

Bellwoods Community News

The latest news, updates and announcements

In This Issue

**Response to
COVID-19 (2)**

**Organizational
News (5)**

**News for Clients
(7)**

Bellwoods' Head Office

3 Concorde Gate, Suite 200

Toronto, ON. M3C 3N7

T: (416) 696-9663

F: (416) 696-9481

E: admin@bellwoodscentres.org

Charity Registration #:

10807 0665RR 0001



Message to Clients from Lori Holloway, CEO

I want to thank all of our clients for their continued support in following infection prevention and control protocols. We are continuing to work with our partners to confirm availability of COVID-19 vaccines for all of our clients and staff. *When it's your turn, please get vaccinated.*

I want to thank Brad Campbell for stepping in as Interim CEO and for his leadership during an incredibly challenging year. Thank you, Brad, for your dedication to Bellwoods.

RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Working together to identify probable or positive cases in our community early is our best protection

In the month of March, two of our clients contracted COVID-19 from a visiting family member who had tested negative for COVID-19 and were not experiencing any symptoms of illness at the time of the visit. Unfortunately, both clients passed away as a result of contracting COVID-19. This is a tragic loss to the client's family and a sad loss for our community. Two of our staff were also exposed in these homes prior to the diagnosis, which resulted in some members of their families also falling ill with COVID-19.

This tragedy highlights that even if someone tests negative and/or does not exhibit symptoms, there is no guarantee that you are not carrying the virus.

Reminders:

- Public health measures continue to be in place and visiting anyone outside your bubble is strongly discouraged.
- Clients should inform us if they (or a close contact and/or a family member living within your household) has symptoms of COVID-19 and/or has tested positive for the virus. It is important to notify Bellwoods' staff at the start of the visit so they can put on the appropriate protective equipment.

Self-Isolate to Prevent the Spread

Individuals who test positive for COVID-19, must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the day symptoms start or the day of the test if they are without symptoms. Under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, self-isolation is mandatory.

For more information visit:

<https://www.toronto.ca/home/covid-19/covid-19-what-you-should-do/covid-19-orders-directives-by-laws/?accordion=covid-19-self-isolation-class-order>



As a reminder, you and/or family members must isolate from others if:

- You have COVID-19, or
- You have COVID-19 symptoms, or
- You have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19, or
- Someone in your household was exposed to someone who has COVID-19, has symptoms and is awaiting their test results, or
- You have returned from anywhere outside of Canada, within the past 14 days, or
- You received a notification on the COVID Alert app and you are awaiting test results.



Steps to keep everyone safe:

- Limit non-essential trips outside your home.
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell.
- Keep two-metres distance from others
- Wear a face covering.
- Wash your hands often or use alcohol-based sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.
- When it's your turn...get the vaccine!

Eye Protection for Staff Now Mandatory

All staff have access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) they need to safely complete their work. Staff are provided with approved, medical grade PPE that guarantees the quality and safety of the products used. In response to the variants of the COVID-19 virus circulating in the community and the associated increased risk of transmissibility, Bellwoods reviewed our Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) practices. As of Monday, March 15, 2021 all Bellwoods' staff are required to wear eye protection in addition to the mandatory use of a surgical mask and gloves during all client visits.



Reminders: Bellwoods' staff are required to ask clients questions as part of the daily screening process prior to (or at the start of) each visit. These questions help us to identify the different factors that may influence the use of PPE.

It's Time to Roll-Up Your Sleeve!

In alignment with Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan, all of Bellwoods' clients are now eligible for the vaccine. This week we informed clients at our other sites and in the community that hospitals and Ontario Health Teams in the City of Toronto are currently accepting registration and/or appointment bookings for the vaccine. The availability of vaccination appointments varies based on the supply of vaccine. Clients at our Dundas, Shaw, Sudbury, Mimico and Elm sites have been sent a letter with further instructions. Clients at our Deauville, Madison and Walton sites have been vaccinated.

We have also submitted the names of clients interested in in-home vaccines to Emergency Medical Services (EMS). The Clinical Resource Team (CRT) has reached out to clients to gather health information in preparation for these vaccines.

Note: If you're 70 or older in 2021, you have the option to book your vaccine appointment at either a mass vaccination clinic or pharmacy. If you're 60 or older in 2021, you can book your vaccine appointment at a pharmacy.

ARE THE COVID-19 VACCINES SAFE?



All vaccines approved by Health Canada have met safety & quality standards



They have been tested in large trials to show they are safe & they work



Millions of doses of the vaccines have already been given around the world with good results



Most side effects are mild and go away after a few days

Answering your questions

Will I be immune after my vaccine?

It takes a few weeks for your body to build immunity after vaccination. For vaccines that require two doses, peak protection begins two weeks after the second dose. For the single vaccine from Johnson & Johnson, immunity is strongest starting 28 days after inoculation.

Can I stop wearing a mask?

Not yet. The current research is unclear on exactly how well vaccines stop the coronavirus from taking root in an immunized person's nose and then spreading to others. Until then, scientists urge caution. Please continue to wear your mask.

To learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine visit: <https://covid-19.shoppersdrugmart.ca/en/vaccine>

Organizational News

Meet Craig Knowles, BCAC Member

Craig Knowles is a current member of Bellwoods' Board and the Co-Chair of Bellwoods Community Advisory Council (BCAC).* Craig has been involved in community engagement for over 30 years. He has been a primary caregiver for over 25 years to two individuals who live with chronic health challenges and disabilities.

Craig has a long history managing political campaigns, leading large volunteer teams and raising funds for a number of community and political initiatives. He has extensive volunteer experience working with Casey House AIDS Hospice, Dixon Hall and the Neighbourhood Group



"Being part of Bellwoods' client council is an honour for me. The Council is helping us generate new ideas on how to improve services for clients."
- Craig Knowles

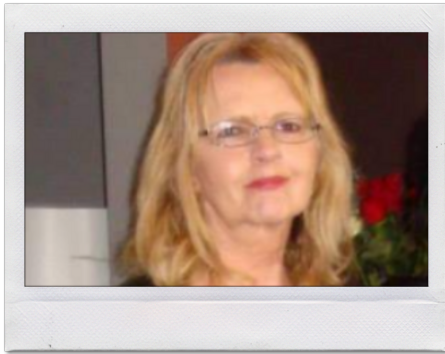
**BCAC was launched in Spring 2019. The Council serves in an advisory capacity making recommendations on matters that impact the experience of clients and also provides advice on issues that will improve quality and service experiences.*

300 Shaw Lounge Renovations

The lounge at 300 Shaw has been renovated. As Bellwoods continues to follow Toronto Public Health guidelines, the updated area is able to accommodate up to 10 staff and one trainer while practicing physical distancing.



A Fond Farewell to Marsha!

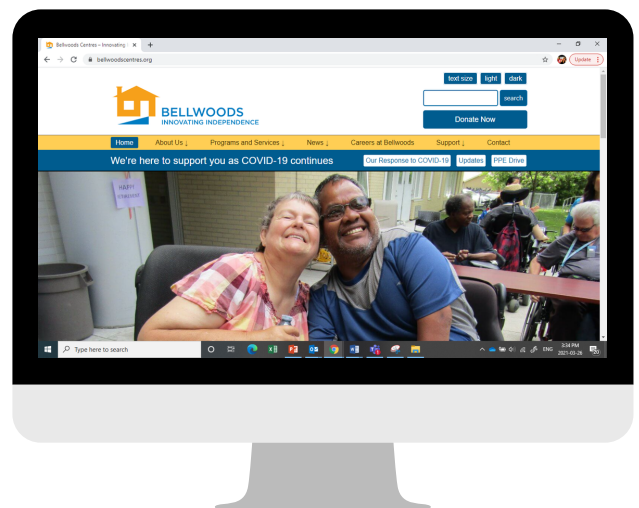


Marsha Gobin - receptionist and administrative support at Head Office - will be leaving Bellwoods on March 31, 2021. Many of you have interacted with Marsha when calling or visiting Head Office. Marsha has been a valued part of our Bellwoods' family for 25 years. ***Marsha: thank you for everything you have done for the Bellwoods community! You will be missed.***

Check-Out Our Website: www.bellwoodscentres.org

Bellwoods launched its refreshed website earlier this month. The site was designed to be more accessible, user-friendly and easier to navigate. Highlights of the refreshed website include:

- Fully accessible by keyboard
- Colour contrast that meets the highest WCAG requirements as well as a colour switcher (if you prefer light on dark to dark on light colours)
- Content on the website is contained in regions, making it easier for blind users to get an overview of the page. (i.e., headings structure, content)
- Google maps of our Head Office and Supportive Housing site locations.



Thank you to members of Bellwoods' Community Advisory Council (BCAC) for their constructive feedback, our web partner, and Sandy Feldman (Inclusive Media and Design) who all did an amazing job helping us refresh the website. We will update the content on the website regularly to include organizational announcements and employment opportunities.

Take a minute to say thank you...



News for Clients

Deadline for Income Taxes is April 30, 2021

If you need help with your taxes, reach-out to one of the free tax clinics listed below.

WoodGreen Tax Clinic

WoodGreen Community Services provides year-round tax clinics for low-income people.

Due to COVID-19, services are entirely by phone. No appointment needed.

<https://www.woodgreen.org/services/programs/free-income-tax-clinic/>

Call (416) 645-6000 ext. 1187 or email: taxclinic@woodgreen.org

West Neighbourhood House

West Neighbourhood House offers a Financial Empowerment and Problem-Solving (FEPS) program by phone.

Contact Shaughn at (416) 848-7980 to schedule an appointment.

211 Ontario

For free virtual tax clinics visit: <http://211update.findhelp.ca/record/MET1607>

Find the right free tax clinic near you

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/individuals/community-volunteer-income-tax-program/need-a-hand-complete-your-tax-return.html#whatfree>

Important Changes Impacting Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI)

Effective July 1, 2021, all household members whose income is included in the RGI calculation must:

1. File an Income Tax Return; and
2. Submit their Notice of Assessment to their housing provider at the time of their annual income and asset review.



The Province of Ontario has recently changed the requirements of the *Housing Services Act, 2011*. As a result, you must file an income tax return to be eligible for RGI. Canada Revenue Agency will send you a Notice of Assessment after your income tax return has been filed and verified.

Upcoming Programs & Events

COVID-19 Vaccines and People with Disabilities in Ontario Zoom Webinar



Topic: COVID-19 Vaccines and People with Disabilities in Ontario

Description: The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (CILT) will be presenting a Zoom webinar on COVID-19 vaccines to empower people with disabilities with information and self-advocacy skills. The webinar will explain the different COVID-19 vaccines, their effectiveness and safety in Canada, addressing vaccine hesitancy, the meaning of herd immunity, the various stages of vaccine rollout and how-to self-advocate for receiving the vaccine in Ontario.

Workshop Presenter: Timothy Valyear, RPN, Owner, Integrity Care Consultants Inc.

When: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

To register in advance for this meeting visit:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kNNaHj-BRJ6ks_VUVMwncA

If you need assistance with registering please contact Rebecca Wood at rebecca.wood@cilt.ca or call (416) 599-2458 ext. 291.

Please note: You must register to join the session. After registering, you will receive an email confirmation with the Zoom webinar details. Registration closes two hours before the webinar.

CILT and Vibrant Peer Support Movie Night

Movie: Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse (Rated PG)

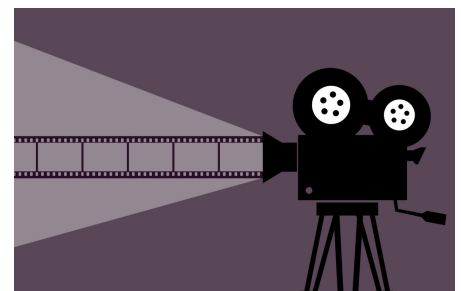
When: Friday April 16, 2021 starting at 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Where: Zoom (you must register to receive link)

Cost: Free

To register contact: Lucy at lucyn@vibranthealthcare.ca or call (416) 486-8666 ext. 226.

Please note: The movie will be presented with closed captioning and audio description. Please let Lucy know about accommodations or access needs (including support with setting up Zoom) when registering. The chat function will be available throughout the movie.



Bellwoods' Bridging the Gap Fund (BTGF)



**Applications are
being accepted
anytime for the
Bridging the Gap
Fund (BTGF)**



This fund is intended to '**Bridge the Gap**' for Bellwoods' clients experiencing periods of greater financial hardship.

If you need help or know of a client that does, apply or reach out to the Bridging the Gap Coordinator at 416-447-1168 or by email at ayip@bcclsp.org



Bellwoods Head Office:
3 Concorde Gate, Suite 200
Toronto, ON. M3C 3N7
T: (416) 696-9663
F: (416) 696-9481
E: admin@bellwoodscentres.org
Charity Registration #:
10807 0665RR 0001

This newsletter is produced by Bellwoods a charitable, non-for-profit organization headquartered in Toronto. Bellwoods provides housing, personal support and reintegration services to individuals with a broad range of disabilities and also provides transition programs and supports for clients transitioning from hospital and/or those at-risk of homelessness.

Electronic copies of this newsletter are available on our website <https://bellwoodscentres.org/resources/>
See Publications > Newsletters. For a printed copy and/or suggestions on content for future topics contact Anna Yip, Communications & Development Associate at (416) 447-1168 or by email at ayip@bcclsp.org