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AN INSIDE LOOK AT AN OUTSTANDING ORGANIZATION

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THE COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR

On February 20, 2016, I joined a group of people called the “Merry Methodists” and walked 5 km to raise money for Grace Place. Grace Place is on Simpson Street and they feed people who don’t have much money and give them clothes and other necessities. You can walk 2, 5 or 10 km if you want. It happens in the winter to remind us what it’s like for homeless people in the winter months.



Photo courtesy of the Chronicle Journal

Everyone walked in a big long line at first and then spread out and we all stopped at Grace Place half way through to warm up with hot chocolate and donuts! There were different groups with funny names and everyone got the same hat to wear that said “coldest night of the year” on it. Every year they have a different hat.

After everyone got back, we got to eat chili and buns and dessert too. Then they announced how much money each group raised and how much it was altogether. They were raising money for a new roof on the building this year. There was lots of laughing, clapping and cheering. I think our group did a good job. I thought it would be fun to have a group from OPTIONS walk together on February 25, 2017. If you would like to join, please let us know!



For more info:

www.coldestnightoftheyear.org/thunderbay

*Each Coldest Night event is operated by a community based registered Canadian charity working in agreement with The Coldest Night of the Year organization and happens all across the country on the same day. All funds raised remain in the community. Thunder Bay’s charity is Grace Ministries, pastors Gary & Melody Macsemchuk.
email: info@blueseaphilanthropy.org*

Submitted By: Sadie Napash & Monica van Ramshorst

ARTISTS IN THE MAKING

Once again OPTIONS northwest partnered with Willow Springs to offer art classes over the summer and fall months. Through the months of August to November, individuals came together to learn how to do water colour painting and to create wooden ornaments. Creativity was a plenty as individuals put on their artistic caps and painted lupines, leaves and mountain scenery. 500 wooden ornaments were created with beautiful words expressing individuals' interests and painted decorations on the opposite side. Much fun and friendship was made during these art classes. Special thanks go out to all of the individuals who participated in the classes as well as the many staff from the homes and the office who came out to lend a hand. OPTIONS northwest is proud of all of the art work made as evidenced by the many beautiful pictures that have been framed and are now hanging in the office.

Individuals got an opportunity to sell some of their art work at the Christmas luncheon on Dec. 7th. The paintings have been turned into cards and the ornaments will be sold for the Christmas season.

Proceeds from the sales will be shared amongst the participants and will help fund further classes.

Congratulations to all of our budding artists!!

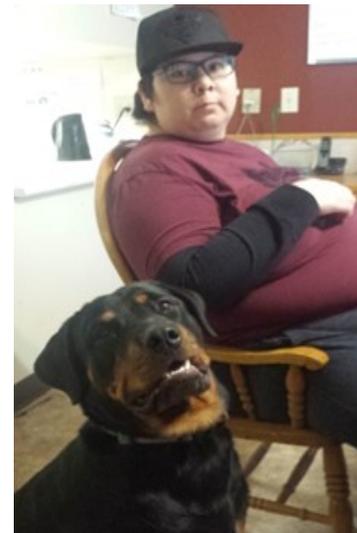


Submitted by: Anna-Marie Eckensweiler

Suki the Rottweiler

Suki is a ten month old Rottweiler that is giving endless love and laughs to the ladies at Market. She visits now and then and loves going for walks with the ladies. Suki can be found begging for table scraps or trying to crawl on anyone she can find for a big bear hug. She makes everyone smile on her visits with the silly puppy things she does and loves to play.

Submitted by: Lacey Anderson





Christmas at Market

It's Christmas time at Market St and Jenna has the house all decked out. She decorated all by herself and is busy, busy, busy baking, wrapping and watching every Christmas movie ever made. Jenna plans to spend the holidays with family this year and is ready with all her gifts to give wrapped and ready under the tree. This year Market has an elf on the shelf named Brad. Brad is a stylish elf and is always changing outfits and hiding in new fun places for the ladies to find.

Merry Christmas from Market Street to the Staff at OPTIONS northwest

Submitted by: Lacey Anderson

OFF THE LEASH

Gem was born in the summer of 2015 in a small community in Northwestern Ontario. She was a sweet little pup and everything was going great for her until she was about 5 weeks old, when she became the victim of abuse. She was rescued and flown into Thunder Bay the next day.

Gem was paralyzed in her back end but was still able to wag her tail. This gave us hope that she may walk again. She received acupuncture, chiropractic treatments, as well as vet care. Her foster homes did a lot of work with her. She is now over a year old and has been adopted into a wonderful forever home where her rehabilitation continues. She is very active and loves to swim and go on hikes. She has two different wheelchairs, one for every day and one for off-roading. Nothing can stop Gem. She is a social butterfly who visits many people and many places. She has been to a school and to a seniors home where she was spoiled and adored by all. Gem is an inspiration to all that have met her and her never ending determination to keep up with the other dogs and to never give up is amazing. Gem does not let her physical disability slow her down! She is determined to play, run, and do everything any other dog can do.

We would love to have Gem visit a few of our OPTIONS homes and spend some time with the people living there. Hopefully we can set something up in the New Year to make this happen. You can follow Gem's story on Facebook at a dog named gem.

Submitted by: Daniela Heerema



Have You Heard! STAFF NEWS

On Monday, June 20, 2016 @ 4:24am, Anita and Jay Storeshaw welcomed their newest addition to the family, Layla Jade, weighing 6lbs 5oz. Big sister Adrianna, who is now 3 years old, loves playing with her little sister and can't wait to help her open up Christmas presents this year.

Congratulations Storeshaw family!

Kelly McLean has twins - a boy and a girl! Their names are Danny and Rilla and they were born on October 19, 2016. Congratulations to Mom and Grandma Shelley!

Our DSW student Jincy Xavier took great pleasure in decorating her first Christmas Tree in Canada! What a wonderful experience we all had. She will continue on her journey and will make a difference in one's life!

Staff Recognition

In 2016 it was introduced that staff will be recognized starting at their 5th year of service, every 5 years thereafter and in their retirement year. Staff will receive a congratulatory letter and a gift card within one month of their anniversary date in 2017. Staff who reached a milestone year in 2016 received their recognition during the months of November and December. Since we are recognizing staff beginning at 5 years for the first time, we have some catch up to do; staff who had more than 5 years of service, but less than 10 years were also recognized in 2016.

5 YEARS

Stacy Hrestak
Samantha Junttola
Alison Lajeunesse
Bryanna Lund
Mandy McCallum
Kelly McLean
Jason Sabotic
Tiffany Squitti
Michael Tkaczyk
Kaitlin Turk

10 YEARS

Lacey Anderson
Patricia Buwalda
Denise Davis
Christie Fraboni
Roberta Wolch

15 YEARS

Albert Aiello
Tammy Cook
Amanda Margaret Janssens
Dave Jones
Lynn Pescod
Melanie Tiboni

More than 5 years, less than 10 years

Deanna Bailey	Kim McBain
Nicole Butvin	Crystal McCaul
Shannon Circelli	Kaitlyn McFall
Janet Copeman	Stephen McNally
Elena Cushway	Simeon Ostap
Amanda Digiueseppe	Rachel Peterson
Patti Dustin	Alissa Pradal
Anna-Marie Eckensweiler	Craig Rogers
Anja Erwin	Rhonda Salatino
Jolene Finnie	Vanessa Schmerk
Rob Francis	Jolie Scott
Kevin Gvora	Wayne Smith
Melissa Haney	Patti Spade
Erin Hemsworth	Anita Storeshaw
Cindy Hoard	Michelle Tallon
Brenda Kainula	Alana Tino
Nancy Knight	Elizabeth Tod
Kari Lavoie	Helen Zawacki
Shane Macleod	
Darcy Magbanua	

20 YEARS

Annette Pugh
Gayle Schutte

25 YEARS

Corinne Ceci
Brenda Fidler
Cheryl Maki
April Richardson
Doreen Savela
Catherine Shaw
Roy Sportak

30 YEARS

Angela Campbell
Lori McAlpin

35 YEARS

Michael Topp

RETIREE'S

Anne Rose
Laura Danelisky
Cathy Muzzin (2015)

VEGAS TRIP

Joy McCraw and I (through passport services) had the great privilege in March 2016 of accompanying David B. on his trip to Las Vegas. We stayed on the strip at the Planet Hollywood Hotel & Casino which was decorated with memorabilia and pictures of celebrities. Because the hotel was on the main strip, David did a lot of sightseeing. David also enjoyed shopping at the Miracle Miles shops, watching live shows (Elvis impersonation and a variety show of comics and acrobats), mini-kart racing, the Circus Circus amusement park. David also tried his hand at a few slots, with no luck unfortunately, and he checked out the Reo Hotel (highest view of Vegas) and the Golden Nugget Casino (Old Vegas, fish aquariums and shark tank).

David was hoping to get a tan while in Vegas but the weather was disappointing. It was mainly cloudy and windy on his trip and temperature in the mid- high teens. On our last day the weather warmed up to around 22°C and the sun came out. David was able to enjoy a slushy drink on the pool deck of our hotel.



David's favourite parts of the trip was the Circus Circus rides, the shark tank at the Golden Nugget casino and of course the delicious food and the sights!

Submitted by: Julie Lemieux-Savard

LOST YEARS

Seeing as how Remembrance Day has recently passed, I thought it was the perfect time to share my story. A few years ago, I was going through tbnewswatch when I saw a story titled "Lost Years" which I decided to read. The article was about a Veteran named Elmer who felt his late teens were wasted because he was fighting in World War 2. As I read through the article I got more and more upset as Elmer talked about what it was like to fight in the war and he considers himself lucky to enjoy what he has left because so many of his friends didn't make it. This didn't sit well with me, because in my mind, Elmer and every other veteran is a hero.

After a few days it still wasn't sitting well with me, so I took it upon myself to write Elmer a letter. In the letter I explained that (being 23 at the time) I would never understand the pain he was feeling, but that I would like to personally thank him for his service and sacrifice in the war. I told him I was saddened to hear that he felt like those years were wasted in the war, because what he did was so important for this country. I also thanked him on behalf of every Canadian citizen, because although we have set aside a few days a year to commemorate the countries veterans, I appreciate it every day. So, I found his address in the phonebook and I sent him this letter.

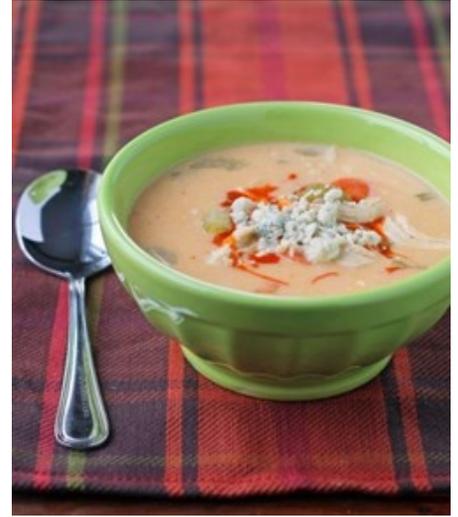
About a week later, I got a message from Elmer on my answering machine. He introduced himself and in a shaky, choked up voice he thanked me for my letter. Elmer is now 92 and I call him every November 11th to chat and wish him a happy Remembrance Day.

Submitted By : Mackenzie Plichta

Stay warm this winter with this recipe for BUFFALO CHICKEN SOUP

Ingredients

¼ cup butter
 1 small onion diced
 ¾ cup half & half
 1 cube chicken bouillon
 ¼ cup buffalo sauce or more to taste
 salt & pepper to taste
 3 stalks celery diced
 ¼ cup all purpose flour
 3 cups water
 2 cups cubed chicken
 1 ½ cups shredded cheddar



Directions

Melt butter in a large pot over medium high heat. Cook the celery and onion in melted butter until tender. About 5 minutes. Add the flour and allow to cook until absorbed, about 2 minutes more. Slowly stir in half & half and water into the mixture. Dissolve the bouillon in the liquid. Stir in the chicken, buffalo sauce and cheddar cheese. Season with salt and pepper. Reduce heat to medium low, stirring occasionally, allow the soup to simmer until the cheese has melted completely, about ten minutes.

Submitted By: Nicole Berube

WORK LIFE BALANCE

Having work life balance is important to keep us healthy! Thank you to those of you who submitted great tips for achieving this in October during our healthy workplace initiative. Here are some of the tips that were shared:

- Volunteer. You can leave work behind and focus on something else.
- Make time for yourself every day. Even 20 minutes will make a difference.
- Make time for family & friends.
- Maintain good health habits. Exercise, healthy eating, drink lots of water, get enough rest.
- Organize work load for your shift.
- Laugh. Learn to laugh at yourself, laugh with friends and co-workers.
- Plan ahead. Helps us to feel more in control and gives us something to look forward to.
- Communicate well with co-workers.

For more information on work life balance, visit the Canadian Mental Health Association's website.
www.cmha.ca/



**A time for everything:
 A time to relax and a time to be busy,
 A time to frolic and a time to labor,
 A time to receive and a time to give,
 A time to begin and a time to finish.**
 - Jonathan Lockwood Huie

Submitted By: Suzanne Fiorito

*Wishing everyone a safe and
happy holiday season!*



To submit your articles or stories for the next issue of Inside OPTIONS, please submit all articles to Bryanna Lund at bryanna@optionsnorthwest.com