

MM Together

Community Care Resources for Mississippi Mills



On the Frontlines p.4



Thanks, Volunteers! p.5



Community Resources

MMResourcesList p.6-7



Business Un-Usual p.10



Remembering p.12





Welcoming Messages

Find the Helpers

When all of this is too much.
 When you don't know
 where to stand.
 Find those ones.
 Those helpers.
 Who are staying home.
 Who are teaching the young.
 Who go out into a world to
 do work that is necessary,
 for an ever shifting world.
 Find the ones who are
 calling their family and neighbours.
 Texting friends
 and checking in.
 The ones being creative,
 and share their vibrancy.
 And find the ones simply
 taking one breath at a time,
 finding space to navigate their new normal.
 See their bravery.
 Find those helpers.
 When nothing makes sense.
 They will show the unity in our perseverance.
 When you have no idea how to exist.
 Find the shards of sparkle,
 left by the helpers.
 And together,
 Let's all throw it into the sky, to brighten the dark days.

— Jessica Kennedy



Sydney and Oliver show some of the cards they made for seniors

On the Cover

Cover photo by Ryan Gordon. The image is part of the *Faces and Fabric of a Small Town During Pandemic* exhibit at the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum, curated by Michael Rikley-Lancaster. To view or purchase Ryan's photographs, please visit mvtm.ca, or find him on Facebook: Ryan Gordon Photography or Instagram: Ryan.Gordon.Photography. All proceeds go to support the Almonte General Hospital Foundation. Ryan also took the photo of Jeff Mills that appears on this spread.

Production Team

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 This publication was conceived by Liz Rootham, and produced by Carebridge Community Support with assistance from the Town of Mississippi Mills and from Lanark County.



Message from Christa Lowry, Mayor of Mississippi Mills

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our community has shown its true character by coming together and supporting one another during this difficult time.

I am filled with sorrow for the parents and grandparents, sisters and brothers, friends and neighbours we have lost during the local outbreak. They are loved ones who contributed to the very fabric of our lives, each loss rippling through the community.

It continues to give me a great sense of pride to see residents, businesses and organizations pull together to show support, help and encouragement. Many have stepped up to help vulnerable neighbours as well as frontline and essential workers. The acts of generosity and kindness go on and on and it makes me smile each time I hear of someone helping someone else. In these most unusual times, sometimes we uplift and sometimes we are the uplifted. As the pandemic continues, we have all had to adapt, make changes and learn new habits.

I want to thank everyone on the frontlines, the healthcare workers and first responders, who show up every day and who work so tirelessly to serve our most vulnerable. Thank you to the essential workers; we could not do this without you. And thank you to every single person in our community who is doing their best to stay the course, continue looking out for their neighbours and choosing to act with kindness, showing that we truly are in this together.

Stay safe and be well.

— Mayor Lowry



Turning Lemons into Lemonade

A message from Carebridge CEO Robert Eves

Neighbours helping neighbours! In small communities like ours, you just need to ask for help and people step up. And everyone has!

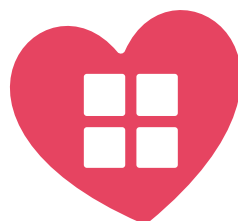
Carebridge is proud to be part of MMTogether. It was sparked by Board Chair Bob McGaraughty's simple idea to use Carebridge vehicles to deliver groceries in the community. From there, Community Engagement Director Jeff Mills jumped in. We partnered with Patrice's Your Independent Grocer in Almonte to deliver groceries to seniors and those at-risk. Within days, it blossomed into a movement across the community with an army of volunteers. At the same time, we reached out to local businesses who were struggling to stay afloat during the pandemic. The program expanded to provide meals to shut-in seniors and support our local restaurants at the same time. Then, MM Together moved into Carleton Place, Smiths Falls and Perth. To date, our generous communities have provided more than \$20,000 and hundreds of hours of volunteer time to support these initiatives. These donations are going right back into the community for individuals, families and businesses that need help.

For all the details or to add your support, visit www.carebridge.ca. It just makes sense. Carebridge exists to respond to community needs — jumping in and figuring out what needs to be done. We are so grateful for your support!

— Robert Eves



Carebridge
 COMMUNITY SUPPORT
 Caring Connects Us



MMTogether

The logo above was created by Auni Milne at Sumack Loft sumackloft.com. Auni explains that: "MMTogether stands for 'Mississippi Mills Together'. The logo shows a heart with a window inside of it, which speaks to our care for people who can't leave their homes. The care encircles them completely while staying outside. The

window represents the idea of a gift or donation in its resemblance to a gift-wrapped package. The heart is at a slight angle to indicate the spunkiness of our community. The heart also shows care for the community, and has a character that is friendly, welcoming, happy and fun, but also respectful, honest and trusted."





Mississippi Mills — We Are In This Together

We're now heading into Fall 2020 and shops, hospitals and schools are opening up, as life in this "new normal" begins to take shape. Liz Rootham, who has led some initiatives on behalf of Carebridge, came up with the idea for this publication — a reflection piece to capture the "first wave" of the global COVID-19 pandemic in our community, combined with a list of resources to assist us should things get tough again this Fall. So here we take a moment to review what the unprecedented lockdown looked like in our small corner of the world.

All spring, parents and caregivers were schooling their kids at home through virtual classrooms while trying to work full-time or part-time. Many folks in our community were laid off entirely as businesses had to close. All public buildings were closed — churches, museums, theatres, arenas and childcare facilities. Outdoor spaces too — parks and playgrounds, beaches, sports, camps, community festivals and events — all closed. We were encouraged to simply stay home for months on end with grocery, food and pharmacy pickups as the only essential outings. And when we did need to go into these essential businesses, everyone was mandated to stay 2-metres apart and wear masks. It took a toll.

COVID-19: Reflections on a Window

The Mississippi Mills Together logo features a window inside a heart. The window represents so much: "window visits" at long-term care homes with loved ones on both sides, hand touching hand with glass between; families teaching their children much more than the curriculum — about life from the inside of their four walls looking out; smiling teenage grocery clerks eager to serve behind plexiglass protection; a shop window offering take-out or curbside pick-up from a business that's just holding on.

That same glass, that same window, like a mirror, offers our reflection. We have peered into our souls. We have become reflective. We've had lots of time to think and learn about what is truly important. Politics on every level seem somehow less important. Our children, our parents, our neighbours and friends, the older man or woman down the road — this is what we focus on, watch over, call and support.



"Social distancing" was what we all needed to do to keep our frontline workers safe as leaders had no idea if our hospital system could handle the impacts and demands of the virus. In an effort to "flatten the curve" of cases in our communities and keep medical infrastructure working, hospitals and doctors' offices closed to in-person appointments except for emergencies. COVID-19 testing clinics were set up. The stress of the unknown led some to resort to hoarding toilet paper and hand sanitizer or clearing grocery store shelves. Although fear took hold of many in the beginning, care and kindness overcame.

This short publication has just a few stories of how Mississippi Mills responded with kindness, courage and love in the face of the most devastating crisis since the early 1900s. But we know there are so many more. **If you would like to share your own stories of how you were helped or how you reached out to others, please send them to Jeff Mills at <jmills@carebridge.ca>.** We hope some of these stories inspire you to continue to reach out to one another this fall and after this virus is over. We are in this together.

— Sarah Kerr

Many of us look inward for support more than outward, perhaps because we are the descendants of those hardy folks who cleared the rocks and put plough to earth. On the whole, we don't ask for help. This aside, please know there are places to turn for help. Please find in the "centrefold" of this insert the numbers of many wonderful services available to you here in our community. Don't know who to call? Call Carebridge Community Support/MMTogether and we will do our best to connect you to what you need. Just call our confidential phone line at 343-571-2312 or email <mmtogether@carebridge.ca>.

During these past months we've connected with people and heard tremendous stories of strength, hope and resilience. People hanging in but missing the few AA meetings they would normally attend each week; hospice visits by video conference; Go Fund Me pages to buy a replacement window for the Canadian Café or to support young women devastated by a home fire; the ways that our community came together in support of Black Lives Matter and against racism; a dedicated and innovative group of organizers who transformed a first-annual Pride celebration from a week of community gatherings into a month of virtual events; shortages of flour because we all rediscovered the "slow food" movement and baked our own bread; grandparents raising grandchildren during this difficult time; the comforting sound of the bagpipes outside apartment windows; simple stones painted by children left about town with messages of hope.

We will welcome all the new souls born into this crazy mixed-up world and never forget all those we lost. We will carry on... together.

— Jeff Mills,

Carebridge Community Engagement Director

Porch Portraits by Sarah Evans



As a photographer, part of my job is being there to capture moments in time. When March came around and the world came to a screeching halt, "Porch Portraits" became the perfect outlet for that. I wanted to capture what isolation looked like for different families and individuals, but also bring some lightness to a situation we are all enduring.

— Sarah Evans





Frontlines and Families

An Interview with Katie and Matt Tiffany

Hospital staff were at the forefront of this pandemic. It was scary to hear the reports from China where they built entirely new hospitals to respond to COVID-19, and then in certain parts of Italy where hospitals were completely overwhelmed. Almonte was hit with the highest rates in the province this spring. We decided to speak with community healthcare leaders Matt and Katie Tiffany to hear what that was like for their family.

Note that Matt's responses are quite short as he was helping to chase our two families' four kids under 5 and a handful of baby chicks around the porch... because, well... COVID!

MMTogether: Can you describe your backgrounds in health care and how you ended up back "home" in our community?

Katie: I work at the Queensway Carleton and also the Carleton Place emergency. Matt has his clinic at the Ottawa Valley Family Health Team and works at the Almonte hospital. We met working together in New York City and moved here five years ago. Matt always wanted to come back to his hometown and really wanted a "true family practice" where he could do in-patient, clinic and emergency. Everything in the city was very specialized. The transition "home" was more difficult for me because all of the medication and dosages were different from the U.S., and it's also taken some time to get rid of the city mentality. It's been a whole new side of client care here — we're looking at the whole family and community instead of just a clinical view of what's in front of you.

Some frontline medical staff described this concept of a "pre-traumatic stress disorder" as COVID-19 was sweeping through Europe but had yet to hit North America. Could you describe some of the feelings your family was experiencing in mid-March when there were so many unknowns?

Katie: It was strange watching it come, knowing it was inevitable but also scary seeing what was

happening in China and Italy. Seeing it come without information was scary.

Matt: We experienced four times the rate of COVID anywhere else here in Almonte — the highest in the province. The outbreak at Country Haven contributed to this.

Katie: On the one hand, it's what we've been preparing for our whole careers, and yet now that we have little kids there was an added fear of exposing them. We realized though that as health care workers you're always exposing your family to risk (other infectious diseases), so trying to manage the media frenzy was terrifying but then knowing this is how I would treat airborne shingles, TB, etc. was grounding. The real fear is about aerosolized intubations, which is what Matt has to do. Ultimately it comes down to: wash your hands and clothes, shower, use a separate entry. We've done really well here so I don't know what the magic is, but the fact that we have clean water, the ability to isolate, all the things to protect ourselves, have made a big difference. We isolate to save hospital systems and we're so fortunate to have resources and personal space here.

While some were paralyzed by fear in the initial onset, you seemed to be thriving. Katie you alone made dozens of masks and skull caps all while juggling a new baby and young kids. Can you describe some of these initiatives?

Katie: It's in our nature as humans to want to help people. It's still hard being a mom and a nurse. This is what I've trained for all my life and so it's hard for me to sit on the sidelines. I'm still getting all of the emails, daily numbers, notices of staff shortages. It just comes down to needing to do what's right as a family. I'm so grateful to have accurate data through all of this because it's scary if you're getting your information — or mis-information — from social media. I actually gave up social media because it was too much. I needed to connect with people in a healthier way, to stick to the facts that I know instead of polarized opinions.

Matt: It's a new risk we have to get used to. There are the cynics that make it more dangerous, but we need a middle ground. Wash your hands, cough into your elbows, wear a mask, reach out, get treated, stay home if you're sick. This was all a good warm-up.

Katie: Social isolation needed to happen initially, but it was so difficult with two little kids, bad weather, my family in Florida and at-risk in-laws who we couldn't see. It was hard work to be home with kids without playgrounds or the entertainment we've relied on. Some silver linings were that we were



As healthcare professionals and parents of young children, Matt and Katie Tiffany weigh in on the effects of COVID, and lockdown, on both frontline workers and families

having family dinner every night. Matt was home for his 2½ clinic days and we appreciated slowing down and getting back to the family unit.

My "sewing mania" mostly started to support my work. I made 72 caps and 25 masks and it was more of wanting to protect my colleagues and feeling guilty about being on maternity leave! I know there was no option of going back without daycare or family, but this was my way to give back to my co-workers.

One thing that we've seen is that our community is quite stoic and reluctant to ask for help in times of need. As we consider a potential second wave of this, what are some important things to keep in mind for people who might feel sick or in need but unsure if they should seek help?

Katie: People didn't realize that your doctor's office is still open. They're trained to triage — to determine if you need to be seen immediately, can have a phone consultation or whatever you need. People weren't reaching out and were suffering. The ER is open, doctors' offices are open but modified, you can still access telehealth. There are so many COVID symptoms, so don't be afraid to reach out and call.

Matt: If we do experience a second wave we're going to need to immediately quarantine nursing homes and hospitals. We could set up an outpatient clinic to keep it out of our hospital — the curling rink would be the perfect place in Almonte.

Katie: I got tested twice at the beginning. I had a sore throat and headache and was worried that I might have it. I got tested to ensure that Matt was safe to return to work. Isolating was stressful in the beginning, but you don't want to be walking around with it. Just get tested.

As humans, we are all built to give and to receive. Are there services that you found helpful as a young parent or a frontline worker during this time?

Katie: I think it's super important to check in on everyone. Everyone is having a hard time — old, young, single, those with kids — everyone is miserable. The grass is always greener on the other side. Just check in on everybody. Kindness is so important. Be patient with each other.

We are so grateful to have your family in our community. Thanks so much for your kindness and hard work.



If you're experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms,

call 613-325-1208



to book an appointment, or visit

www.almontegeneral.com/assessmentcentre

How Our Community Cares



More Than a Grocery List

I have found myself perusing the aisles of Patrice's, our local grocery store, more frequently these days, contrary to the COVID-19 norm. I have been privileged to have the opportunity to support a local non-profit agency, Carebridge Community Support, by fulfilling grocery orders for seniors and other vulnerable people who are self-isolated or otherwise not able to leave their residences to go to the store.

Until recently I thought a grocery list was, well, a grocery list, but I now understand that it is much more than that. The wonderful experience of shopping for another has allowed me to get to know a person, who I will likely never meet, at an intimate level. Who knew that a grocery list is also the story of a person's life?

The first order, which included a request for 7 bananas, not-too-ripe, but not-too-green-either, invites me to their daily breakfast table. Does it get sliced over some steel-cut quick-cook oatmeal, as another part of their grocery list suggests? Or perhaps I am wrong and it is a healthy mid-afternoon snack, every day, at precisely 2:30PM? I like routine too, it's comforting, just like their rhythm of getting groceries once per week, every Wednesday!



The next order has the "lowest possible price" box ticked at the top of the sheet. I wonder if he has had to live his whole life this way, carefully managing his scarce resources, or if a solid middle-class career was shattered by a corporate bankruptcy, which revealed an underfunded pension plan and a much-tighter-than-expected retirement. What do I do then when the list states "1 can of no-name corn", which happens to be on feature this week, 2 cans for \$2, or \$1.29 each? I know what I would do if it was my list, but who am I to spend \$0.71 of someone else's treasured reserves?

Yet another order requests large tomatoes and other produce, and spices which tempt my taste buds and remind me of Aunt Betty's homemade lasagna and the inevitable, on-going debate of whether the leftovers should be warmed up or simply eaten cold. Further down this list is some sweet chili sauce, clearly to add some zest to life; a Kit-Kat chocolate bar to satisfy a sweet tooth; and a large con-



Volunteers (like Art & Terri Clarke, above; Mimi Asselin, left; Anik Marchildon, Catherine Ray and Heather Billings, below; and Peter McGaugh, who wrote this article) helped take orders, shop, and deliver groceries!

tainer of Tide laundry detergent, no substitutes please, because sometimes brands do matter!

My final trip around the store that day was a small list, which included a mid-sized box of Red Rose tea. This instantly brought me back to my childhood and the popular "Pity, only in Canada" television commercials that everyone mimicked at the time. It's been years since I had even heard the mention of Red Rose tea! The last time I had actually touched a box of it was when we were emptying out my Mom's home, seven years ago, soon after she died.

Every list different and yet the same. Stories of our childhoods, the joys and hardships of life, our peculiarities and similarities jumping off of every grocery list I held in my (constantly-washed) hands. To all of you who placed orders, thanks for sharing a bit of your life with me. It's been a wonderful gift to get to connect with you through the invisible threads of life.

— Peter McGaugh



Ukulele Ladies "Change Their Tune" to Support Seniors During Lockdown

The "Ukulele Ladies" is a music group of local women who play at the seniors' residences in Almonte. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the closures of all of these homes to the public, these women "changed their tune" and went about making cards for all of their friends at Country Haven, Fairview Manor and Orchard View. "The residents mean a lot to us," said Millie Maloney, pictured below, "and we felt terrible — some of the Ukulele Ladies' mothers have been locked down in their rooms for months". Together they delivered hundreds of Easter and Mother's Day cards through Julie Rice, a member of the group and frontline staff at Fairview Manor. They also raised funds for the Food Bank, Carebridge, and for a tree to be planted in honour of the community members who died due to COVID-19.

On April 9, the Almonte General Hospital Fairview Manor Foundation noted that: "The wonderful Ukulele Ladies came through for us! Millie stuffed around 200 cards and notes in our Mailbox yesterday! Families and neighbours are doing it too."



What "Helping" Looks Like

We have such a self-sufficient community, but many services have been set up so we can all adhere to this incredible social experiment to stay 6-feet away from each other, and stay home as much as possible, until this pandemic is over. "Helping" may look like volunteering to shop or sew for someone, but "helping" might also look like asking someone to shop for you so you can stay home and keep essential workers safe. Asking for help can be really hard. Let's stay humble and kind, help where we can, wear a mask, and ask for help to keep each other safe.

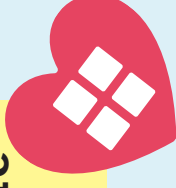
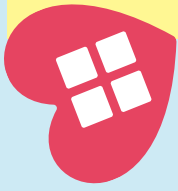
If you are a single parent or are acting as one with an essential worker partner on the frontlines...

 **call 2-1-1**

Stores have asked kids to stay home, if possible. We want to help.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

While it looks like sunnier days are ahead, there are still many unknowns and uncertainties on this road. Some of our friends, family and neighbours need help or will need help in the time ahead. Please pass these resources along so that when someone in our community needs help they know who to turn to. Remember to also spread the word to those who may not be comfortable accessing information online or who have unreliable internet. There is lots of help out there. Let's make sure everybody knows who to turn to. We're in this together.



Not sure where to start or who to call? Try Carebridge or 2-1-1.

CAREBRIDGE COMMUNITY SUPPORT: MMTOGETHER

If you or someone you know needs help paying rent or bills, buying groceries, feels lonely or just doesn't know where to go for help, reach out to Carebridge on this confidential line: 343-571-2312 (it's a local call) or email mmtogether@carebridge.ca.

CALL 2-1-1

Need help finding information on government or community-based programs? Not sure what local services are here to help? Call 2-1-1. The phone line is open 24/7 and someone is ready to help you access the information you need. Prefer to chat online? Go to www.211ontario.ca and click "Live Chat."

COVID-19 INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District Health Unit <healthunit.org/coronavirus>: 1-800-660-5853

COVID-19 Assessment Centre: Book an appointment at 613-325-1208 or visit www.almontegeneral.com/assessmentcentre

COVID-19 symptoms and enquiries: 1-800-660-5853 ext. 2499

After-hours crisis line: 613-345-5685

COVID Self-assessment tool: <covid-19.ontario.ca>

Information from Canada's Pediatricians: <www.caringforkids.cps.ca>

Telehealth Ontario (24/7): 1-866-797-0000

Canadian COVID App: <www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-19-app.html>

MENTAL HEALTH

A Friendly Voice <www.afriendlyvoice.ca>: An option for seniors who may be feeling lonely or isolated. Run by trained volunteers.

Call: 613-692-9992 or 1-855-892-9992

Lanark County Mental Health: <www.lanarkmentalhealth.com>

Residents over age of 17: 613-257-5915

Pandemic Mental Health Helpline: 1-833-283-9979

Wellness Together Canada: <ca.portal.gs>

Counselling Connect — Free Zoom or phone counselling sessions for anyone in the Ottawa region. Sign up online. Free, confidential, timely: <www.counsellingconnect.org>

Coping strategies for anxiety: <www.anxietycanada.com/covid-19>

Distress Centre of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville: 1-800-465-4442

Provided from 5PM to midnight by nonjudgmental and empathetic volunteers.

Alcoholics Anonymous: 613-284-2696 or Toll Free 1-855-267-2696.

Meetings online: The Fundamentals Group in Almonte on Wednesday 7:30PM <lanarkleedsaa.org>

Lanark Leeds and Grenville Crisis Line, available 24/7: 1-866-281-2911

Ontario Drug and Alcohol Helpline Call, Chat and Email services available 24/7 toll free: 1-800-565-8603

FAMILY SUPPORTS

Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth serves kids ages 0-18 and their families. Offering video/phone counselling and crisis services: 613-257-8260

COVID-19 assessment tool: <COVID-19.ontario.ca>

Information from Canada's Pediatricians: <www.caringforkids.cps.ca>

Telehealth Ontario (24/7): 1-866-797-0000

Canadian COVID App: <www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-alert.html>

HOUSING & SAFETY

Lanark County Interval House <lcih.org>. If you are experiencing violence at home, please call the 24/7 Crisis Line: 613-257-5960 or 1-800-267-7946
Online chat: unsafeathomeottawa.ca/chat-text/
Text chat: 613-704-5535

Social Isolation Centre for those who are homeless/marginally housed who have suspected COVID or must isolate related to exposure. Anyone wanting to access a free bed in Lanark County who fits the above can call: 613-257-5960
Call **Carebridge Community Support** on this confidential line: 343-571-2312 (it's a local call) or email <mmtogether@carebridge.ca>.

FOOD & BILLS

Lanark County Food Bank — The Hunger Stop: 613-257-8546
<lanarkcountyfoodbank.ca>

Senior Support Services and Meals on Wheels: 613-256-1031
<www.carebridge.ca>

Grocery Delivery for seniors and those at risk. Provided in partnership by Carebridge Community Support, Patrice's Your Independent Grocer and Mitchell's Your Independent Grocer. Please have your credit card and expiry date ready.

For Almonte: 613-256-2080 ext. 312 or 313

For Carleton Place: 613-253-6206 ext. 121

Hydro Relief: if you're a customer experiencing hardship, call 1-888-664-9376
Customer Contact Centre Hours – Mon–Fri 7:30AM to 8PM, Sat 9AM to 3PM
Enbridge COVID-19 Energy Assistance (CEAP) provides a one-time payment of \$80 to qualifying residential customers to help pay down energy bill debt incurred since COVID-19 began. Visit <enbridgegas.com/ceap> to apply.
Reach out to **Carebridge** on this confidential line: 343-571-2312 (it's a local call) or email <mmtogether@carebridge.ca>.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Follow updates from the Mayor, Council and Town: <www.mississippimills.ca>
Follow local news on The Millstone: <millstonenews.com>

Pick up a copy of theHumm for free or read about arts, entertainment & ideas at <www.thehumm.com>

Read about local news at <www.insideottawavalley.com>

Connect to a local church at <churchdirectory.ca>

Visit the library in Almonte or Pakenham: <www.missmillslibrary.com>



FAMILY SUPPORTS

Open Doors for Lanark Children and Youth serves kids ages 0–18 and their families. Offering video/phone counselling and crisis services: 613-257-8260 or 1-877-232-8260

Parent Support Line: Monday–Friday, from 9AM to 4PM: 613-565-2467 ext. 2
Email: <information@parentresource.ca>

Kids Help Phone <kidshelpline.ca>, available 24/7: 1-800-668-6868
Text CONNECT to 686868

Child, Youth and Family Crisis Line for Eastern Ontario <www.icrs.ca>:
Toll Free 1-877-377-7775

LGBTQ* Youth Support: Confidential, non-judgmental and informed
LGBTQQ2S1 Live Chat Peer Support: <www.youthline.ca>
Immediate questions or concerns helpline: 1-800-268-9688
or text 647-694-4275 <champlainhealthline.ca>

SUPPORTS FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & STUDENTS

Local Schools: get information on school closures, childcare supports and learning at home during COVID-19: <www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-support-students-and-parents>

OSAP Payments & Interest Pause: you will not have to make payments and no interest will accrue on your OSAP loan between March 30, 2020 and Sept 30, 2020. Visit <www.csnpe-nslsc.canada.ca>

Learn at Home: Find made-in-Ontario activities, courses and more.
<www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home>

COVID-19 Youth Mental Health Resource Hub powered by jack.org:
<jack.org/Resources/COVID-19-Youth-Mental-Health-Resource-Hub>

Learn how to **be there** for those you love: <bethere.org/Home>

Almonte Daycare Centre offers full day care as well as Before & After Care at Holy Name of Mary, Naismith and R. Tait McKenzie Schools.

Call 613-256-3833 <www.mississippimills.ca/en/live/childcare.asp>

Linda Lowe Daycare offers early learning and school aged programs in Pakenham. Call 613-624-5320.

Almonte Co-operative Nursery School offers preschool and kindergarten Readiness Programs. Contact: 613-256-0286

Mississippi Mills Youth Centre: <www.mmyc.ca>

INFORMATION FROM MISSISSIPPI MILLS

<www.mississippimills.ca/en/live/covid19-resources.asp>

INFORMATION FROM LANARK COUNTY

<www.lanarkcounty.ca/AboutLanark/NewsMedia/COVID-19_Information__Resources.htm>



Marvelous Mask Makers



Costume designer Ingrid Hamster was an inspiration for the "Mask Collective", a group that collectively raised over \$5,500 by sewing and donating masks

The Mask Collective

Liz Rootham is a long-time local resident who, like many others, felt compelled to help and looked for ways to contribute when the pandemic hit. We asked her about a program she helped to run during the lockdown this spring.

"I ran something I have called 'the mask collective'", she explains. "It started after I had a conversation with Ingrid Hamster, who was being overwhelmed by requests and trying to sew. I helped coordinate a material supply and distribution chain for our twelve sewers, including Maureen Dagg, Katrina Ayling, Catherine Arbour, Cathy Blake, Judy Stanley, Patty Carson, Patricia Gervais, Pat Murphy, Jeanne d'Arc Labelle, Beth McKibbon, Judy Riopelle and Melanie Girdwood."

"Sewers dropped off their masks and picked up supplies from my porch. I 'advertised' via a few local Facebook pages, and received requests via word of mouth, email, and through MMTTogether. I bagged up masks with instructions and the name of the volunteer sewer, put the recipient's name on the bag, and hung it on a rack on my front porch for no-contact pickup. They left donations in my mailbox or sent an e-transfer, usually \$10 per mask."

"Together our group has raised over \$5,500 for Carebridge's MMTTogether initiative and for Lanark County Interval House, the Mississippi Mills Youth Centre, and the Almonte Legion. The proceeds have supported other community care initiatives like family fun packs, senior treat packs and activity books, circle of care cards, and cards from kids. Volunteer sewers helped to keep our community safe and at the same time supported MMTTogether and local businesses — a virtuous circle! It's really important to remember that a whole bunch of other people around town were also making and distributing masks on their own. We all just did what we could."



10-year-old Dot Lockhart sews masks at the Almonte United Church Sunday School

Haute Couture to Mask-maker An Interview with Paddy Mann

Paddy Mann is a Mississippi Mills resident, award-winning fashion designer, and grandmother. We asked Paddy how she put her skills to work and pivoted her business during the first wave of the pandemic, from her studio in Pakenham. This is what she shared...

MMTogether: Paddy, it's amazing how you've pivoted Paddy Mann Clothing to make masks for our community. When did you decide to start sewing masks? Did you have to put your full-time work on hold or was this added onto your already busy schedule?

Paddy Mann: Well it took about a week to switch to masks in March. I was first asked by Shirley and Scott Deugo to make masks for the Fire Department where Scott works, and then for the Rotary Homes. That's what we've been doing ever since. I told my team here that I would pay them no matter what, not knowing this would be 3½ months! But I was more stressed sitting at home than making masks. There are four of us working on sewing now and my granddaughters love to pitch in too.

The Millstone reported that you had made 700 masks by April 17. Have you kept track of how many you've made and where they've gone?

We've made about 3,500 so far (June 18). We've also been making scrubs and caps. They've gone to the Fire Departments, Rotary Homes, Hub Hospice, the Almonte Hospital, Stonebridge Haven, all throughout Mississippi Mills and beyond. Leanne Cusack did a little piece on us at CTV and people have been calling in from all over asking for masks. Claire Marson at Stonebridge Haven has been so supportive — I didn't even ask her for help and she has been donating and has been really super. People who can afford it donate, but otherwise we just distribute them as gifts to everyone with need regardless of financial ability in Pakenham, Almonte and Ramsay. We haven't said no to anyone. People have been leaving thank you notes and I've kept a book of it all. It really means a lot when people say thank you. That's what kept us going.

There have been so many amazing sewers join you in making masks and you even set up a page on your website with pattern details and step-by-step instructions. Did this all happen organically, or did you rally the artist community to join you?

Well, Ingrid Hamster and I had conversations. You think a mask would be a mask, but I have a particular way of making my masks. My own design uses two layers of 100% tightly woven



Photographer Robin Andrew sports a beautiful Paddy Mann mask above. Some of her friends are wearing them in the photo below...

cotton with jersey ties and focuses on a special flexible noseband that my brother Colin manufactures in Arnprior at InterAero. They're designed to withstand repeated washing and keep glasses from fogging.

People can go to my website and get the pattern and design which explains why we use certain fabrics. We also have a comic by graphic artist Colin White on how to wear and care for your masks. Carebridge printed the comic for us and Bridging Generations has been helping with marketing as well.

We went through all of my cotton fabric, so we started to support local suppliers. My sister has been doing some logistics and friends have been picking up supplies. There might be only three of us producing 3,500+ masks but there have been hundreds of volunteers helping to deliver, drive and donate.

We saw there is a Sewing Camp in Almonte being offered this summer and my kids are getting into the sewing frenzy. I'm curious — do you think all this mask-making will get a new generation of young sewers involved in fashion design?

Yes, my granddaughters are also sewing! Through my whole career, I have always taught and wrote for Threads Magazine — I love to teach sewing and share my skills. If what happens through COVID is that people start making again, I would be over the moon. It's so healthy. I really hope people get sick to death of their screens and realize there are so many things they can do with their free time.

Can people buy masks from you, and what's the best way to do that?

Yes! We're going to sell them online for \$18. Anyone can call us at 613-624-5201 or email <clothing@paddyemann.com> to order. Tin Barn Market also has some special edition masks for sale in Almonte. Even though they're for sale, if you need one, call and you will get it. I don't want anyone to feel like they can't have a mask.

Thanks for being such an amazing community advocate and stepping up to support our community.

This is an extraordinary community.





Need Help? Want to Help?

Carebridge wants to meet emerging needs as they arrive. That's why they created MMTogether.

MMTogether is aimed at providing support to those in need as result of the COVID-19 pandemic through small gestures of community care. The goal is to concurrently care for residents while also buying local to help Mississippi Mills stay vibrant into the future.

It is a great way to double the impact of community donations.

Carebridge received donations from a number of local folks, as well as some funding from Lanark County and the United Way East Ontario, that has enabled a number of initiatives to be put in place, bringing joy to hundreds of local residents and putting over \$35,000 back into local economy through businesses who provided needed products and services.

MMTogether is continuing to look for ways that citizens can help each other as we move into the Fall. Going forward, we know that folks will face new financial and emotional challenges, especially as families cope with the stresses of work, school and daycare. It may become more difficult as colder weather arrives to keep active and socially engaged. Maintaining our mental and physical health and our sense of social inclusion for everyone will need all of our best efforts.

Small things can make a difference, so let us know what you need or any ideas you have to help others.

Through the spring, Carebridge pursued a series of initiatives under the MMTogether umbrella. Some of those, like the **grocery shopping and delivery service**, engaged many volunteers to help folks isolating at home stay safe and to keep the community safe from families returning from travel abroad.

Significant efforts were made to help seniors and their caregivers by providing **free meals** to Almonte County Haven, Stone Ridge Manor, and to frail seniors. Carebridge also partnered with **North Market** to provide a special meal to those working long hours in group homes during a difficult period of strict isolation, in order to recognize those extraordinary efforts. In addition, seniors at Five Arches in Pakenham received meal coupons for dinner from the **Centennial Restaurant**; and seniors nominated by individuals received home-made "pies" from **The English Pie Shop**.

Seniors also benefitted from the distribution of **cooling fans** to help them cope with the summer heat while isolating indoors, and from outdoor musical events featuring **local musicians** at the Stan Mills Centre.

Other initiatives reached out to seniors at their residences to provide them with small treat packages or activity books to brighten their day. Carebridge delivered 190 **treat packages** and 112 **activity books** to seniors across Mississippi Mills, including residences in Clayton and Pakenham, as well as apartments and private homes in Almonte. Packages were purchased and put together by local

businesses including **Pêches and Poivre, Fultons Sugarbush, Hummingbird Chocolate** and **Mill Street Books**, and for some a lovely hand-made gift courtesy of **General Fine Craft**.

Seniors receiving the packages expressed their appreciation for the small gesture of caring. "It was like getting a Christmas stocking full of treats in May. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your continued care. Stay safe everyone." "I received one of your goody bags yesterday. Thank you very much — it made my day. I am fine." "I so appreciate this kindness. I have really struggled lately."

Folks experiencing new financial stresses and trouble keeping up could request a **grocery coupon** to help them cope with the increased challenges brought to them and their families as result of the pandemic. Carebridge also invested in the gardening efforts of the Neighbourhood Tomato Community gardens with new raised boxes at the Almonte Library to grow food for the **food bank** and made **masks** available for free for those who could not afford them.

Working in partnership with some local elementary schools and daycares, parents with young families coping with the challenges of having kids home were able to receive **family fun packs**. These packages of activity books, crafts and games were purchased through MMTogether locally through **JB Arts, Mill Street Books, Rexall, Shoppers Drug Mart** and **The Dollar Store** and distributed in Pakenham and Almonte to 181 children. Carebridge also helped families with the purchase of much needed clothing through **Wee Bee Children's Shop**.

MMTogether also piggy-backed on efforts of the Ukulele Ladies music group by sending 360 additional cards to seniors

(some donated and some purchased from **That's The Spirit** and **local artists**), written by some caring community members through a **Circle of Care**. Cards went to folks isolating at home and receiving groceries as well as to residents in seniors' homes. In addition, 116 lucky seniors received **Cards from Kids**, which were hand-made by local children with love and stickers!

Other initiatives included encouragement to call a senior, participate in online community challenges, or get active exploring the community on foot or by bike. Gift certificates for **The Almonte Ice Cream Shop, HFT, Baker Bob's, Gilligalou Bird Inc** and **Almonte Bicycle Works** were shared with folks who demonstrated their care for community. And Carebridge helped other helpers in Mississippi Mills through the purchase of fabric and oh-so-rare elastic from **Textile Traditions**.

Going Forward

You can help MMTogether continue to support our community as we move into the Fall/Winter. Let us know what you need, or how you can help. Your input and your contributions can support efforts that benefit all of Mississippi Mills.



Kids Helping Out

Many kids in our community stepped up to support their relatives and neighbours in our long-term care homes. Above, 6-year-old Lennox Donnelly receives an enthusiastic thumbs up from the staff of Almonte Country Haven. Lennox raised over \$500 for ACH by selling his own hand-made macramé keychains. The Ottawa firm MG Law was inspired by the example Lennox set, and donated an additional \$5,000 to the care home to help out.

Thanks to all the kids who made cards, art, phone calls, and window visits to brighten spirits!



New Ventilator!

Thanks to businesses who donated \$23,000 through the Westview Projects fundraising drive, a transport ventilator will be purchased for Almonte General Hospital (AGH). Pictured above, AGH president and CEO Mary Wilson Trider, left, accepts the donation from Westview Projects' Seth Richards, Cedar Nisbet and Brad Doran-Veevers.

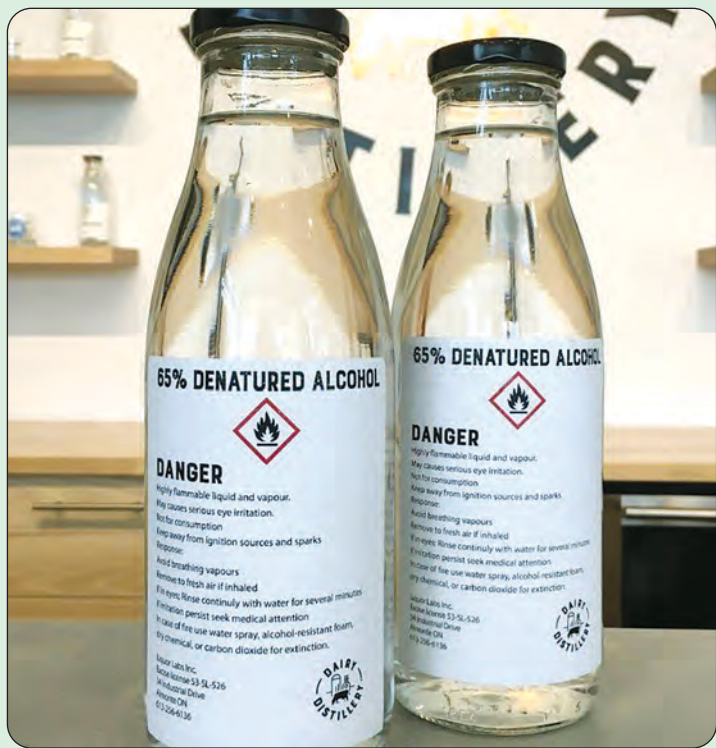
If you have an immune deficiency, asthma, underlying health condition, or live with someone who does...

 **call 2-1-1**

We want to help.



Business Un-Usual



Business Pivots for Essential Supplies

We were so fortunate to have manufacturers in the friendly town pivot to produce essential supplies for our frontline health workers and community agencies this spring. Our local Dairy Distillery moved beyond their “vodkow” production business to become a hand sanitizer manufacturer, as we saw a major global supply shortage of sanitizer. The team at the Dairy Distillery was so quick to make the decision to distill a Health Canada-approved sanitizer and donate proceeds back to our community. Their “Buy 1 Give 1” program has donated over 30,000 bottles to frontline workers fighting COVID-19, including to the Almonte General Hospital, Lanark County Paramedics, Country Haven, Interval House, and many more.

Almonte’s Canadian Hydro Components Ltd. added medical face shields in addition to their turbine production using their three industrial-sized 3D printers. We’re so amazed and grateful to these business leaders in our community for acting so quickly and using their businesses to care for our community.



If you are caring for a special needs child or family member...

 **call 2-1-1**

We want to help.



New Kids on the Block

There are always challenges to opening a new business, but opening a month before lockdown was something else again! Julia Pine opened **Big Vintage** (located in the former Subway Restaurant space on Mill Street in Almonte) on February 16, and shortly after had to close the doors for three full months. Since her soft re-opening in late June, though, she has found both locals and visitors to be very friendly and says that “it’s been a really positive experience!”

This is a great time to check out this and other new businesses in Mississippi Mills!

Reinvention & Resilience

Amanda and Rick Herrera closed their very popular **North Market** café for all of one day before re-opening for delivery and pick-up. And although that model sustained them through the first eight weeks of the pandemic, they started to see sales decline at about the same time as they noticed more people out and about on the street. In order to capture more walk-in traffic, they pivoted to a “bodega-style” business and now offer a wide range of take-away foods and ingredients.

Fans of their delicious fare will be happy to note that about 80% of what they sell is made in-house. They are supplementing this with offerings from local farms and some carefully curated additions.

It’s inspiring to witness the resilience and imagination of these and other local entrepreneurs during these tough times!



Staying the Course

Mary Lumsden from **Mill Street Books** has basically been staying the course throughout the pandemic, but even so has had to adapt to each new Stage as it was announced. She credits the store’s excellent website for making it easier for customers to order books during Stage One, when she began offering after-hour outdoor pick-up and free local delivery (sometimes with chocolate or free books included to keep people’s spirits up). Once restrictions were loosened in Stage Two, she hosted her first “safe distance book release” for the very popular *Almonte: Spirit of Place*.

Like most other small business owners, Mary has been doing “three times the work for half the results” for months now.



Show the love!
Support your local businesses.



If You Need Food, Don't Go Hungry An Interview with Sophy Chhiv

The Hunger Stop Food Bank is a cause near and dear to Sophy Chhiv's heart. She and her three kids — aged 7, 5 and 4 — support it through their sports and school fundraisers throughout the year, and it was their charity of choice during the COVID-19 pandemic this spring. This young Almonte family knows first-hand what's it like to unexpectedly be in a position of needing food.

"A number of years ago I had to use the food bank," explains Chhiv, a cybersecurity analyst and past treasurer for the Board of Directors of Information Systems Security Association Ottawa. "I drove away from a \$650,000 house that we just sold and went straight to the Hunger Stop. I had \$20 in my bank account and used it to fill up my car and drive to Carleton Place. I did not fit the stereotype of someone who needs help and I had this really weird idea of what the food bank would be like. There was massive shame. I was asking myself 'how did I end up in this place in my life?' But I needed food for my kids' lunches for school the next day, so I went."

The kindness of The Hunger Stop volunteers who knew that Chhiv was there for her kids was appreciated, especially those who let her switch out pantry staples for school lunch items. One volunteer threw in a few extra supplies for her baby at the time. "It's so important that we start to understand that the face of poverty isn't often what you might expect," says Chhiv. "The idea that if you have a car, cell phone or a house then

turns people off from reaching out for help. Instead, we all need to have empathy and understand that this could happen to any of us. Ramsay Hart, Executive Director of The Table Community Food Centre agrees. He explains that **"no one feels bad about taking books out of the library for free, yet there can be a lot of unnecessary baggage around accessing food that is available for the community through food banks and meal programs"**. Access to food is a human right.

Everyone struggles at some point in life — whether it's with physical needs or mental health. "I don't care what state you are in — if you have a nice car or house, it doesn't mean that you won't need food," says Chhiv. "If your financial situation changes abruptly, you could be in need of food." **The most important message is that: You don't have to go hungry.** "I had to say to myself — I'm not living on this, but I do need the food today and it's okay. This is what community and being part of a



No one feels bad about taking books out of the library for free, yet there can be a lot of unnecessary baggage around accessing food that is available for the community through food banks and meal programs...

you don't need help, is not okay. **If you need food, you need food, and that's the criteria**". We need to break the stigma.

Chhiv says this starts with more volunteers who understand this dynamic and who give money and time from their hearts — who aren't giving for the photo-op or to get another notch in their "acts of kindness belt", which just increases the shame and

village is about." So please reach out.

The Hunger Stop Food Bank is located at 84 Mill St, Carleton Place. Call 613-257-8546 to book a shopping appointment or request delivery to Almonte. You can "shop" for five days' worth of food. A typical shop will include milk, bread, eggs, cereal, juice, school snacks, baked beans, pasta, pasta sauce, mac & cheese, canned soups and stews, canned tuna, canned and fresh fruits and veggies, rice, and peanut butter.

A Story of Loss & Hope: Almonte Country Haven

During the initial outbreak of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, Almonte experienced one of the highest rates of infection in the province. This was primarily due to the spike of cases at one of our long-term care homes, Almonte Country Haven. As the disease swept through the home, it infected almost all of the residents and took many beloved lives. This pandemic brought out tremendous fear and grief for the friends and families of those who were living in long-term care, for those who became ill, for those who were lost, and for those who were working in its midst.

While the devastation and loss felt overwhelming for our small town, the community around Almonte Country Haven rallied to support the families of residents as well as the frontline workers at the home. Lucy Brown, a community resident, made signs that said "We Support Almonte Country Haven" that many had plastered in car and shop windows around town. Matt Dyck, pastor at Hillside Presbyterian Church, organized prayer walks around the building every day in April and May and opened up the church hall to house Nursing and Med students who were hired as summer students working at the facility. Holy Name of Mary students created art and compiled a slideshow to share with staff. Residents received window visits from family and loved ones who were unable to enter the building, and cards from community members. Meals and treats were delivered by individuals and local restaurants, and one local 6-year-old, Lennox Donnelly, raised just over \$500 for the home. His amazing efforts prompted an Ottawa law firm to donate an additional \$5000. Lynn Melbourne, a local artist, put her talents to use by drawing portraits of residents, which have become incredible keepsakes in their passing. Thanks to everyone who reached out in the ways they knew how.

Family Council Formed

Jane Coyle, co-chair of the newly formed Almonte Country Haven Family Council, writes: "When the tragedy started to unfold at ACH, families came together to support each other. Our loved ones were at the front lines of the pandemic. Families gathered around zoom screens a few times each week, sharing stories and offering each other support. Families know it was hard for staff and appreciate the care they continue to offer. It has been heartbreakingly difficult on families as we watched helpless as the events unfolded. Over 90% of the residents tested positive and 36.5% of the residents died of COVID 19. Almonte Country Haven was one of the hardest hit homes in Ontario.

"As the outbreak resolved, families could see the benefits of transitioning the support group into a Family Council. The Family Council is working to build a partnership with ACH administration that can help us all move beyond the tragedy, learn from the tragic events to help prepare for the second wave, and ultimately work towards improving the quality of life and care for all residents at Almonte Country Haven. Families have come together to work in partnership for transformative change at ACH. Underpinning the work of the Family Council is communication, advocacy, education, support and teamwork. We all want to see improvements to long-term care in general and specifically for all the residents at ACH.

"Almonte Country Haven Family Council currently has 28 members. We welcome families and friends of current and past residents to join. The next meeting is planned for September 22 from 7-8:30PM by zoom. For more information, please email <ach.family.council@gmail.com>."

Abandoned: COVID-19 From a Special-Needs Parent's Perspective

It's been three months since my son's last medical appointment.

No school means no consistent physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, or vision therapy.

A few months ago, my son's condition worsened.

No one would see him, because it wasn't COVID-19 related.

I cared for him alone.

We are told schools and clinics are closed to protect our vulnerable citizens, but this doesn't feel like protection.

It feels like abandonment.

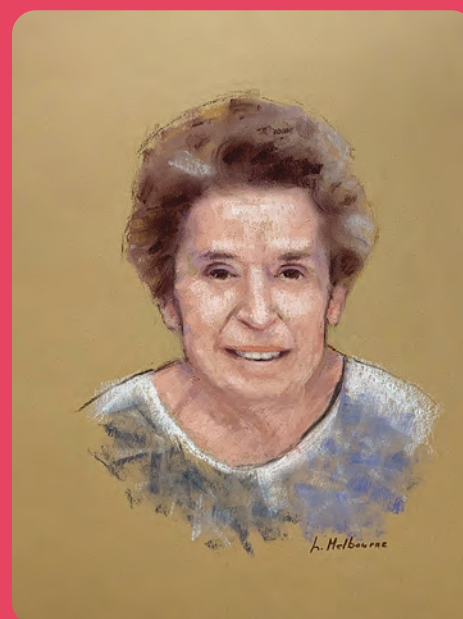
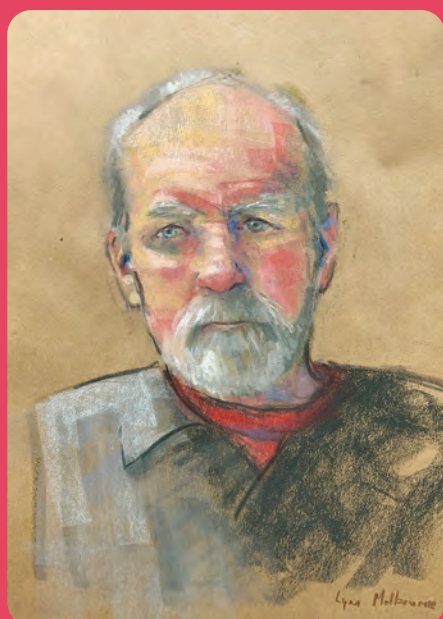
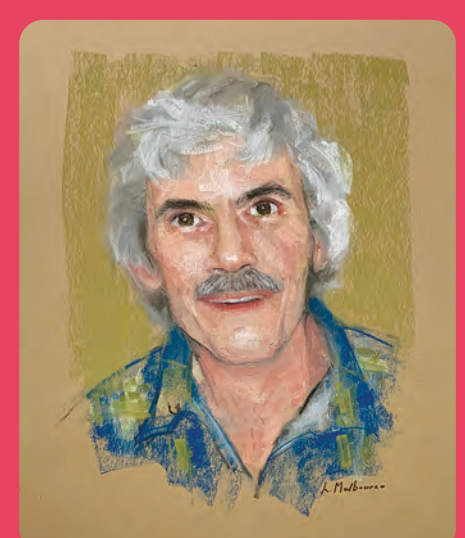
To all the special-needs children and their caregivers, who rode the first wave alone: you are not forgotten.

You are not alone.

— Emilie Timmins

Emilie is a poet, writer, and special needs mom in Almonte. She is working on a collection of word portraits that expresses the experience of COVID-19 from a Special Needs parent's perspective. If you would like to learn more, please contact <emilietimmins@gmail.com>.

Remembering



**Almonte artist
Lynn Melbourne created
portraits of Almonte
Country Haven residents
who died of COVID, and
donated them to surviving
family members.
15 families gave their
permission to publish the
portraits pictured here.**