

WEBINARS AMONG SUPPORTS HELPING CANCER PATIENTS

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ming possible for people well beyond Halton's borders, across the country, in fact, those in communities and provinces without a Wellspring.

The result was a wealth of new types of members.

"Caregivers have been able to participate more than ever before because they're able to participate from the comfort of their homes, and they don't have to leave their loved one," said Susy Borges Santos, Wellspring's associate director of program delivery.

"We've also found we've been able to support people later in their disease, those who pre-pandemic have been too ill or too tired to travel to Wellspring, said Borges Santos.

"Now, with the virtual platform, people can participate in the comfort of their beds and reduce the fatigue in commuting to a centre. They're able to participate in a really safe and comfortable manner now. It's wonderful to be able to support people with later stage advanced palliative or metastatic cancers."

The virtual setting provided an open forum for communication to help reduce the sense of isolation and a place where people felt they could connect with other patients going through the same thing, creating a sense of community, said Borges Santos.

She said there had been more than 50,000 visits to Wellspring's programs nationally since the switch to virtual.

"We've been able to expand our capacity tremendously with online programming," said Borges Santos, adding that many of Wellspring's educational webinars are recorded so they can be viewed at any time of the day.

"I think we were quite taken aback ourselves of the popularity and just how willing people were able to shift and really gravitate to the online community."

People may miss congregating in the kitchen for a cup of tea, but "on the flip side, we've been pleasantly surprised to hear all the feedback about how the virtual support really does feel as good as that in-person support," said Shiller.

Virtual support comes in the form of emojis or

"People have used the expression that they feel like they're receiving a virtual hug."

**- Ilene Shiller,
Wellspring social worker**

through the chat function, said Shiller.

"People have used the expression that they feel like they're receiving a virtual hug," she added. "I think we're going to keep the hybrid model because of the success and accessibility of a virtual platform."

It's been amazing to see how comfortable people

are to share very intimate things about their diagnosis onscreen in the comfort of their home, added Borges Santos.

"Now we have the best of both worlds, people that never were able to participate, can; people that were just too sick to come despite being very close to the centre, can."

Wellspring offers more than 40 unique programs targeting emotional, practical and physical function needs.

Some of the more popular programs over the past two years have been the support groups and the Healing Journey, which helps people deal with cancer-related stress, providing psychological and spiritual tools to promote inner harmony, peace and heal-

ing, said Shiller.

Relaxation and Visualization allows clients to learn to quiet the mind, she added. There has also been "incredible demand" for Money Matters.

Wellspring is hoping to open its doors again sometime this spring.

STORY BEHIND THE STORY: With the pandemic continuing to make things even more difficult for those living with cancer, we wanted to explore how Halton's Wellspring has adapted to keep offering an emotional lifeline.



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WHAT'S ON

ONE BOOK, ONE HALTON HILLS PROGRAM GETTING UNDERWAY

NON-FICTION BOOK CHOSEN FOR THE FIRST TIME

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The Halton Hills Public Library has revealed this year's title and author se-

lection for its One Book, One Halton Hills initiative.

For the first time, a non-fiction book has been chosen for the community-wide read — "The Day the World Stops Shopping" by J.B. MacKinnon.

The library invites residents to borrow a print copy of the book or download a digital version.

On May 10 at 7:30 p.m., the library will then host a virtual celebration night with J.B. MacKinnon to discuss the book, his other writings and more.

"We are delighted and honoured to have J.B. MacKinnon for our 12th annual One Book, One Halton Hills author," said adult services librarian Danielle Dawe.

"The Day the World Stops Shopping" is a timely and thought-provoking read, investigating how lower consumption would

impact society. We can't stop shopping, and yet we must — that conflict is at the heart of J.B. MacKinnon's inspiring new

work." For further details on the One Book, One Halton Hills program, visit <https://bit.ly/3rWkKwP>.

A copy of the book can be reserved through the library's online catalogue at <https://bit.ly/3JrgR98>.

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SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR TODAY!

GIDDENS OPTOMETRY



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83 Mill St | 905 873 1867

We are open but due to the current virus situation we are seeing patients by appointment only. If you are planning a visit (for routine eye examinations, eyewear purchase and repair, contact lens pick up etc), please contact us in advance and we will arrange an appointment time for you. This will help to ensure we keep everyone safe!



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Dr. Ben Giddens



Dr. Andrea Kozma



Dr. Stephanie Britton





THINGS MY FORE-SISTERS SAW

written & performed by Leslie McCurdy

MARCH 3-13

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