

Help Save Carleton!



Photos from the SAVE Sir Guy Carleton Elementary School Faecbook page



by Adrian Dix

Dear Neighbours,

The *Vancouver School Board of Trustees* met last night to debate a motion on the permanent closure of *Carleton Elementary School*. After two hours of debate and to our great disappointment, they passed a motion 6-3 vote to permanently close Carleton.

Thanks to the 3 trustees who voted against closure – Suzie Mah, Jennifer Reddy and Preeti Faridkot. All three spoke eloquently on the issue. They heard our community and responded. I also want to express my appreciation to all the trustees. These are difficult decisions and while I strongly disagree with their decision, I always believe that everyone deserves respect when difficult decisions are made.

Mostly, I want to thank the dozens of people who spoke at the public hearings in favour of Carleton, in particular Melanie Cheng who led the fight and mobilized our community. Also people such as Linden Wong, Ravi Khanna, Karin Bernauer, Ann Wong and many more who presented our strong argu-

Continued on page 2





胡波
Dr. Bo Hu

胡豪偉
Dr. Peter Hu

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Sir Guy Carleton Elementary: Continued from page 1

ments about the massive growth of our community and the need to ensure for public spaces, public services, and public education.

The dozens of people who spoke at the public hearings, the hundreds who put lawn signs in front of their homes, the thousands who signed petitions – all of you – had an impact. Collingwood's voice was heard and will be heard again on this question. Everyone knows where we stand. And this will make a major difference going forward.

This will be important in the next phase of this debate about the future of our community. Carleton remains VSB property. Even trustees who voted for its permanent closure agreed that the property should continue to belong to the public.

Early in the new year, we will get together again to discuss next steps. Carleton Elementary and the public land



at Kingsway and Joyce have been essential to this neighbourhood for 129 years. You showed over the past weeks our determination that Carleton stays essential for the next 129 years.

Visit: <https://www.collingwoodrecsociety.com/carleton-petition/> to learn more and sign the petition to Save Carleton




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Your neighbours at the **2400 Motel** want to wish you the very best of the season — and a joyful, healthy New Year ahead!

As we look toward celebrating **80 years in 2026**, we're feeling especially grateful for the community that has supported this little local landmark for so long. If you haven't stopped by recently, we'd love to welcome you for a stroll through the property. We've been busy with upgrades and care all year, and we think the place is shining brighter than ever.

Thank you for being part of our story. We look forward to continuing to host you, your family, and your friends in the year to come.

Warmest holiday wishes from all of us at the 2400 Motel.

THANK YOU !

to the contributors and advertisers that make the RCC News possible.

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Contact Lisa at 604-435-0323
or email:
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Thank you contributors, advertisers, distributors and readers of 2025!



Many thanks to the writers, artists, photographers, advertisers and distributors who help make this monthly newspaper possible for our Renfrew-Collingwood community, year after year. Warmest wishes for a safe and healthy 2026!

— The RCC News team

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COMMUNITY NEWS 社区新闻

The mission of this non-profit publication is to provide the residents, businesses and organizations of Renfrew/Collingwood with a medium for community communication.

Paul Reid: editorial and layout coordinator
Lisa Symons: sales and distribution coordinator
Kayla Isomura: web and social media coordinator

Contributors:

Loretta Houben, Penny Lim, Jenny Zhang,
Ricardo Cerna, Adrian Dix

We want to hear from you!

Yes, You! Send comments, community events, press releases by regular post, fax or e-mail. Suggestions for improving the paper are welcome.

We welcome appropriate, unsolicited editorial submissions if accompanied by the author's real name, address and telephone number. The author should retain the original as we cannot return submissions without prior agreement nor does submission guarantee publication. We reserve the right to make editorial changes.

The Renfrew/Collingwood Community News does not necessarily support the views of its contributors.

Next submission deadline: Jan 15

The Renfrew-Collingwood Community News is an initiative of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH).

You Can Find the RC Community News @

Libraries, Collingwood Neighbourhood House, Renfrew Park Community Centre, The Italian Cultural Centre, Collingwood Policing Office, other organizations, religious institutions, schools, laundromats, Starbucks, Rona, Superstore, Canadian Tire, Walmart, London Drugs and Safeway coffee shops, restaurants, markets, corner stores, other businesses, and coffee tables all over Renfrew-Collingwood.

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Renfrew/Collingwood Community News
Collingwood Neighbourhood House
5288 Joyce Street
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Collingwood Corner

Beaver Gumball Machines

by Loretta Houben

I enjoyed simple pleasures when growing up in the Collingwood area of Vancouver, during the 1960s and 1970s. Our family of six rarely ate out, and my mom would save up for one year to go to a special restaurant for her wedding anniversary. One of these places was at Kingsway near Gladstone and was called *The Copper Kettle*. It was buffet style, and you had to climb a ramp to get into it, as it was built above a grocery store. My dad would joke that you could roll down the ramp after eating the delicious and tempting food in the buffet!

In the grocery store below there were gumball machines located near the doorway. A friend of our family, Paul Plesko, owned them, and filled them up with small plastic toys, which kids would enjoy getting as a special treat. I think the cost at that time was one quarter. A pleasant memory I have is that Mr. Plesko allowed my sisters and I to turn the crank on one of the machines, after he inserted the quarter, and we each could have a little toy which dropped out for free! I got a tiny red plastic apple with two sections. When I turned the apple, a white plastic worm popped out. When I turned it in the opposite direction, the worm popped back into the apple.

There are two gumball machine locations at *Metrotown Mall* in Burnaby. They are quite popular but now accept a \$2 coin for the plastic toys inside. I tried one out the other week, and that satisfying twist of the



1982 photo by Roger Kwan, Kingsway and Gladstone. *Copper Kettle* restaurant above *Dominion* grocery store, later an *IGA* store. Vancouver Archives



2025 photo by Loretta Houben. Beaver gumball vending machines at Metrotown Mall

handle is still a great feeling! I noticed an engraving of a beaver on the machine and decided to research it. I discovered that the vending machines were invented in Canada by Beaver Gumball Machines in 1963 by Josef Schwarzli. His descendants took over the business and now make digital machines that accept tap payments, so if you want the satisfaction of the twist crank, you'd better hurry as they might disappear soon. I was pleased to discover that the invention was Canadian.



Beaver motif and name on closeup of a gumball vending machine at Metrotown Mall.



The will to do; the soul to dare.

... Sir Walter Scott plaque gracing Harry W. Jerome Stanley Park bronze statue

by Penny N. Lim, scribe

Research. Rewarding. I found a common thread, golden values, sculptor Jack K. Harman shared with his bronze personalities. Their bond of vision, dedication, and achievement. The artist's kinetic energy imbued his bronze sculptures striving for excellence.

Fleshing out statues, the artist bringing them to life forever. Watch the indomitable Harry Jerome sprint! Or Landy and Bannister as champions racing "The Miracle Mile." A moment in Eternity lives on.



Prolific Jack Harman of the best-known public sculptures in Canada include: Vancouver: Harry Jerome, The Miracle Mile, The Family; Ottawa: equestrian Queen Elizabeth and the National Peacekeepers Memorial "Reconciliation." In 1992, the latter chosen as the winning team design collaboration of Jack Harman, two architects, and Cornelia Oberlander, landscape architect. "Reconciliation" does illustrate the dangers of alert peacekeeping seeking global resolution and harmony. A humanitarian exemplar. A tribute to all peacekeeping soldiers of today and yesterday.

My visit to study, then photoshoot Themis, Goddess of Justice, at the Provincial courthouse altered my storyline. Researching Themis and viewing Jack Harman's bronze statue fascinated me. (Two-year Art Education Certificate, Capilano College, two little bronze dancers, a tripod-bell pot w. lid to my credit.)



What captivated me so? Themis holds a scroll -- not a sword. Both are worthy symbols. Swords are knowledge cutting through of ignorance whereas scrolls are knowledge, history, and law. Her blindfold illustrates her impartiality. Balance of scales. Because Harman did not believe in capital punishment -- Integrity of his scroll replaces the sword. Justice defined as the fair treatment of people

Why a goddess? In Ancient mythology, Justice and Order were represented by female deities as Greek and Roman abstract ideals of law and moral order.

Themis - allegory -- immanent justice. Immortal Themis is both a Titaness and a Goddess. Themis is accorded priceless attributes. Divine law. Theism = "belief in existence of a god or gods." Themis means "a dare, challenge."

I observe The Lady Justice exuding power, action, like a woman warrior of mercy. Attractive pleated tunic gown under a heavy wing-like robe. Firmly gripping both the Scales of Justice as well as the scroll. Ready to mete justice. Her blindfold benefits the aesthetics of this Goddess. Her



blindfold leaves her whole in contrast to hollow-eyed bronzes. I feel Themis exists.

Themis -- "omniscient -- can see the past, the future of every creature."

Footnotes:

Titan -- one of a family of giants overthrown by the gods in Greek mythology.

Titaness Themis -- in family line, 2nd wife to Zeus.

NB: Photography not allowed in Courthouse, photoshoot through patio windows. Apparitions appear! Befitting the practice of law and order in different domains. Aside: Scales = Libra horoscope.



2025

gratitude report


CITYREACH
CARE SOCIETY


FOOD FOR FAMILIES

- Over 60,000 fresh food hampers
- Over 1.5 million pounds of food rescued & redistributed
- Launched the Vancouver Food Recovery Network

OUT OF SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

Over 130 children impacted in 2025 through after school care & day camps

"The CityReach team has gone over and above to understand our son's challenges and find ways of supporting his growth. They see the beauty inside our child, and often comment on how much they appreciate his wonderful spirit. We are so proud of the person he is becoming - and appreciate the foundations built at City Reach. We would highly recommend CityReach to any parent!"

ADOPT-A-SCHOOL

Over 60 schools supported
New: Adopt-A-School
launched in Delta

"The resources provided by CityReach have made a meaningful difference in the lives of many of our students, helping reduce food insecurity and promote overall well-being. When students are hungry, it's difficult for them to focus, engage, or thrive in the classroom. CityReach plays a vital role in allowing students to fully participate in their education." - School District 43



CLUB FREEDOM

- Over 200 individuals supported with homelessness prevention services during this first year of The HOPE Project
- Prison Outreach programs doubled
- Surrey Outreach established through SUMS & NightShift partnerships
- Over 12,000 hot meals served

"When I first walked into Club Freedom, the biggest thing I felt was acceptance. I wasn't seen as an addict—I was seen as a person. That acceptance brought me back.

To those who support CityReach: Your donations truly make a difference. Every meal, every connection, every bit of care helps someone rebuild their life.

Recovery doesn't end when the program does; people need a community waiting for them. That community is what saved me. For 25 years, Club Freedom has been changing lives. I'm living proof. And I believe the best is yet to come."

-Michel, Club Freedom Guest
& Staff Member

EVENTS

Over \$200,000 raised through
Coldest Night of the Year

3,000 children & youth
supported through
community events



CITYREACH BEES

525 pounds of honey harvested

Over \$10,000 raised through
the Adopt-A-Bee campaign





Don Davies MP

戴偉思 डॉन डेविस Đào Vĩ Tâm
Vancouver Kingsway



Community Office

2951 Kingsway, Vancouver, BC V5R 5J4
604-775-6263 | Don.Davies@parl.gc.ca



A new exhibition from Il Museo Gallery

EARTH, FIRE AND FORM A BC CERAMICS CELEBRATION

The 70th Anniversary Exhibition of the Potters' Guild of BC



Holly McKeen,
Layered luster crystalline glazes
on porcelain bottle form



Sharon Reay,
Red riding Hood Lidded Jar



Jai Sallay-Carrington,
Large Triad Elk Vase

Running: November 21, 2025 to January 15, 2026

Opening event: November 27, 2025 at 7pm

HOURS: Tuesday to Friday 10-6 | Saturdays 10-4 | Closed Sunday and Monday



Il Museo Gallery at the **Italian Cultural Centre**
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Holiday Open House at Collingwood Neighbourhood House



A Facebook post from Adrian Dix

Thank you to the 325+ who attended the Holiday Open House at Collingwood Neighbourhood House (Official). To my amazing friend Don Davies who co-hosted the event, to our incredible constituency team and volunteers led by Emily Tsang and Idy Leung, to Jim Edmondson who for the last 18 years has led the carol singing with his guitar and his wit, gratitude all. This event, our 20th, brings together our community in celebration, respect and song. Renee and I love it. Vancouver Kingsway/Renfrew is a diverse and generous and



whenever we come together, even in challenging times, even when we don't always succeed, a joyful and hopeful place. Truly a privilege to live here and to represent this community. Merry Christmas.

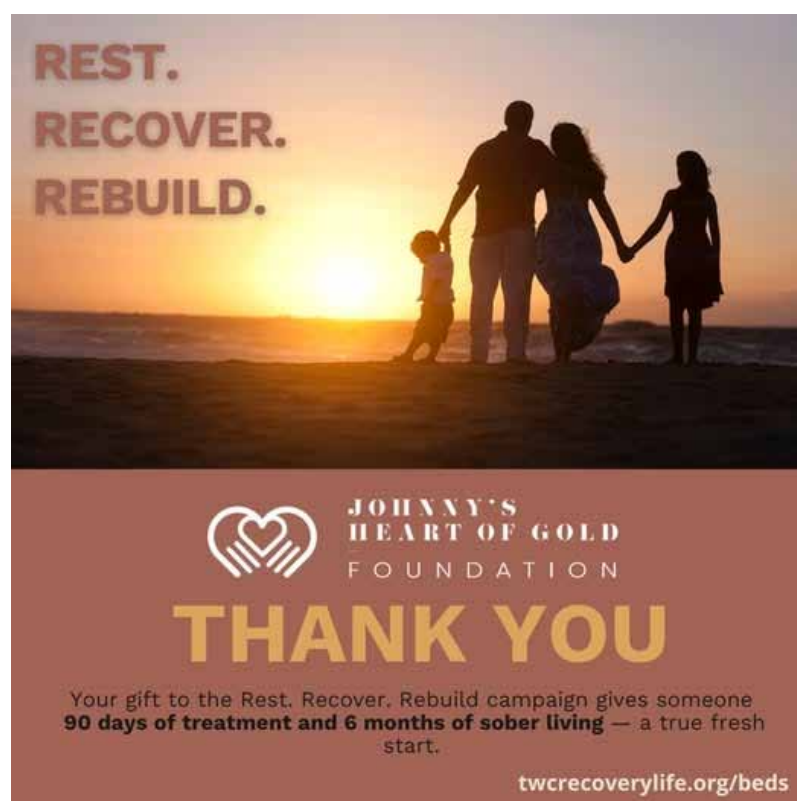
Together We Can Drug & Alcohol Recovery & Education Society

Because of generous hearts like Johnny's Heart of Gold Foundation, recovery becomes more than a possibility — it becomes a new beginning.

Your support of the Rest. Recover. Rebuild. campaign provides 90 days of treatment and 6 months of sober living, giving someone the time, space, and support needed to heal, reconnect, and rebuild their life.

This is what hope looks like. Thank you for helping families find their way back to one another and toward a healthier future.

Learn more or support a bed:
twcrecoverylife.org/beds



The following is a paid advertisement by
Adrian Dix, MLA for Vancouver/Renfrew

Dear Neighbours,



Happy New Year! I want to wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2026. As we enter the New Year, I would love to hear your feedback on how we can better support you and your family and ideas on workshops or activities you would like to see more of in the community, so do not hesitate to be in touch.

2026 BC Community Awards are now accepting nominations!

The Community Award (COM) program celebrates British Columbians who go above and beyond in their dedication and service to others. It honours individuals who devote their time and energy to making their communities more caring, dynamic, beautiful, resilient, and inclusive. Nominations close on February 15, 2026. Learn more at <https://www.bcachievement.com/>

EmergencyInfoBC

The EmergencyInfoBC website helps people find current and verified information about:

- Emergencies happening in British Columbia
- How to stay safe during an emergency
- How to recover after an emergency

This website is updated 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at <https://www.emergencyinfobc.gov.bc.ca/>

As always, my community office, at 5022 Joyce St. Vancouver, is open to provide services for constituents in person with appointments and via phone and email. Please give us a call at 604-660-0314 or email us at adrian.dix@leg.bc.ca, and we will get in touch with you as soon as we can. 聯絡本辦事處請電郵 adrian.dix@leg.bc.ca 或致電 604-660-0314. 如欲親臨敬請預約。

Thank you very much for all that you're doing and take care.

Sincerely,

Adrian Dix
MLA for Vancouver-Renfrew



What’s happening at Collingwood Branch



2985 Kingsway | 604.665.3953
Tuesday & Wednesday: 9.30am - 7pm
Thursday & Friday: 9.30am - 6pm
Saturday: 9.30am - 5pm
Sunday: 9.30am – 5pm



EARLY YEARS PROGRAMS

Babytime
Thursdays, Jan 15 – Mar 12
10:30 am (30 min)
Rhymes, songs, bounces, fingerplays, and stories for babies and their caregivers.
For ages 0-18 months | Drop-in

Baby Stay & Play
Thursdays, Jan 15 – Mar 12
11:00 am (30 min)
Drop in for independent playtime with your baby and connect with other families.
For ages 0-18 months | Drop-in

Family Storytime
Fridays, Jan 16 – Mar 13
10:30 am (30 min)
Songs, rhymes, and stories for children of all ages and abilities with their caregivers.
For ages 0-5 | Drop-in

Family Stay & Play
Fridays, Jan 16 – Mar 13
11:00 am (30 min)
Drop in for independent playtime with your children and connect with other families.
For ages 0-5 | Drop-in

SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS

Family Board Games
Saturdays, Jan 3 – Mar 28
2:30 pm (60 min)
Drop in to play with the library’s collection of board games.
For Grades K-7 | Drop-in

ADULT PROGRAMS

Coffee Connect
Thursdays
9:30 – 11:00 am
Drop in for a free cup of tea or coffee and meet your neighbours. Everyone is welcome!

ESL Conversation Practice
Every second Tuesday
Jan 6 & 20
5:30 (60 min)
Meet new friends and practice your English conversation skills with other English language learners. This is a supportive and casual meet-up. For intermediate speakers.

Renfrew Branch

2969 E 22nd Ave. Contact | 604.257.8705

**Library is closed on Thursday, January 1st for New Year’s Day holiday.

SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

LEGO Block Party
Wednesday, Jan 21, 3:30pm–4:30pm
Drop in for some LEGO building fun! Grades K-7.
Keva® Plank Party
Wednesday, Jan 28, 3:30pm–4:30pm
Drop in for some Keva® construction fun! Grades K-7.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Babytime
Mondays, January 12, 19, & 26
11:00-11:30am and 1:30-2:00pm. Drop-in.
Rhymes, songs, bounces, fingerplays and stories for parents and caregivers with their babies. Recommended for newborns to approximately 18 months.

Family Storytime
Mondays, January 12, 19, & 26
10:00-10:30am. Drop-in.
A program for parents and caregivers with young children. Songs, rhymes and stories are shared. Suitable for children of all ages and abilities to enjoy and learn together.



Family Movies
Fridays (weekly)
3:30-5:15pm. Drop-in.
Visit the library and enjoy free, kid-friendly movies. For children and their accompanying caregivers.
January 2: *Finding Nemo*
January 9: *Finding Dory*
January 16: *Lilo and Stitch*
January 23: *The Boss Baby*
January 30: *The Emperor’s New Groove*

ADULTS

Coffee Connection
Tuesdays, 9:30-11:00am. Drop-in.
Drop in for coffee and other light refreshments. Play board games, do a crossword, or chat with your neighbours.

ESL Conversation Club
Thursdays, January 15, 22, and 29. 10:00-11:00am. Drop-in.
Meet new friends and practice your English conversation skills with other English language learners. This is a supportive and casual meet-up. For intermediate speakers.

Adult Colouring Club
Fridays, January 9, 16, 23, and 30. 10:00-11:00am. Drop-in.
Relax and enjoy the many benefits of colouring with like-minded creatives. We’ll provide the colouring pages and pencil crayons!



Story Circle
Wednesday, January 7, 10:00-11:00am
This monthly program is for adults with developmental disabilities and their families, friends and caregivers. Join us in an accessible, relaxed and fun community setting for stories, music and more!
Register at www.vpl.ca/events

Vancouver Life Salon in Chinese 溫哥華生活沙龍
Tuesday, January 20, 2:00-4:30pm.
Register at www.vpl.ca/events 請線上登記:
www.vpl.ca/events
In this salon we explore various aspects of life in Vancouver: socio-cultural, political, economic, environmental, leisure and wellness. Each month we select a theme for open discussion, creating an exclusive, diverse and respectful space for conversation and sharing.
The language of the event will depend on the guest speaker of the session, and could be in Mandarin or Cantonese.
歡迎安居溫哥華! 在這裡我們探討溫哥華生活的方方面面, 社會文化、政經環境、休閒養生等等, 每月一次一個主題暢所欲言, 共創一個平等、多元、尊重的聊天分享空間。
國語或粵語活動, 將取決於當期話題嘉賓。



Collingwood Neighbourhood House HIGHLIGHTS



Joyce Location: 5288 Joyce St. ; **Tel:** 604-435-0323 / **Annex Location:** 3690 Vanness Ave. ; **Tel:** 604-428-9142 / **Visit:** www.cnh.bc.ca

CNH milestones

Celebrating 20 years with Elizabeth Ramos and 15 years with Bharti Vardhan and Tiffany Ouyang

by Collingwood Neighbourhood House

Collingwood Neighbourhood House (CNH) proudly recognizes its long-serving staff members. At the *2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM)*, CNH staff and contractors who have reached the milestones of 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years of service and dedication to the neighbourhood house were thanked by the Board of Directors.

This year, we recognize and celebrate Elizabeth Ramos for her 20 years of service, and Bharti Vardhan and Tiffany Ouyang for 15 years of service!



Elizabeth Ramos

Elizabeth, affectionately known as Beth, started working at CNH in 2005. A valued member of our accounting team and our early years department, We are grateful for Beth. her efficiency keeps us on track, and she shows dedication and commitment to her role. If there is anything we need to know about what is happening at CNH, Beth is always our go-to. We rely on her knowledge and her easy manner to get us through our day and to get through the task at hand.

Beth says it is quite rare for an organization's culture and its priorities to be aligned. When she started working at CNH, she had two

children in primary school. Her work schedule fit around her family's needs, and she was able to drop off and pick up her children from school, which was very important to her.

Beth says that approach from her workplace further strengthened the trust and confidence her colleagues continued to have in her. Our morning coffee would not be the same without Beth.



Bharti Vardhan

Bharti first began her journey at CNH in September 2009 as a volunteer with Family Place. She began working as a casual in January 2010, when she also began taking the part-time Early Childhood Education (ECE) program with the Burnaby School District. She worked in our Carleton School Age Program from 2011-2012 and became a permanent staff member at Sarah

House in July of 2016, where she has worked ever since.

"I first had the opportunity to get to know Bharti when she was a casual in the program I was working in at that time," says Bharti's supervisor. "Bharti has since become a vital member of the team at Sarah House, where she brings passion and a sense of humour to her work."

Bharti's other colleagues say they always enjoy working with her as she is passionate, hardworking, a wonderful team player, supportive and shares creative ideas. Bharti has a strong relationship with the children, parents and staff in our programs.

When asked about why she has stayed at CNH for so long and what her favourite memory has been, Bharti says, "Each and every moment is so special and memorable for me as CNH has become my second home and my team is my extended family."



Tiffany Ouyang

Tiffany first started at CNH on April 16, 2010. As part of her role in childcare, she has worked at *Duke Street* and *Sarah House*.

"She is a highly motivated, hard-working individual who consistently arrives on time and shows great dedication towards her duties as a teacher," said Jeany Tudio, Tiffany's supervisor. "Her calm and pleasant disposition brings peace and order to the room."

Over the years, Tiffany has demonstrated the education, experience, patience, and joy she carries into the room when working with children at CNH. In particular, Tiffany's colleagues commend her for her ability to work with young children "because she treats every child under her care with utmost respect and patience."

Thank you Elizabeth, Bharti, and Tiffany, and congratulations on this milestone!

To learn about career opportunities at CNH,
visit cnh.bc.ca/careers



January 2026

Happy New Year

Welcome to 2026! We hope you all had a wonderful Holiday Season and Wishing everyone a Happy Healthy New Year.

The Collingwood BIA is excited to starting some new projects. A new mural, landscape and planter box enhancements and more marketing campaigns to highlight the incredible small businesses in Joyce Collingwood.

12 Days of Gifting December 1-16th

Thank you to all participating businesses in the 4th annual 12 Days of Gifting campaign. Social media engagement has increased this year, and we appreciate both new followers and long-time supporters on Instagram and Facebook.

List of all the participating businesses and we are grateful for their donation of a prize on their particular featured day.

Yo-Bones BBQ – Gift Box: t-shirt, hat, \$50 gift certificate, chocolates

Balkan Bakery: 2 bags of their famous empadandas

Vector Training Centre: one month unlimited training

Sigma Eyecare: Pair of RayBan sunglasses

Jambo Grill: 2 x \$25 gift cards

Pampanga Cuisine: 2 x \$25 gift cards

Desi Bazaar Grocery & Meats: Dry Fruits Tray

Orijin Yoga: 2 week unlimited Orijin Yoga pass and shaker bottle

HM Tax & Accounting: Free Tax Return Service

Wings Up: Headphone

ShareTea: 2 x tumblers and straws

Yuki Café: 2 x \$50 gift cards

Lunar New Year – Year of the Horse – February 21 or 28th 11-2pm

We invite you to participate in the parade celebrating the Year of the Snake. This marks the 16th annual event with the Hon Sing Athletic Club, whose many members live in Renfrew/Collingwood.

Businesses can register to have the Lion come by and bless them with good fortune for the New Year. An advertisement will appear in the February issue, and all businesses will receive a notice later this month.

To register your business, please contact Angela at angela@shopcollingwood.ca

January 1



February 17



Lunar New Year Celebrations in Collingwood

Tentative Date Feb. 21 or 28th

To be Determined

Check back in the February issue.

11:00 a.m.- 2:00p.m.

How to Reach Us:

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Shop Collingwood! It's good for business.

The Miracle of Forgiveness Will Bring You Peace For Being a Man of Good Will

Art and Fragments by: Ricardo Cerna

Are you perfect?
A pure white dove without mistakes?
Do you believe your pride is worth more than your brother's love?
Do you think arrogance is stronger than forgiveness?
Do you believe hatred is more powerful than love?

If you think this way, if your ego is so high that you cannot even look back, believe me: through your contempt you are dying while still alive, and in doing so you also wound your brother, your sister, your parents, a family member, or a friend who once extended a hand to you.

Little brother and sister of the soul:
There is no greater pain than feeling rejected, ignored, humiliated, unappreciated, and disrespected. Not feeling loved. And, most painful of all: being forgotten by one's own family.

My dear brother and sister:
Have you forgotten that, when you were little, you shared the same clothes because there was no money to buy new ones?
That you ate from the same plate because Mom and Dad did everything possible to make sure you were well? That you went through the hardest

moments of the family together, supporting one another, caring for one another, comforting each other when one of you cried?

You went through nights of sadness, loneliness, and uncertainty...
But you also fought every day to wake up with hope, to live with joy, with strength, with faith.

And now that you have grown, that you have formed your own family...
Did you forget him or her?
Did you decide to stop speaking, to hold a grudge over some mistake?

That is why I ask you, my friend:
Will you have the courage to look your brother and your sister in the eyes again, and tell him, or tell her how much you love them?
Will you have the bravery to admit how much it hurt to be far from him or her?

Please...Set pride aside. Embrace him. Sit at the table and serve forgiveness.

You will see how the happiness, peace, and love you so deeply deserve will reign once again in this month in which we celebrate the Birth of Jesus, the Son of God.



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