

EDITORIAL

with Dawn Brown

Sandwich generation

These days many people find themselves in the position of caring for both their own children and their aging parents. There's even a name for it; the Sandwich Generation.

While caring for aging parents is hardly new, longer life expectancies combined with couples choosing to have children later in life can often lead some people to being in the position of being a care provider for their parents and their children at the same time.

Statistics Canada reported that in 2011 nearly 600,000 grandparents lived with their grandchildren, 88 per cent also lived with at least one person from the middle generation. Family Services of Ottawa explained that those making up the sandwich generation are usually between the ages 45 to 60 years old, and are more often women than men, who, while raising their children, also work either full or part time.

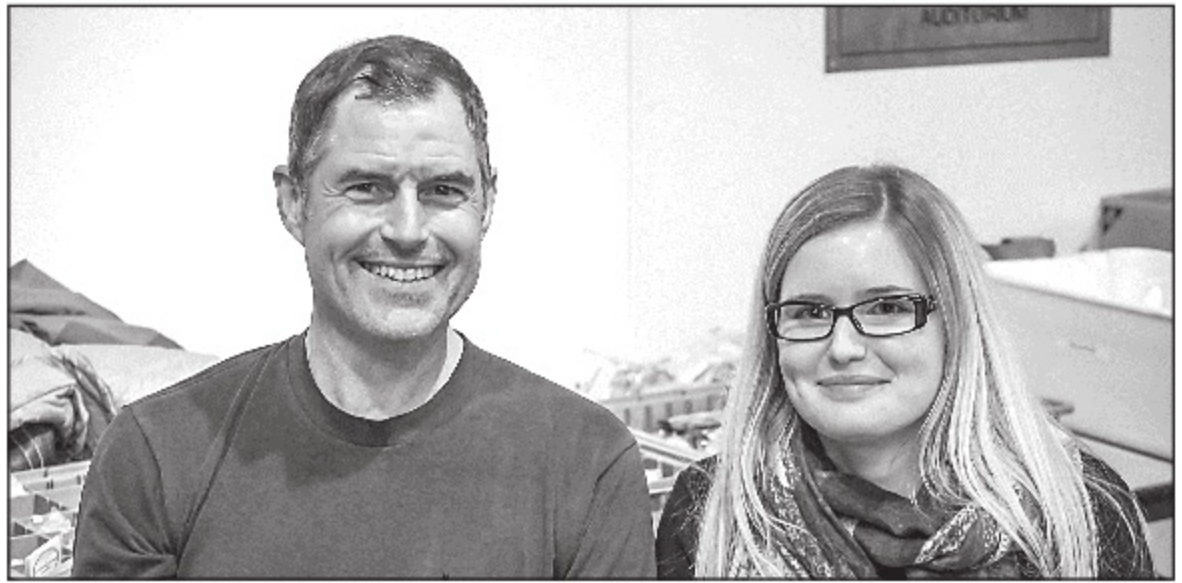
Sandwich generation caregivers often experience greater stress than non-caregivers, spend less time with their partners and families, and are more likely to experience exhaustion and illness. They also face ongoing feelings of guilt and being overwhelmed.

So what can you do if you find yourself a part of the sandwich generation? Family Services of Ottawa have a number of tips and suggestions, but at the top of the list is for caregivers to take care of their own health, both physical and mental, reminding them to get out and have some fun without feeling guilty for it. Make a point of making time for your family and spouse, and don't take on more than you can manage.

All too often caregiving for a parent falls on the shoulders of one individual. Whatever the reason, it's not fair for the bulk of the responsibility to be carried by one person. Hold family meetings to discuss fair disbursement of responsibility between siblings and even older children, and be sure to include the parent so he or she can make their feelings known.

Don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it. Friends and family, local groups, as well as online support groups can often provide great resources. When someone offers you help, take it, and don't be afraid to tell people what you need. If you feel yourself burning out or struggling with depression, it's important to speak to a doctor or look for counselling. The problem won't get better without help.

Another important step in caring for an aging family member is learning as much as possible about any illnesses or health conditions that your loved one may have. It is important to have as much information as you can find to better understand what your loved one is experiencing and what to expect if and when the illness progresses. This knowledge will allow you to advocate for you and your loved one fully informed.



GENERATIONS GIVE: Alan Ruddell of Rockwood, and his daughter Ashley Rolfe teamed up to donate blood last Thursday night at the Acton Legion. Ashley is temporarily staying with her family, and commuting to Toronto, after a fire at her condo building. While both have donated blood previously, they took advantage of the opportunity to make their donations together for the first time. Blood donor clinics are typically held between 5 p.m., and 8 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month. To check the schedule or for more info, go to www.blood.ca. - Les Schmidt photo

Regeneration

Real-estate is a hot topic these days. It's all over the news and there is plenty of discussion amongst politicians from the GTA right through to Vancouver with ideas trying to lessen the incredibly fast rising prices people are getting for property.

It is a common sight to see a for sale sign on a front lawn with a sold sticker over top of it then yet another sign stating "sold above asking". Five years ago one rarely heard that expression - sold above asking. Now, bidding wars are a run of the mill occurrence. I read a few weeks ago about a bidding war that included a plea from the family for the seller to accept their bid, even though it wasn't the top one because of their story and need for a home. In the end, the plea won over the sellers heart and they accepted a not as high over asking price.

Acton is no different. Almost every day I see a new for sale sign or coming soon sign. It seems within days, the sold



By
Angela Tyler

sign is up. There isn't a week that goes by that housing prices aren't discussed. "Did you see that house on... did you see what it's listed for..." is the normal line of chatter.

However, recently, the "did you see that house on..." has been replaced by did you see which business is for sale. Will our concern over empty stores or stores for lease now be replaced by concern for businesses selling or maybe just closing all together and/or landlords placing their properties for sale?

If you follow Highway 7 East into Acton through the downtown core and past the final stores near the library and incorporate the areas to either side of this pathway there are more than a dozen businesses and/or business properties listed for

sale. Now, mentally count how many businesses are there. It's a pretty staggering percentage of businesses/commercial properties for sale in a small town.

Do we need to worry about commerce in our town? Some may see this as a cause for concern. Realtors certainly aren't. This is the time that they love which makes up for the days of realtor despair when the housing market goes for a dive.

However, do we as residents of Acton need to be worried? I personally am hoping that this could be the start of a new beginning. Have you ever lived on a street and when you moved in it was picture perfect then after about a decade home owners change and the neighbourhood starts to become stagnant. Slowly as new home owners enter, the neighbourhood takes on a different vibe and regeneration. Sometimes it takes a few decades to make this circle of transformation. Maybe Acton is about to take on its regeneration.



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