into more detail my summary sentence refers to a place or environment where people are caring and sweet to one another. Where everybody is treated as equals at every age. A safe community, a small community as well, where everyone knows who everybody is, not just their name but their personalities.

The narrative began with the story of our drum making and then to the stories and experiences of the young elementary students with the senior residents and back to the drum making. The drum traditionally represents the heart beat of Mother Earth. The drumming circles we form honour the earth and all our connections in this realm. The drum is an instrument of communication and carries many stories. We concluded our Story Telling by offering a one day drum making course where everyone made a drum, shared stories, heard the teachings and now has their own personal drum to enjoy. One extra drum was made to gift to someone who wasn't there. Names were drawn at the end of the day and a very happy resident received the gift of a drum.

Story Telling - Then and Now Project came to completion with the making of drums. We had come full circle honouring all the shared relationships and all our relations.

We thank everyone who participated. Your involvement made Story Telling - Then and Now, a success. Special thanks to the Government of Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program and Start Me Up Niagara.



What's New in Our Kitchen

*From the kitchen and desk
of Susan Grimard*

Our kitchen is busier that ever and we're happy about that. We have great volunteers doing our preparation for weekend meals and special events at Start Me Up Niagara. Food donations continue to help us meet the increasing demands for meals.

Starting Dec. 7, I will be teaching a ten week course on cooking basics for residents in the Booth Centre's transitional housing units.

Our kitchen has a wish list. We go through a ton of coffee and creamer. All donations gratefully received and appreciated by our guests. We are open 7 days a week.

As well there is an opportunity to sponsor our weekend lunches. \$250.00 will provide lunch for Saturday and Sunday's lunch.

Please call Kim for details. 905-984-5310 ext. 11
Our Pasta Dinners resume in 2012 January 18th 5-7p.m. See you there for the best meatballs in town.

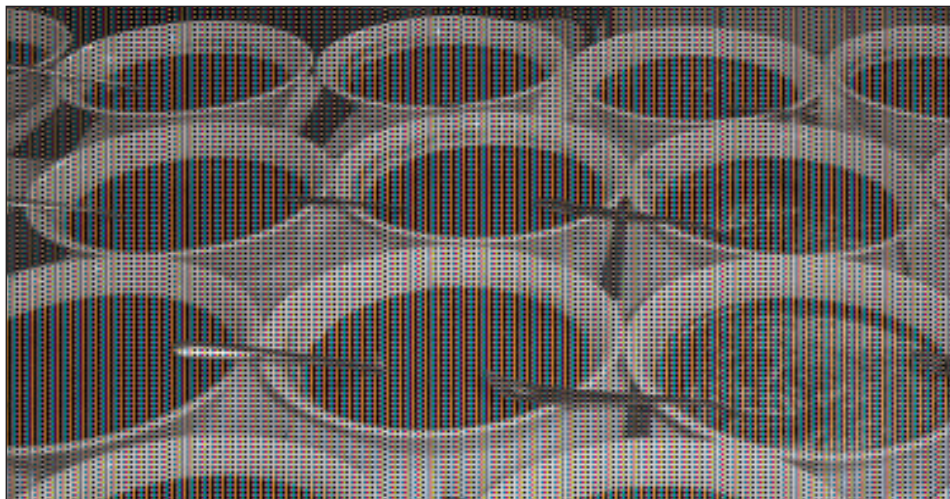
A Random Act of Kindness

Sunday afternoon and I am standing in line at Costco with my cart full of bananas for Out of the Cold. The man behind me has one item so I tell him to go ahead. he asks if I am making banana bread. When I tell him the bananas are for Out Of The Cold he said to put half the cost on his bill. His kind gesture made my day. Thank you banana man...S.V.

Answer for Suduko from page 20

9	6	1	4	3	7	2	8	5
7	3	8	2	9	5	4	1	6
5	4	2	8	6	1	3	7	9
8	5	7	9	1	3	6	2	4
4	2	9	5	8	6	7	3	1
6	1	3	7	2	4	5	9	8
1	9	4	6	7	2	8	5	3
3	7	5	1	4	8	9	6	2
2	8	6	3	5	9	1	4	7

Squash, Red Potato, & Apple Soup



Ingredients

Having the gang over for the the holidays? Here's a great recipe to feed 100+!

Not quite so many? You do the math!

25 whole Butternut Squash
10 lbs Red Skin Potatoes
10 Russet or Mutsu Apples
1 large chunk of Ginger
1 lb Garlic
butter and oil

2 tbsp Cinnamon
2 tbsp Nutmeg
Salt/Pepper
20 sprigs of Fresh Thyme
Stock-vegetable or water
cream to taste

Cut the butternut squash in half and scoop out center seeds, Place on trays upside down, add some water to the tray and place trays in oven on racks at 400 for approximately 45 minutes.

When the squash is soft to the fork remove from oven. Peel back the skin and place flesh in bowl to mash.

In large pot add a combination of oil and butter and turn heat on to medium. Sauté the peeled and cored apples, garlic & ginger, then add the butternut squash, water and seasonings. Allow to simmer. Add the potatoes (pre mashed with garlic cream and butter).

The potatoes can be added to the soup cold or warm. Stir, as this has a tendency to settle on bottom and burn. Add seasonings to taste.



"I'm making sure I get my five daily portions."



SPECIAL HOLIDAY EVENTS – NO COST

DATE	TIME	EVENT	SPONSOR	ADDRESS	NOTES
Dec 14	3 and 5:30	Dinner	Booth Centre	Westminster Church	Reg by Dec 10
Dec 20	6 - 8	Carols'n'cider	Start Me Up	17 Gale Crescent	All
Dec 22	5:30 - 8	X - Mas Party	Women4Women	124 Queenston St	Women only
Dec 25	12 – 5	Dinner	Stella's	45 James St	All
Dec 25	4 – 6	Dinner	Joey's Only	318 Ontario St	Taxis from B.C.
Dec 27	1 – 6	Dinner/party	C.A.W. Hall	124 Bunting Rd.	Continuous Buses run from B.C. & C

B.C. - Booth Centre C.C. - Community Care

MacFrugal's Furniture Free ham and veggies 353 St. Paul Street 10 a.m. while quantities last.
 Out of the Cold - Southridge - Booth Centre - RAFT - All run their regular schedule through the Holidays
 Start Me Up Niagara Centre - open regular hours; Monday - Fridays 9 - 3, Saturdays, Sundays - Lunch 11:15 - 1
 Start Me Up Niagara Centre - open Christmas Day 11:15 - 1
 Start Me Up Niagara Office - closed Dec 24 - Jan 3, 2012
 Friends of Recovery invite you to a 48 Hour Christmas Party Westview Christian Fellowship, 124 Queenston Street, Dec 24 - 4p.m. to Dec. 26 - 4p.m. Coffee, food, games carols and more...All Welcome! New Year's Eve 4p.m. - 4p.m. New Year's Day
 Salvation Army closed Dec 26 - 27 & Jan 2. Van will run Dec 24 & 28 - 31
 Ozanam closed Dec 24 -27 and open 28 - 30
 Community Care & Housing Help Centre close noon Dec 23 Open 28, 29, 30
 CMHA closed at noon Dec 23 and Dec 26, 27
 O.W. closed Dec 23, 26, 27, 30 Re-Opens Jan 2, 2012
 O.D.S.P. closed Dec 27, Jan 2, Re-Opens Jan 3

St. Catharines

OUT OF THE COLD

November 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012

6:00 p.m.

Hot Meal / Overnight Shelter

Sunday Night	St. George's Anglican Church	83 Church St.
Monday Night	Silver Spire United Church	366 St. Paul St.
Tuesday Night	Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Catherine	67 Church St.
Wednesday Night	Queen Street Baptist Church	57 Queen St.
Thursday Night	St. Alfred's Roman Catholic Church	272 Vine St.
Friday Night	Knox Presbyterian Church	53 Church St.
Saturday Night	Queen Street Baptist Church	57 Queen St.
Out of the Cold (905) 984-5310 or (905) 641-2249 Shelter Information 211		



Emergency Resources

Shelter Information - 211

EMERGENCY SHELTERS	PHONE	ADDRESS	BEDS	HOURS	RESTRICTIONS (Age, sex, addiction, etc.)
Abbey House	905-684-9736	115 Dufferin Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 2A2	8	24hrs	females and females with children; 8 weeks clean
HOPE House	905-734-8492 905-734-8302	116 Division Street Welland, ON L3B 3Z9	21	24hrs	accommodate men, women & families; no alcohol or drugs
Nightlight Youth Shelter	905-358-3678	5207 Victoria Avenue, Niagara Falls, ON L2E 4E4	10	24hrs	males and females, ages 16 - 30; no alcohol or drugs
The RAFT	905-984-4365	17 Centre Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3A6	16	24hrs	males and females, ages 16 - 24; no alcohol or drugs
Salvation Army Booth Centre	905-684-7813 905-684-7990	184 Church Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3E7	22	24hrs	males only, ages 19 and older; no alcohol or drugs
Southridge	905-682-2477	201 Glenridge Avenue St. Catharines, ON L2R 3G8	35	24hrs	males and females; no alcohol or drugs
YWCA St. Catharines	905-988-3528	183 King Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 3G8	28	24hrs	females and females with children; no alcohol or drugs
YWCA Niagara Falls	905-357-9191	6135 Culp Street Niagara Falls, ON L2G 2B6	20	24hrs	females and females with children; no alcohol or drugs
SPECIALIZED SHELTERS	PHONE	ADDRESS	BEDS	HOURS	RESTRICTIONS (Age, sex, addiction, etc.)
CMHA Safe Beds	905-684-7271, ext. 43230	15 Wellington Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 5P7	7	24 hrs	must be referred from hospital's community crisis care or mental health agency; 3 to 5 day stay; ages 16 and up; no alcohol or drugs
Men's Detox	905-682-7211	10 Adams Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 2V8	18	24 hrs	men only; no alcohol, drugs or smoking
Women's Detox	905-687-9721	6 Adams Street St. Catharines, ON L2R 2V8	12	24 hrs	women only; no alcohol, drugs or smoking
Gillian's Place (St. Catharines & District)	905-684-8331	P.O. Box 1387, St. Catharines, ON L2R 7J8	24	24 hrs	females and females with children; at risk of violence, no alcohol or drugs

Start Me Up Niagara 905-984-5310 17 Gale Crescent Monday-Friday, Holidays, 9-3 Saturday-Sunday 11:15-1 Open to all

Meals

Salvation Army Booth Centre 184 Church Street	Daily 8:00am, 12:30pm, 5:15pm	\$2.50-\$3.00
St. George's Breakfast Program 83 Church Street	Daily 7:30am-8:30am	no cost
RAFT (ages 16-24) 172 Church Street	Daily 6:30pm-8:00pm	no cost
Out of the Cold	Daily 6-7:30 pm, Nov. 1 - March 31	no cost
Ozanam Centre 235 Church Street	Monday-Friday 11:30am-1pm	\$1.00
Start Me Up Niagara 17 Gale Crescent	Saturday, Sunday 11:15am-1:00pm	no cost

SMUN Family of Businesses

Happy Being Me
Steve K-Lentinello Computer
David Allen Computer
The Happy Spinster
Hilton Tobin - Simply Organic
Paint It - Clean It
Donna's Mobile Beach

Business Supporters

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Tree'n'Twig
Vineland Research &
Innovation Centre
Speck Industries
Con Gusto Artesan Bakery
Starbucks at Fairview Mall,
4th Ave and Scott at Niagara
Wrights' Brothers Produce
Rysons United School of Music
Royal Crown Printing
The Peanut Mill
Donut Diner
Liberty Cycle
Niagara Growers
Fresco's Euro Grille
The Office Tap 'n' Grill
Stoke Seeds
Marinelli's True "Italian Pasta Sauce"
Pharma Viva Pharmacy
Rich's
Sheehan & Rosie Insurance
Village Wellness - Healing Centre
Glenridge Martial Arts
Canadian Tire Financial Service
Costco
Meyers Fruit Farms
De La Terre Bakery
Simply Delicious
Seaway Farms

SUDOKU

Sudoku is a number grid. The aim is to fill in the missing numbers so that all horizontal columns, all vertical columns and all 9 mini grids contain the numbers 1 to 9. They can be in any order. Good luck! Answer on page 17.

9	6				7	2		5
7		8		9				
5			8			3		
	5					6	2	
			5	8	6			
	1	3					9	
		4			2			3
				4		9		2
2		6	3				4	7



Yes, I want to support Start Me Up Niagara

Enclosed is my donation for: _____

☐\$25 ☐\$50 ☐\$75 ☐\$100 ☐other\$ _____

Please direct my donation to: ☐Street News

☐The Centre, 17 Gale Crescent ☐Where it is needed most

OR - Go to www.startmeupniagara.ca - 'Donations' - and follow instructions

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

THANK YOU. Please make cheques payable to:
Start Me Up Niagara, 17 Gale Crescent
St. Catharines, ON L2R 3K8 (905) 984-5310

