

ONE THOUSAND TREES



SEPTEMBER 2019

ONE THOUSAND TREES

FACILITATING WELLNESS
THROUGH CONNECTION, CREATIVITY, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

PUBLISHER
Lisa Browning

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS
Emily Brant, Cheron Kovacs, Andrea Lines-Botell, Christine Nightingale,
Kayleigh Radatus, Arlene Spencer, Sandra Wilson

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www.onethousandtrees.com/magazine.html

Please submit by email, as a Word doc attachment, by the above-stated deadlines. Please do not send PDFs. First-time writers for One Thousand Trees are asked to send a brief (two to three sentence) bio, and a head shot in JPEG format.

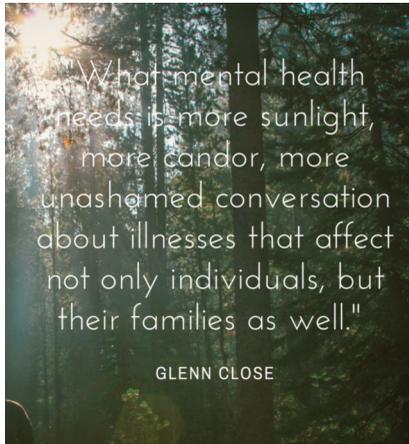
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ONE THOUSAND TREES
3-304 Stone Road West, Suite 338
Guelph ON N1G 4W4

Email: lisa@onethousandtrees.com
Phone: 519-362-5494





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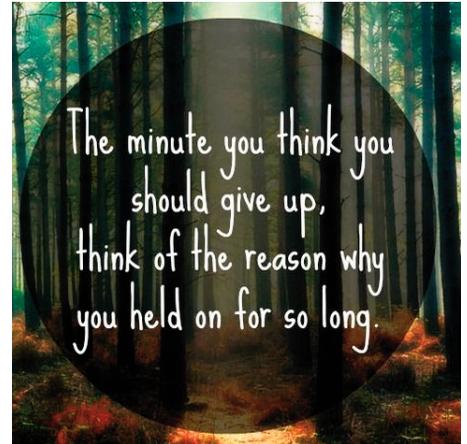
SEPTEMBER 2019

SUICIDE AWARENESS

FEATURE ARTICLE:

OFFER THEM KINDNESS
by Sandy Bassie

1



DEPARTMENTS: *(bolded articles are monthly features)*

CONNECTIONS

- **The Month in Review**, by Lisa Browning 13
- **Spirit Babies: Suicide Prevention and Pregnancy**, by Christine Nightingale 4
- **Words I Couldn't Say**, by Arlene Spencer 3

CREATIVITY & THE ARTS

- **e-interview: Inspiration Guelph**, with Brenda Gibson 5
- **My Adventure Called Life: Grateful Giraffe**, by Sandra Wilson 6

GIVING BACK

- *My Dog Is Gone and I Miss Him So*, by Malcolm Bernstein 8

HEALTH & WELLBEING

- **Spice, Splatters and Soul: Lessons I Have Learned**, by Andrea Lines-Botell 3
- **Essentially Emm: How To Turn a Bad Mood Around**, by Emily Brant 11

THE LIBRARY

- *Understanding Darkness*, a poem by Marilyn Elphick 9
- **The Story Behind the Story: From the Heart**, by Dennis Perrier 9

*Cover Photograph by Brian Stauffer
for Rolling Stone Magazine*

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Sandy Bassie

Offer Them Kindness

Sandy is an artist, a poet, and a dreamer. She is a stubborn advocate for those she loves. Fierce, yet tender. She holds to this: it is never too late to learn or change. The things we believe about ourselves drive our lives and choices. Choose to believe the good and those will be places we soar.



Malcolm Bernstein

My Dog Is Gone and I Miss Him So

Malcolm is a management consultant and founder of The Benjamin Project, a non-profit initiative in memory of his dog, which raises funds for shelters and education on responsible pet and animal stewardship. He lives in Toronto with his wife Helen, who found Benjamin at the OSPCA and brought him into their lives for 13 wonderful years. Malcolm's children's book about Benjamin has just been published by Saplings and all net proceeds are donated.



Emily Brant

Essentially Emm

Emily is a holistic health enthusiast who has overcome various health challenges herself and realized the power of nature's tools like whole foods and essential oils to assist in healing. Emily is on a mission to share her unique story and gifts in hopes that it'll help inspire and motivate anyone who might be up against any challenges, self-doubt or difficult times.



Marilyn Elphick

Understanding Darkness

Marilyn's first career was as a Registered Nurse in various fields of medicine. Her last position was as a dialysis nurse. She completed an MDiv degree in 2002 and a TH.M in 2013. From 2002-2015 she worked as the Director of Campus Ministry, and at present she works as a chaplain at a long-term care facility. She recently moved to Orton, Ontario, and she loves to write!



Brenda Gibson

e-interview: Inspiration Guelph

Brenda Gibson is the quintessential woman-of-all-trades: athlete, coach, community worker, event planner, businesswoman; and a leader. In 2013, she founded Inspiration, an annual benefit concert that raises money for the Children's Foundation of Guelph and the Wellington Music and Art Grant Program. She lives in Guelph with her two children and her dog Willow.



Andrea Lines-Botell Spice, Splatters and Soul

Andrea offers gentle support to others through her coaching company, Mandalia House of Healing. Many modalities are available including art, mindfulness techniques and supportive tools for change. With a vast training background in conflict, crisis and mindfulness, Andrea's passion is to help others find their own solutions for inner peace and betterment. For more information visit www.mandaliahouse.com.



Christine Nightingale
Spirit Babies

After studying Hypnosis for Fertility, Christine found that while working with clients, she would get very clear messages from their miscarried or not yet conceived babies. Her speciality has become getting messages from these babies explaining their difficulties in coming in, and suggestions for making it easier. She has worked with over 400 couples, facilitating communication and pregnancy. For more information please visit her website at www.nightingalehealing.com.



Dennis Perrier
The Story Behind the Story

Dennis was born and raised in southern Saskatchewan and Alberta communities where a free range kid, to everyone's surprise, turned into a teacher, and to his surprise a political candidate. When he moved to Cambridge, Ontario, Dennis dredged out his idea collection and wrote a book – a compilation of what he believes in.



Arlene Spencer
Words I Couldn't Say

Arlene is a wife, mother of three grown boys, and a special education educator who has a passion for life, an abundance of energy and a need to be heard because at the end of the day everyone has "Words They Couldn't Say." You can reach Arlene by email, at Arlenewics@gmail.com.

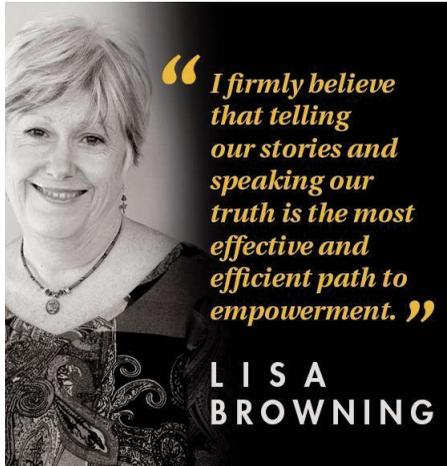


Sandra Wilson
My Adventure Called Life

Sandra is a writer, photographer and educator with a passion for fun and learning. She holds a BA in English and History, and has continued to take courses online throughout her adult life, deeming herself a life-long learner. She believes that life is a learning experience, and continues to find lessons every day, which she applies to her writing, her photography, and lessons she can share with others. Connect with Sandra at www.quiteacharacter.ca.



PUBLISHER'S PONDERINGS



I have spent this extra-long weekend (I had Friday off from my "day job" as well) getting caught up on a lot of work for One Thousand Trees. I was proud of myself ... I found a fine balance between work, play, and relaxation, and I got a lot done as a result.

Then last night, all of a sudden, my throat seized up, and I felt terrible. I haven't been sick in over a year ... not even slightly. I woke up several times through the night with an agonizing sore throat, and stumbled into the bathroom to apply more essential oils. When I woke up this morning, the agonizing pain was gone, replaced with only a tickling reminder of last night's reality.

The message is not lost on me. For the past several years, my energy is blocked around my throat chakra ... and although I'm getting better at it, I still sometimes find it very difficult to speak my truth, particularly when that truth is a result of hurt or pain.

But speaking our truth is so vitally important, especially when it comes to our mental health. As you know, I am very passionate about this topic, and so I am grateful to be bringing a focus on suicide awareness to you this month. I am so looking forward to our September 12 Sharing Evening, with three awesome speakers who will talk about their experiences related to suicide.

I would also like to bring your attention to two other mental health projects that I am working on:

1) Roots & Wings: mental health awareness and empowerment through creativity

Due to some unexpected personnel changes, this project has taken a while to get off the ground. However, we're ready to launch it now! Roots & Wings consists of three products: one for elementary school students, one for high school students, and one for university students. For more information please email me directly, or visit www.otrootsandwings.com.

2) Metamorphosis: from the darkness of abuse to the light of empowerment

This book will document my own personal journey with emotional abuse, and the PTSD that came as a result. It will be an interactive book, as I would like to provide an opportunity for others to share bits and pieces of their own story (in total anonymity). For more information please email me directly at lisa@onethousandtrees.com.

Finally, I cannot stress enough that the reason I am undertaking these projects is not for my own glory or gain, but rather to enable others to speak their truth, and claim their power. Please, if you are suffering in any way, reach out to someone. Reach out to me, if you have no one else. You are not alone.

Lisa



OFFER THEM KINDNESS

by Sandy Bassie

I thought this would be easy to write. It isn't.

I was made aware of two more suicides in the past few weeks. Neither were direct connections, but they sit there, an added weight on my system. They were friends and acquaintances of people I know. They deserve my attention and respect, and so I listen and I speak.

I'm not afraid to talk about suicide. I realized that early on, though it surprised me the first time someone pointed that out to me. In the middle of a conversation, they stopped and asked me bluntly, "Talking to me about this doesn't scare you does it?" I wasn't sure how to react. It grieved me hearing their pain, their loss, their fears, but I wasn't afraid to listen. That may make me different than other people. I shrug my difference off, saying I'm weird and don't mind being weird.

At the same time, it's not a comfortable place. Listening, feeling it is hard. There is a heaviness to suicide that's

different than other deaths. The conversations can be awkward. People say things I disagree with that grieve me further. They speak from habit, from misunderstanding, from their own awkwardness and fears. It's not always helpful. At times their comments are hurtful. I'm thinking about that today.

I heard that a young man from my son's school died suddenly. So often I hear people assume that word is code for suicide. Something we say 'aside' hidden behind other words because we're afraid to say it straight out. Suddenly. Suicide. This wasn't. He had cancer. The loss was sudden and shocking to those who anticipated many more years with him. They will grieve him deeply with longing for what was stolen from them. But the cancer, outside the control of them and their loved one will be blamed; the loss accepted. Suicide is not taken that way.

I've lost friends and family to suicide. Good people. I hear it described as selfish. Thoughtless. Other unkind words. Intended or not, those words add to my grief.

I don't remember the first time that I heard the word 'suicide'. It may have been during high school when the brother of a classmate attempted to take his life. I don't know that I ever learned exactly why. In those days you didn't talk about 'things like that', except that I always did talk to people about any number of 'things like that' they needed to share to be okay. I understood not being okay. So, I let her talk. Others judged. I felt their words like the weight of all the struggles she faced, her brother faced. Listening, I felt understanding that he would or could get tired and give up. I worried about how she would cope. I think about that whenever suicide comes up. It's easy to choose unkind words that add to the burden.

We all get tired. I see exhaustion in people around me every day. Many different reasons. When I can, I listen to their stories and try to offer a smile; a reason to smile. Even one reason to smile may get us through the day. We need each other. We need the little kindnesses. Sometimes that's all we get; all we have to give. Open spaces. Silences into which people can speak, and kindnesses to lighten the load.

* * *

MONTHLY SHORT FILM CONTEST

CALL for ENTRIES



Online Library for Interactive Video and Engagement

\$1,000 CASH PRIZE EVERY MONTH

Films must be:

- 5 minutes or less
- About mental health
- Produced in the past 24 months

Submit at www.artwithimpact.org

An Evening of SHARING

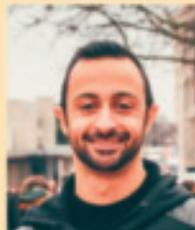
Suicide Awareness



Featuring:



Craig Dubecki



Dominic Mitges



Clay Williams

Thursday, September 12, 7-9pm

Harcourt Memorial United Church
87 Dean Avenue, Guelph ON

free admission (reservations recommended)

For more information visit www.onethousandtrees.com.
To reserve your spot email lisa@onethousandtrees.com.



I still remember when someone who I interact with on a daily basis lost a son to suicide.

I cannot begin to imagine the pain and anguish this family must still be going through. Their lives will never be the same. They will painfully grieve, knowing they will never hear his infectious laugh, enjoy his warm smile or see the sparkle in his eye as he announces, "I'll catch you later" when he runs towards the door.

What do you say to a family at times like this? Sure, we offer our condolences, sympathies and support, but after the service is over, lunch has been served and we have said goodbye, we go home to our healthy children and grandchildren and continue with our normal lives.

I remember when my 41-year-old sister was killed in an automobile accident. I sat alone on the front porch and watched the school buses buzzing by while others rushed to their work. I listened to the hum of a tractor in the distance and heard cattle bawling in a nearby pasture. I wondered how the world could continue to go on like nothing had happened, when my world was falling apart.

I didn't know if I could find the strength to help make her arrangements, pick out the clothes I knew she would be wearing one last time, or even manage to get myself dressed the day of the service. I know what it means to have a broken heart, because mine physically hurt; it hurt so badly.

But as horrible as that was for me, I can't image how parents who lose children to suicide battle through this nightmare. Agonizing questions that haunt a family after suicide must be overwhelming. Wondering why they didn't see this coming, why their son or daughter never asked for help, why they weren't there, or where they went wrong? They will never know the answers to those questions, but what will be visible are the deep scars embedded inside their hearts. They claim time helps mend a broken heart, but I disagree. You just learn to live with it.

The "Words I Couldn't Say" to my friend: At times like this when your light goes out, let others help brighten your way, lend a shoulder to cry on, and ears that will listen when you are ready to share your wonderful memories of your amazing son.

* * *



LESSONS I HAVE LEARNED by Andrea Lines-Botell

My own family has faced suicidal periods among loved ones. Perhaps I should say facing rather than faced as what I have learnt through my own family journey is that it is vital to be suicide aware always. Here are a few of the lessons I have learned:

1. With everyone in your life including yourself it is vital to be suicide aware at all times.
2. People only tell you what they want you to know.

3. Those who wish to hide their suicidal thoughts can do it exceptionally well.
4. It is almost never because they actually want to die.
5. It is a cry for help as that is how bad they feel inside.
6. The signs can be there if you look carefully enough.
7. It is never too late to get help.
8. Getting prompt help after trauma, incident, family changes and change in behaviour can reduce long term impact massively.
9. All ages can benefit from therapy.
10. There is a place for traditional medicine.
11. It is not a failing to use medicine.
12. Communication is key.
13. Understanding that we are all different and all have value for our thoughts especially when parenting allows easier and true communication.
14. Take time to learn who your friends and family actually are rather than taking what you see on face value.
15. Coming from love and not judgment makes it easier for people to confide their feelings.
16. People may not wish to not talk about it as they may feel guilt, shame or denial.
17. Mental health affects many more people that you ever realize and people you may not think.

18. Self harming and suicidal thoughts happen often in young school children.
19. Addiction and suicide doesn't always go hand in hand but it is common as people look for alternative ways to dim their pain.
20. Suicidal tendencies can be brought on from drug use.
21. Addictions can start very young and are always a way of coping rather than coming from a healthy mindset. Addiction is not a choice or weakness it is a cry for help and is a mental health issue.
22. Addictions are not always drugs and alcohol. It can be many forms of escapism or thrill seeking.
23. When mental health or a suicide attempt affects your family having therapy for not just the loved one who is struggling but also each family member is vital. This allows a deeper understanding for all involved and allows a safe outlet for concerns, stress and awareness.
24. Facing mental health challenges within a family can feel lonely and beyond daunting. It is ok to ask for help.
25. Using the phrase "Are you safe" can make all the difference between thought and action. I shared some of my own journey at MoMondays in Guelph and it can be seen on their You Tube or website if you wish to hear more of my journey

We have used Here 24/7 a few times over the past couple of years and their help is outstanding. If you or someone you love is in danger to themselves or others, call 911 or Canada Mental Health Association - Here 24/7 - 1 844 437 3247.

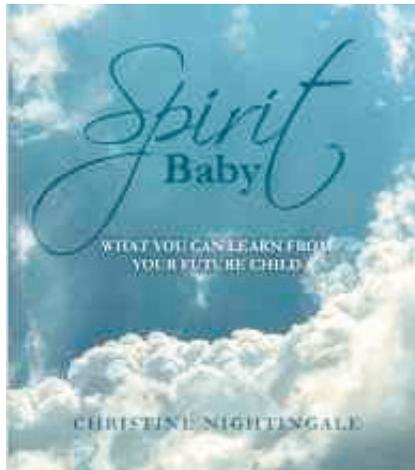
OATC - Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres - 1 877 937 2282

Addictions and Mental Health Ontario - 1 866 531 2600

suicideprevention.ca
crisisservicescanada.ca

For more information, support session or to learn more about wellness my website is mandaliahouse.ca

* * *



SUICIDE PREVENTION AND PREGNANCY

At first glance, these two topics seem wildly unrelated. There is an overall perception and even expectation that pregnancy is a very happy, blissful time of life. Well, not always, and not for everyone.

I have worked with hundreds of couples who have lost one or more babies at various points in the pregnancy. How dismaying to lose a child one has not even had the chance to hold! And the absolute worst insult to the mother's feelings is doctors who say, "Well, you can always have another."

In general, Western doctors see birth as a high-tech medical procedure rather than as a thrilling, life-affirming, live-changing, spiritual experience.

Yet as we have become accustomed to pregnancies which are usually healthy (in first world countries), it might be a shock to realise that 5% of deaths **during** pregnancy are due to suicide. Why would a mother become so depressed? Perhaps the child is not wanted, or planned, or the mother is on her own. It is likely that the huge uptick in pregnancy hormones plays a part. Perhaps there is a feeling of being overwhelmed if the partner is not supportive, or absent.

What is perhaps more widely known is that Post Partum depression affects a great many women. This might be due to the feeling which many women experience of being completely responsible for the survival of another human being. Many marriages are affected by the stress...especially when dads do not pitch in to help exhausted moms (who are both recovering physically, and likely to be getting almost no sleep).

I remember clearly, right after giving birth to my first healthy baby, perceiving that I would never again feel as close to anyone as I did to the child I had been carrying. My husband at the time was not at all supportive. In fact one thing he said to me was, "Every woman wants a child. Well, you have had yours. We're done."

He meant to say that the baby was only my responsibility, and he did not want any more children. But I took it also as a message that I would leave as soon as I could support myself and my child. Was this an extreme case? I think not, actually, as this guy was a **clergyman**...and a woman might be forgiven for feeling a bit of post-partum depression under those circumstances!

Still it was shocking to learn recently that post-partum depression affects 20% of Moms, some of them very deeply. For those most severely affected, on average they were in the

7th month after birth when they **died by suicide**.

In the absence of social supports, however, it is certainly understandable.

Many years later, having remarried and had two more children, I started studying alternative therapies to help young women with issues related to fertility and parenthood.

Interventions which have been found to be effective include:

- First, lots of TLC from caring people (partner, mother, sister, girlfriend).
- Secondly, many essential oils effectively change moods. An Aromatherapy massage can therefore be very helpful.
- Reiki energy healing can help women restore the energy which may be lost during childbirth and caring for a completely helpless (and often very demanding) human being.

Many babies (and consequently their mothers) suffer trauma during birth such as unnecessary C-sections, babies being held upside down and slapped, babies being affected by drugs given to the mother, or having their heads deformed by suction, or being separated from the mother for hours or even days.

Mother Nature prepares all newborns to crawl to the breast after birth. Who knew? Very rarely do they get this opportunity in Western settings, when they tend to be swaddled and put in a crib, causing separation grief to mother and child.

It is therefore advisable for moms and dads to become fully informed and have a home birth if they feel comfortable with it, as midwives

generally have a gently, natural approach to this experience, which many doctors do not.

Moms groups can also be wonderful, as often no one else in the mom's immediate environment can completely understand what she is going through at that moment.

Above all, if you or a loved one are feeling overwhelmed by becoming a mother, it is always advisable to seek help from a counselor, whether a trusted friend, caring relative, or a therapist.

* * *



AN INTERVIEW WITH BRENDA GIBSON INSPIRATION GUELPH

Inspiration Guelph 2019 takes place on November 7. In anticipation of what is always an awesome event, I conducted the following interview with the Founder and Chair, Brenda Gibson.

What is Inspiration Guelph?

Inspiration is a concert held in November that brings together professional and local talent for an annual performance that raises money for children and youth in Guelph and Wellington County.

When did it start?

The first Inspiration concert took place in 2013. Joseph Macerollo and Adrian Raso were two of the first professionals to participate alongside over 300 children and youth.

Why did it start?

In the past children were given music and arts opportunities throughout their years in school. As a result of the education cutbacks in the schools, there are often teachers teaching the arts that have little or no background in that area. The result of this educational change is that children who can't afford lessons outside of school but have a talent in the arts are not being given the opportunity to succeed. Inspiration helps to provide funding for grants to bridge that financial gap.

Were you involved from the beginning?

Yes, I am the founder and Chair of Inspiration.

What was your motivation in creating this event?

In addition to the reasons I gave for starting the event, the research in the child development area clearly demonstrates the benefits of the arts in subjects such as math, science, social skills, etc. Although I competed internationally as an athlete, I know that if you have 500 kids in a school, only 15 of those kids make a school team. That leaves 485 kids without an outlet for their development or a way to feel included. The arts allow everyone to participate and advance at their own pace.

Has the format stayed the same?

The basic format of professional and local talent has remained the same since the beginning, but how we arrive at the lineup for the evening has changed.

What changes have taken place over the years?

We have slowly developed a solid sponsorship group, and as the

sponsorships increase we are able to bring in more popular professional musicians.

What is the major change for the 2019 event?

The major change for 2019 was adding the “Battle of Performers” to select the local talent. The “Battle of Performers” had artists submit a video or MP3. From the submissions 6 finalists have been selected to compete live on Sept 7. The winner receives a) the opening act spot for this year’s headliners (Virginia to Vegas and Tyler Shaw), b) \$1,000 cash, c) the opportunity to perform an original song on Magic 106.1 FM, and d) signed memorabilia.

How can people get involved?

People can get involved by being a sponsor, volunteering the evening of the concert, attending the concert, or donating tickets for kids who otherwise wouldn’t be able to attend; and of course follow and share with Inspiration Guelph on all our social media posts, as well as donate a silent auction item. Information and links can be found on our website at inspirationguelph.com.

When and where will tickets be available?

The tickets are on sales at the River Run right now! You also can follow the links purchase or donate tickets on our web or the Magic 106.1 FM web.

What is your hope for this year’s event?

It is always our hope to sell out the River Run and raise as much money as possible for children and youth to participate in the arts. With this year’s incredible lineup we expect the tickets to sell out fast!

* * *



GRATEFUL GIRAFFE by Sandra Wilson

Recently I completed a book series for kids that deals with emotions, friendships and acceptance. Although written for children this series has some underlying ideas that can be brought into our adult world.

In *Grateful Giraffe*, a school assignment has the giraffe having to define what she loves about herself.

“Grateful didn’t think there was much to say. She wasn’t special, she was just okay.”

Throughout the book Grateful learns how others see her, and how she can appreciate herself. This book, at a child’s level, is about self-love. But, in an adult view it shows the importance of a steady cultivation of self-awareness. The giraffe becomes aware of her motivations for doing things, she learns about how her actions affect others and she starts to understand herself. When we learn more about ourselves, our motivations and our responses, we can get a better understanding of what we want from the world, what dreams we want to reach.

It is important to remember that things may change in life, as may our dreams, or the directions of our dreams at least. I had a dream for 15 years about opening an education centre for homeschooled children. When the day came and I actually opened the Centre I thought my

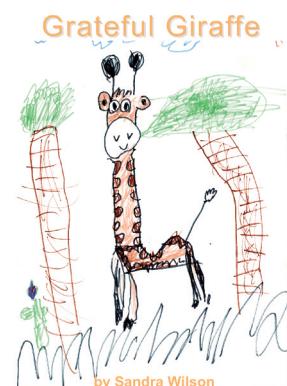
dreams had come true. But, the Centre was not the place I needed anymore, I no longer homeschooled my children and although I was providing a wonderful service to others, it was no longer giving me the gratitude I wanted. I followed my dream but did not keep track of what was going on in my life, what was changing for me so I could recognize that my dream of helping children was still alive, but the means to do it had altered.

The story of Grateful Giraffe can inspire us to keep track of what goes on in our world, how we respond, what we learn from it and how we feel as we move forward.

“I am grateful for my home, my friends, my family. But most of all I am very grateful for the things that make me me.”

Keep track of who you are, who you are becoming and what you are learning along the way.

Self-awareness can help us properly define our dreams and help us truly believe in ourselves and what we want to do. And when we believe in what we are doing, we become more innovative, creative and present.

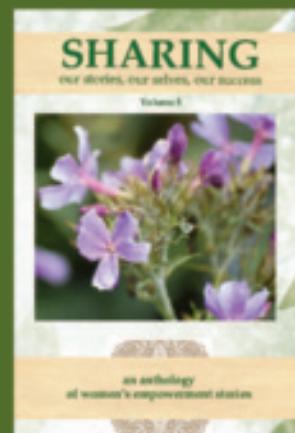
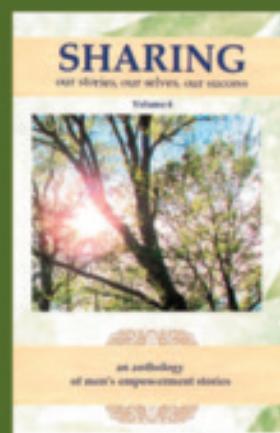
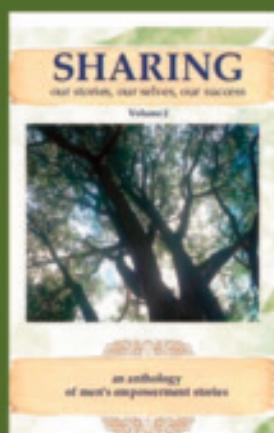
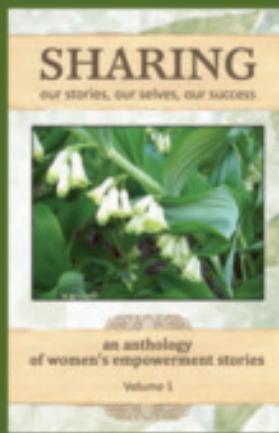


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SHARING

our stories, our selves, our success



Call for Submissions

The next volume of SHARING,
an anthology of empowerment stories,
will be published in March 2020.

This is the first time we will be combining both
men's and women's stories in the same volume!
24 spots are available.

If you are interested in writing for this anthology, email
lisa@onethousandtrees.com.

Deadline for submissions: November 1, 2019.

www.sharinganthologies.com

MY DOG IS GONE AND I MISS HIM SO by Malcolm Bernstein

Unbeknownst to me, my wife Helen went looking for a dog as a present for my 50th birthday. In speaking to shelters in the Greater Toronto Area, the OSPCA in Newmarket told her “We have a little boy here. He’s not glamorous but the most laid back dog we’ve ever seen.” She asked them to hold him for us.

It was a beautiful first Saturday in May, 2000 when we went up there. The scene was pandemonium – cars everywhere, people galore, and a crescendo of barking by the dogs in their outdoor cages. At the end of a long aisle was the sweetest pup you could imagine – lying on the floor of his cage, wagging his tail, looking up at us with these big brown eyes, and not a peep! We took him for a walk on the huge property.

We noticed some endearing traits instantly. Every time another dog came out, he stopped, fixated and wanted to play. He had incredible curiosity and energy and pulled us everywhere. And he was as gentle as he was exuberant; we sat at a picnic table at one point and as I was patting his head, he took my hand gently in his mouth as if it were butter. We were enthralled with him and there was no turning back.

He took to his new life with us like we had been together forever. He loved to play; followed us everywhere; couldn’t wait to go for his next walk or cuddle next to Helen on the couch; and had a great appetite – in short order regaining the six pounds he was under his proper body weight when we adopted him. He loved steamed veggies, raw carrots, baked salmon, homemade chicken soup!

And his coat was spectacular: a multi-hued thick texture of dark grey, tan,

rust, with a grey ring on his tail and a black diamond marking on his forehead. Right ear up, left one down. And a perpetual terrier smile. It took a few years to figure out what he was, sort of: a border terrier crossed with something huge, as he was 43 pounds and quite tall.

In choosing a name for him – he had no tags when they found him – Helen suggested it should be something distinguished as he was such a gentleman. “Benjamin” suited him perfectly.

In no time, Benjamin blossomed into the most beautiful, well proportioned, athletic, sensitive little boy in the world. There wasn’t a day we weren’t stopped by people on our walks saying how beautiful he was. Every dog loved him and he loved anything that moved. He was constantly communicating with us. And he was so incredibly wise. Whether knocking my knee on our early morning runs to tell me which way he wanted to go; lying down next to a baby bird which had fallen from its nest to alert me to it; sitting next to a friend who was visiting one evening and was afraid of dogs, and not leaving her side until she finally patted his head totally relaxed. Benjamin brought spirit, dignity, grace, intelligence and wisdom to everything and everyone. He was a wonderful sentient being.

In what we estimated was his 13th year, Benjamin was diagnosed with lymphoma. He had been experiencing terrifying episodic seizures on his walks for a couple of years with no medical determination as to cause; but we knew something was wrong. Then, after another such occurrence the Friday morning before an extremely hot July 1st long weekend, one of the vets at our clinic found his lymph nodes were swollen and gave us an initial devastating assessment. We were stunned. She took a fine needle aspirate but, given the holiday,

we had to wait what seemed an eternity to the following Wednesday for the dreaded confirmation. We then embarked on a four month chemotherapy treatment protocol during one of the hottest summers on record – the worst weather for Benjamin who loved cool to cold especially with his thick coat. But at the end of the treatment, with all the incredible highs and debilitating lows, his cancer was in complete remission and we had the best winter ever. Then, one evening in April, on our way out for a walk, I just happened to feel Benjamin’s neck and found an orange-size growth; the cancer had returned. We started another round of chemotherapy through another unbearably hot summer, with again the sickening side effects for Benjamin and gut-wrenching anxieties for Helen and me; but Benjamin ultimately succumbed to his illness at midnight July 17, 2013.

Our hearts were broken, seared with pain, shattered to pieces. And, until my last day, I will never forgive myself for putting him through such a horrible end. In my usual manner, I thought his illness could be overcome by sheer force of will. I wanted to keep him forever. I am pained to this day by my actions when my little boy needed me most.

I had started writing a feel-good book about Benjamin and our lives together when he was about five. I finally finished it shortly after his passing. And Helen and I started a non-profit initiative called The Benjamin Project (www.thebenjaminproject.ca) to raise funds for shelters and education on responsible pet stewardship. The book is the cornerstone of the fundraising effort, and all net proceeds after printing and shipping are donated. I speak to groups of adults and kids alike about Benjamin and our lives together, and the sheer joy and goodness he brought to the world. Everyone loves the presentation, just as they loved him. I am continually

looking for 'platforms' from which to tell the story and grow The Project – be they author/speaker series in libraries; schools and school boards; companies; shelters and sanctuaries; seniors residences. My children's book about Benjamin will be published this spring and represents the next step in our effort to grow the community of *Benjamin Boosters* far and wide.

Benjamin is gone and we are doing what we can to honour his life. He was the best little boy in the whole world, and we loved him so. I miss him dearly to this day, as does Helen. Life goes on, but our lives have never been the same.

* * *



FROM THE HEART
by Dennis Perrier

From the Heart was published by *One Thousand Trees* in August 2019. Following are some thoughts from author Dennis Perrier, about this, his second, book.

Canadians, like most people who live in developed nations, are subject to distraction. Their priorities are not always getting them what they need.

The leadership they are choosing is often more interested in maintaining its power than establishing a superior life quality that is sustainable.

We must move from a shopping/car culture to one where we can call ourselves citizens. Our communities should be ripe with political and environmental activism that emphasizes sustainability. Our pursuit of continual growth has to be sacrificed, and replaced with such goals as jobs with a living wage, affordable housing, an inclusive, high quality public education system and a public health care system based on prevention. Media must get behind these goals.

People too easily become preoccupied with amassing wealth, worshipping celebrity, continually smoothing their children's struggles and taking their relationships for granted, and at the same time ignoring how their "leaders" are taking them in the wrong direction.

We also have to be watchful that social justice and environmental safety are maintained. These are given up too easily.

I am always reminded of how the CCF came to the rescue of so many who were suffering from the inhumanity of life in rural, depression era Saskatchewan during the 1930's.

* * *



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UNDERSTANDING DARKNESS
by Marilyn Elphick

*There is a hint of mystery
of mysticism.*

The darkness delights and frightens.

*Forgotten fragments of memories
surface without bidding
summoned unconsciously
by a phrase or image.*

*The invisible line between the apophatic and kataphatic
is fine.*

*The line between the mystical realm and God even thinner
finer.*

*Like a gossamer filament
Like the intricate, lacy threads
of a spider's web
woven with exquisite precision.*

*Understanding lies hidden beneath the surface
born out of a lifetime of incubation
like a child growing within the womb of its mother.*

*Although I have never given birth
I have birthed myself several times.
The images and memories of those particular labours
always fresh
Sometimes the birthing takes months
Sometimes years.
As I get older it takes less time.*



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HOW TO TURN A BAD MOOD AROUND by Emily Brant

It's important that we all have an emotional "toolbox" and be resourceful enough to reach for these tools when we find ourselves in a bad mood, or a low vibe, low energy "funk."

I actually prepared a PDF sheet of my personal "toolbox" of energy shifting activities or things I go to when I personally need to raise my vibration. This can be found in my free resource library that you can easily gain access

to when you opt into my email list on www.essentiallyemm.com.

For those who want some ideas right now (duh, that's probably why you're here reading this) let me go over a few things you can do that are sure to boost your mood.

There are a few categories I sort these into, such as "mind, body, fun" etc but for the sake of keeping this article short and sweet I'll just list a few of my favourites below:

- go on a gratitude walk (walk around your block and mentally list all the things you're grateful for)
- get a workout in, even if it's a short one
- journal
- read a book you love
- call up a friend or someone you love
- diffuse uplifting essential oils like citrus and mint oils
- meditate or pray
- stretch your body or do yoga
- pop some popcorn
- eat some dark chocolate
- listen to uplifting music and dance
- do something you love (crafts, playing an instrument, fishing, etc)

- put the cell phone down for at least an hour
- force yourself to smile and hold it for at least 2 minutes (if anything you'll start laughing at yourself because you'll feel ridiculous, and laughter helps to break the bad mood)

These are just a few of my favourite "go-to" tricks to boost my mood when I am feeling down. Rather than staying stuck in a sour mood, I usually force myself to be resourceful and remember all these energy-shifting tools I have easy access to. We all do. Want more inspiration and mindset tips? Check out my podcast The Miracle Mindset with Essentially Emm, and specifically listen to the episode "How To Get Through A Funk" if you are experiencing one and need some help with that.

I know sometimes we WANT to be mad, sad, angry, or "down" and it is okay to feel that way for a while if something has upset you... just don't stay there. Stay happy, stay healthy, and stay mindful my friends!

* * *

A hand gently touched her on
the shoulder and with it she
stood once more.
Renewed strength in her
soul and love in her heart
she steadied herself.
It took her a moment to
realize that the hand was
her own.
She was her strength
and she was love.

Mandalia Hause

**Have you been, or are you being,
emotionally/verbally abused?**

**Would you like to be heard ...
in total anonymity?**

**Email lisa@onethousandtrees.com
for details on an upcoming project
to raise awareness and
offer hope and encouragement.**

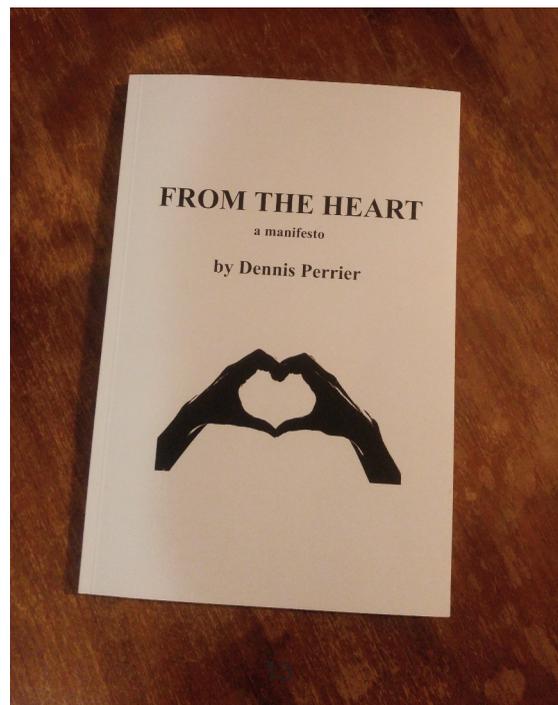


MONTH IN Review



Top: *momondays Guelph* August show

Bottom: Hot Off The Press: *From the Heart*, by Dennis Perrier



Are you a caregiver with a story to tell?



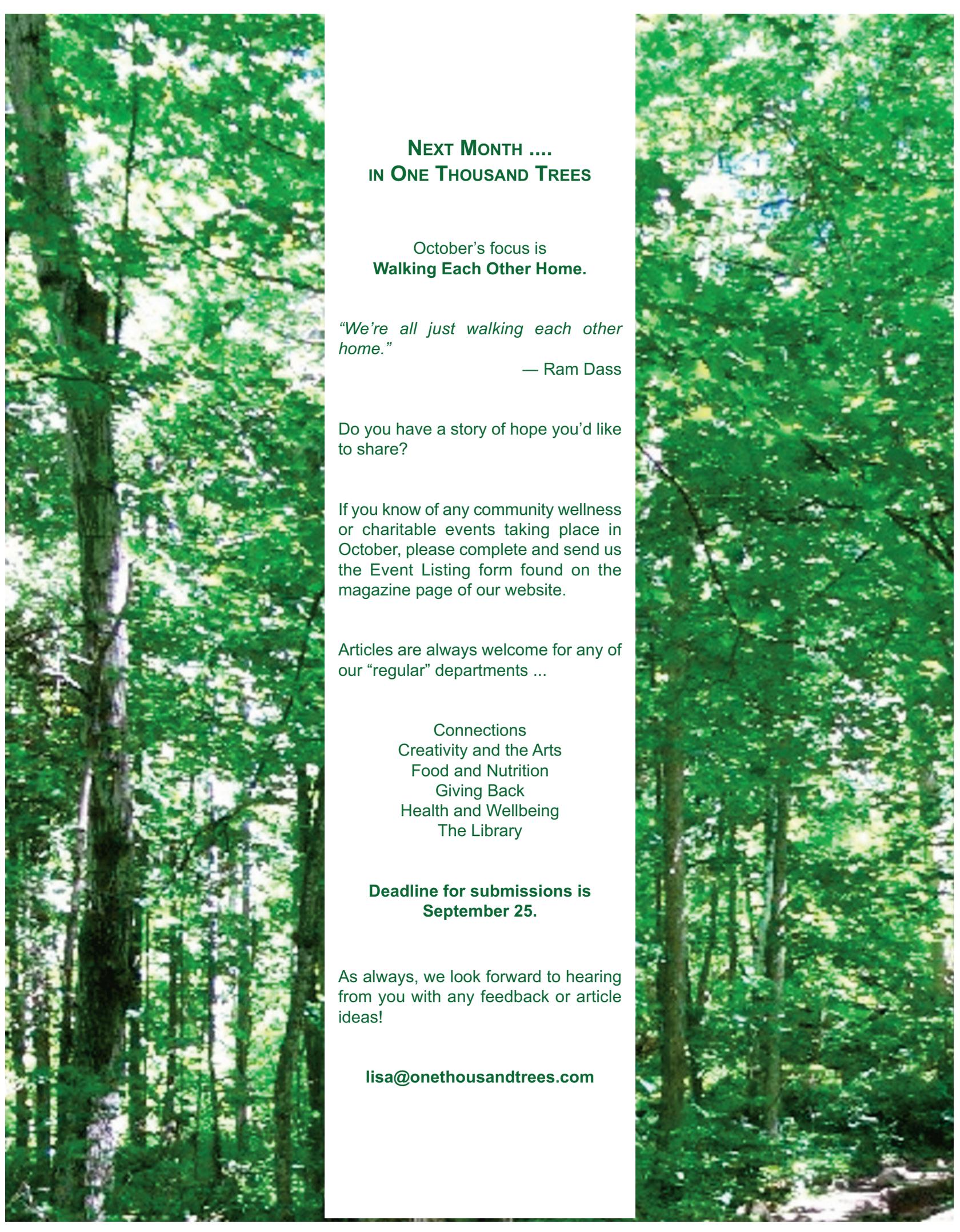
*SHARING: our stories, our selves, our success
an anthology of empowerment stories for caregivers
will be published in April 2020.*

**We are looking for stories for this Special Edition
anthology. Submission deadline is December 1, 2019.**

Email leilan.adair@yahoo.com for details.

A project of One Thousand Trees





**NEXT MONTH
IN ONE THOUSAND TREES**

October's focus is
Walking Each Other Home.

"We're all just walking each other home."

— Ram Dass

Do you have a story of hope you'd like to share?

If you know of any community wellness or charitable events taking place in October, please complete and send us the Event Listing form found on the magazine page of our website.

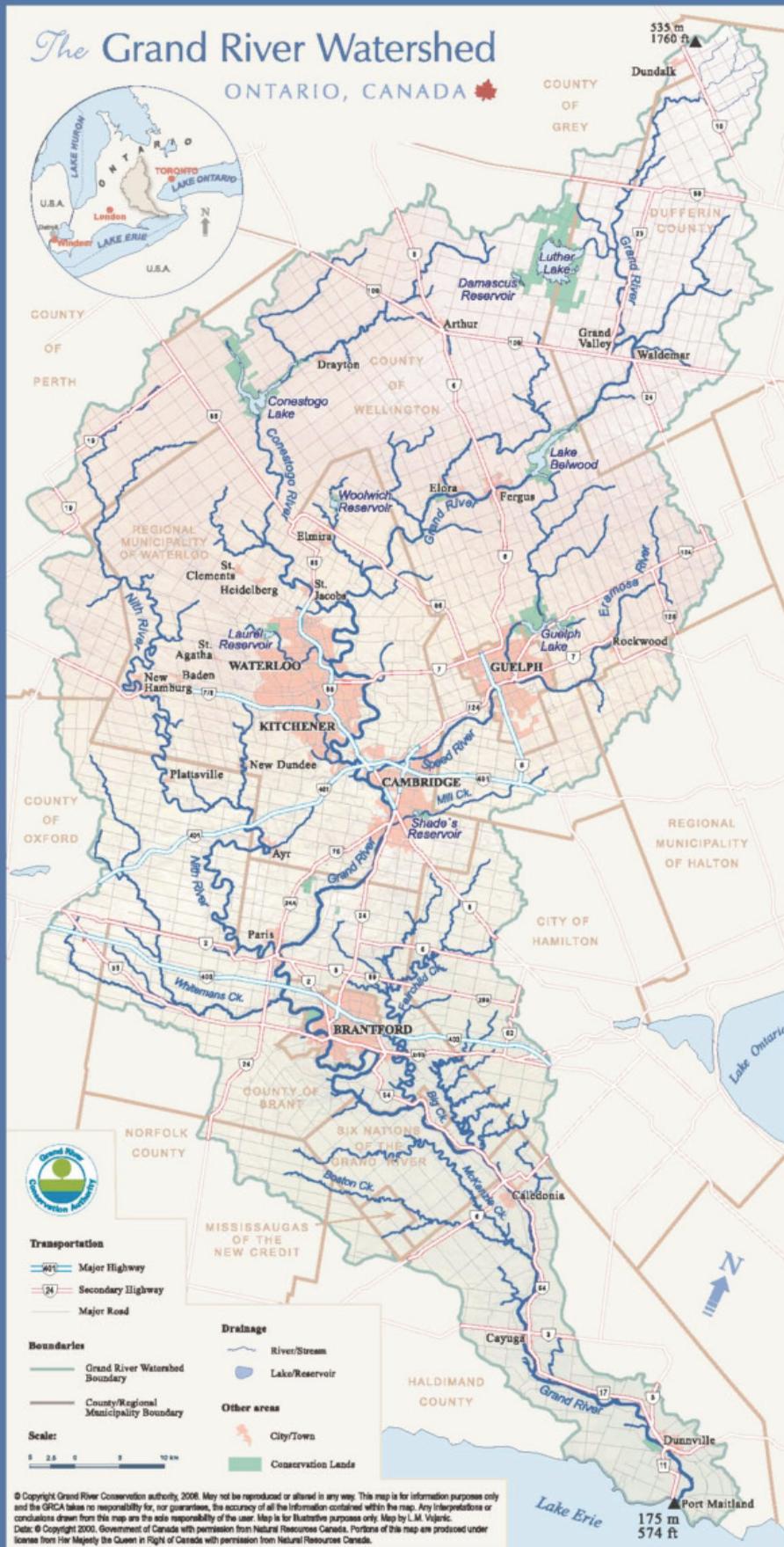
Articles are always welcome for any of our "regular" departments ...

Connections
Creativity and the Arts
Food and Nutrition
Giving Back
Health and Wellbeing
The Library

**Deadline for submissions is
September 25.**

As always, we look forward to hearing from you with any feedback or article ideas!

lisa@onethousandtrees.com



The Grand River flows 300 kilometres through southwestern Ontario from the highlands of Dufferin County to Port Maitland on Lake Erie.

The Grand River Conservation Authority manages water and other natural resources on behalf of 39 municipalities and close to one million residents.

One Thousand Trees' target market is defined by the borders of the Grand River Watershed. Department Editors are responsible for promoting practitioners, events and volunteer opportunities in the cities of Brantford, Cambridge, Guelph, Kitchener, and Waterloo.

Visit the Grand River Conservation Authority at www.grandriver.ca.