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## In loving Memory

With a heavy heart, we share our dear friends' passing since our last Newsletter. We are saddened by these losses and send our sincere and heartfelt condolences to family, loved ones and friends.
While there is no way we can feel your pain, we do feel your loss as we came to know and love each new friend at the program. We fondly remember our friends who passed and are happy to have had the chance to share good times and laughter together.


Heaven has gained these special angels:

## Mary Schlosser Anna Brito Cedric Thorne Gladys Pullar

Heartfelt thanks to families who have made memorial donations to our programin memory of loved ones you have lost.

## I Thought Of You Today

I thought of you with love today, but that is nothing new. I thought about you yesterday, and days before that too. I think of you in silence, I often speak your name. All I have are memories and a picture in a frame. Your memory is a keepsake, with which I'll never part. God has you in His keeping, I have you in my heart.

## On Call List

We have some exciting news for you!
We are thinking of a new way to make K-W Seniors Day Program more accessible and affordable for everyone.

We know that sometimes unexpected things happen like doctor's appointments or you may wake up not feeling well and you have to cancel your program day at the last minute or less than a week ahead.

We understand that this can happen, and we don't want people coming to program feeling sick! Unfortunately, though, this causes our program to incur additional expenses as we have to order your meal for you a week in advance or we may have to alter your prearranged transportation service.

Additionally, having empty spaces in our program is difficult to bear when we know that we have others who would greatly benefit from getting out for the day or have care partners who would benefit from an additional day to do things for themselves. We are also accountable to our funders to keep our program running and to keep our spots filled. We are funded to support 25 people per day. When we have cancellations, we are not serving everyone that we can.

We, therefore, thought that it would be a "win win" by offering clients the chance to join an on-call list to fill in the empty spots when someone else is absent. This means you can enjoy more days out with us if you are flexible and available on short notice. For example, if someone calls in sick for their regular program day, we can call you and invite you to join us instead.

The program fees would be the same as your regular days, and you would get the same quality service and activities. The only thing that might be different is the transportation. We may not be able to arrange it for you at the last minute, so you might have to find your own way to and from the program. But we will try our best to accommodate you, if possible.

If this sounds like something you would like to try, please let us know. You can choose which day of the week or any day you want to be on the call list.

If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to our Program Coordinator, Paula, and she will be happy to help you.

We hope you will take advantage of this new opportunity and enjoy more time with us at the K-W seniors day program!


## Program Updates Outdoor Patio

We have applied for a Capital Grant with the Ontario Trillium Foundation to help fund our outdoor patio space. The application was submitted on March 6th and now we now have to wait up to 4 months to find out whether or not they will support the funding for our new patio. We designed the space using your recommendations and suggestions for ways to enjoy the outdoors while at program. We included: a dedicated area with artificial turf for activities like putting, bowling, shuffleboard; an area with tables and chairs for sitting and relaxing or playing table games; raised garden boxes for planting and growing flowers and vegetables; an awning to provide shade;a fountain to add a calming atmosphere; a Barbeque for picnic lunches, and patio heaters to extend the use of our patio into the late summer and early fall months.
Fingers crossed that we are approved for this funding! Stay tuned!


## Membership and Donation Campaign 2024

K-W Seniors Day Program will be launching our Annual Membership and Donation Campaign in June.

You may receive a letter in the mail requesting your support.
There is no obligation to pay a membership or to give a donation to participate in our program or receive our services.

We are required to have a membership of community members under the Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act to ensure that we are transparent in our operations, accountable for our decisions and meet the legal framework required for all non-profit organizations. Memberships are $\$ 20$ but are not eligible for income tax receipts. Memberships entitle you to attend our Annual General Meeting, vote for board members and vote on any amendments to by-laws and other fundamental decisions.

If you are able and would like to make a donation or become a legal member of our organization, please complete the forms when you receive them in the mail and return them to our office.

We truly appreciate your support!

If you have any questions about our Membership and Donation Campaign, please do not hesitate to reach out to our program Director, Deanne Gillies at deanne@k-wseniorsdayprogram.ca or call the office at 519-893-1609


## Staff Updates

We are so very fortunate to have such a wonderful staff team! We have been blessed with all of our staff who work hard to make our program fun, exciting, and welcoming every day! Unfortunately, for various reasons, our staff may change, and we encourage you to get to know us! We all love spending time at the program together and work as a team to make your days enjoyable!

Please welcome back Yusra as she returns to our staff team, and be sure to say a farewell to Usha who will be leaving us temporarily.


We are excited to welcome back Yusra from her maternity leave!

She will be returning to work on March 25th for a period of time, before she leaves us again to welcome her second baby who is on the way!

Although her stay with us will only be for approximately 4 months, we are excited to have her back with us. Yusra's softspoken personality and kind and gentle nature was a lovely addition to our team.


Usha will be leaving us on April 1st, when Yusra returns from her maternity leave.

We will miss Usha's warm smile and kindness very much. But are happy to welcome her back to cover Yusra's second maternity leave at the end of July.

You may see her throughout the summer on occasion to cover vacation days.

## National Volunteer Week

## National Volunteer Week: Every Moment Matters!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated, creative, skilled, compassionate volunteers who contribute their time and energy in our program with games and activities, musical entertainment, lunch preparation and clean-up, and with organizing and supporting our program on our Board of Directors. We are very blessed for your support, care and time and appreciate all that you do for our program, our clients and our staff!


## Preparing for Income Tax Season

## DOCUMENTS TO BRING TO TAX CLINICS

Your tax return can only be completed properly if you bring all the necessary documents with you to the clinic/volunteer. Family members 18 years or older must be present to sign their own tax return and CVITP authorization form.

The following list will help you prepare for having your return completed.

- A copy of your most recent income tax return summary sheet, and your most recent Notice of Assessment.
$>$ Social insurance card/paper of family members who are 18 years or older. Please provide date of birth for every family member including children.
> Government Photo ID ((PR card, Driver's licence, Photo card, Passport)
$>{ }^{*}$ New clients......Bring Permanent Resident card to appointment.


## * Information Slips (Income slips)

(Note: Many slips are available through CRA 'My Account' or Service Canada 'My Account')

1. T4 - Salary and wages
2. T4A, T5, T3 - Pension, annuity and investment income, Canada/Ontario savings bonds
3. T4A(OAS) - Old age security/ Guaranteed income supplement or spouse's allowance
4. T4A(P) - Canada Pension Plan
5. T4RSP, T4RRIF - Registered retirement savings plan/Registered Retirement Income Fund income
6. T4E-Employment insurance benefits
7. T5007-Social assistance payments/ Worker's compensation benefits
8. IF YOU RECEIVED A LUMP-SUM PAYMENT, bring the breakdown statement from the payer

## * Receipts for (Expenses and Credits)

9. Charitable/political Donations (Please make a list \& add up all of the receipts to help the preporer)
10. Child care expenses
11. Medical expenses/Dental expenses not covered by a health plan (for individuals or service animals)
(Please make a list \& add up all of the receipts to help the preparer, or obtoin a printout from your pharmacy)
12. Public transit, monthly pass For Seniors Only
13. Rent receipts or Property taxes statement (Please make a list \& add up all of the receipts to help the preparer)
14. Tuition fees and education amount (T2202A)
15. Union dues
16. RRSP... Register Retirement Saving Plan contribution receipt

## * Other

17. Details of spouse's (even if not living in Canada) and dependant's income
18. Date of arrival to Canada and status (if a new immigrant)


## Be sure to check out available tax credits for you and your loved ones!



> Benefits and credits available for persons with disabilities and their caregivers

## Disability tax credit (DTC)



Eligible individuals with a disability or their supporting family member may claim $\$ 9,428$ per year as a non-refundable tax credit. Persons under 18 years of age at the end of the year may also be eligible for an additional amount of up to $\$ 5,500$ per year. For more information about the DTC, go to canada.ca/disability-tax-credit.

## Being eligible for the DTC can open doors to other programs

Canada workers benefit disability supplement - up to $\$ 784$ per year if you are eligible for both the DTC and the Canada Workers Benefit.

Child disability benefit - up to $\$ 3,173$ per year for families with a child under the age of 18 who has a severe and prolonged impairment in physical or mental functions.

Home accessibility tax credit - non-refundable tax credit for eligible renovations to improve the accessibility of your home. A maximum of $\$ 20,000$ per year in eligible expenses can be claimed.

Home Buyers' Plan - withdraw up to $\mathbf{\$ 3 5 , 0 0 0}$ from your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) to buy or build a home that fits your needs, or those of a related person.

Home buyers' amount - claim $\$ 10,000$ for the purchase of a qualifying home in the year. You do not have to be a first-time home buyer to claim the amount if you, or the relative you acquired the home for, are eligible for the DTC.

Registered disability savings plan - helps parents and others save for the long-term financial security of a person who is eligible for the DTC.

Canada caregiver credit - non-refundable tax credit that may be available to you if you provide support to a spouse, a common-law partner, or certain other individuals with a mental or physical impairment.

You may also be eligible to claim medical expenses, the disability supports deduction, and the refundable medical expense supplement.

There are benefits, credits, and programs available to help you and those who support you. You and your spouse or common-law partner need to do your taxes by April 30 each year to get what you are eligible for, even if you had no income. If you live in Quebec, you also have to do a provincial tax return. Keep your receipts and other supporting documents in case the CRA asks for them.

## Do you need help?



## Gef your faxes done for free

If you have a modest income and a simple tax situation, you may be able to get your taxes done by a volunteer for free. To learn more, go to canada.ca/taxes-help or call the CRA. If you live in Quebec, go to revenuquebec.ca/volunteers or call Revenu Québec or the CRA.


Do your faxes online
You can do your taxes online with NETFILE-certified tax software. A variety of tax software packages and web apps are available, some of which are free. For more information, go to canada.ca/netfile.


Let someone else represent you
You can authorize someone to help manage your tax information with the CRA. For more information, go to canada.ca/taxes-representative-authorization.

## Don't miss a payment!



## Sign up for direct deposit

Direct deposit is a fast, convenient, and secure way to get your tax refund and benefit payments deposited into your account at a financial institution. Learn more about how to sign up at canada.ca/cra-direct-deposit.


## Register for My Account

My Account lets you view and manage your income tax and benefit information online. You can also view any uncashed cheques you may have from the CRA, and if necessary, ask that a payment be re-issued. Go to canada.ca/my-cra-account.

## For more information:

## Online

See the benefits you may be eligible for, learn how to apply, and estimate how much you could get. Get benefits and credits for up to 10 years back. Go to: canada.ca/benefits-credits-pd

To order CRA publications in alternate formats, go to canada.ca/cra-multiple-formats.

## By phone

To ask about benefits If you are calling from 1-800-387-1193

For other questions or to get forms
1-800-959-8281
TTY (teletypewriter) users 1-800-665-0354

Beware of scammers pretending to be the CRA. When in doubt, check your information in My Account or call the CRA. To learn what to expect if the CRA contacts you, go to canada.ca/taxes-fraud-prevention.

## ServiceOntario

## All About the Ontario Photo Card

## What is the Ontario Photo Card?

The Ontario Photo Card is a government-issued identification card that provides photo identification for Ontario residents who do not have a driver's licence.

## Key Features:

- Valid Proof: Recognized as official photo identification across Ontario.
- Long-lasting: Valid for five years before renewal is needed.
- Security: Equipped with the same security features as the Ontario driver's licence.


## Why is it Essential for Non-Drivers?

- Daily Identification: Whether it's picking up a package, verifying your age, or accessing certain services, having a photo ID is often required.
- Banking \& Financial Transactions: Many banks and financial institutions require valid photo identification for account setup. transactions, and verifications.
- Travel within Canada: While not a substitute for a passport, the Ontario Photo Card is often accepted as ID for domestic flights and train journeys.
- Social \& Community Inclusion: Participation in many community and social activities often requires a form of identification.


## Who Might Benefit from an Ontario Photo Card?

- Seniors who no longer drive.
- Individuals who choose not to drive.
- Teenagers and young adults who don't yet have a driver's licence.
- People with medical conditions preventing them from driving.
- New residents or immigrants to Ontario.


## Who Is Eligible?

- Ontario residents over the age of 16 who do not possess a driver's licence.

- Applicants must be physically present in Ontario for at least 153 days in any 12-month period.


## How to Apply

You can apply for an Ontario Photo Card in person at a ServiceOntario centre if you:

- do not have a driver's licence
- are a resident of Ontario
- are 16 years of age or older

You will need to bring the following to a
ServiceOntario centre:

- original identity documents (for example, birth certificate) to prove your legal name and date of birth
- your marriage certificate, if you are applying under your married name


## Cost and Delivery

- \$35 to get or renew your Ontario Photo Card.
- Once your application is processed, your Ontario Photo Card will be mailed to you within 4 to 6 weeks.


## Did You Know?

- If you require assistance with any part of the application process, you can have someone accompany you to help. You don't need a Letter of Authorization or Power of Attorney (POA) for third-party assistance.
- For enhanced accessibility, you can request that braille be applied to your photo card at no additional cost.


## Support

More information about the Ontario Photo Card is available online at Ontario.ca/PhotoCard. For more information, visit the official ServiceOntario website or contact a local ServiceOntario centre. Anyone who faces difficulties applying for an Ontario Photo Card or booking an appointment should contact ServiceOntario at 1-866-532-3161 (TTY: 1-800-387-5559).

## Research Study

The University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy is looking for participants to help with a research study to help older adults with taking medications. Many struggle with taking medications because of various challenges. Someone may have one of more of the following challenge which may impair ability to use pill bottles or blister packs:

- Low Vision or Blind
- Arthritis in hands
- Hand coordination and/or strength or dexterity
- Difficulty understanding labels or instructions.

- Difficulty remember when to take medications
- May need help of family are care partner to take medications properly or at the right time

We are looking for participants to help test medication organization and dispensing products!
Are you 60 years or older?
Can you speak and read English fluently?
You do not need to be taking medications to participate.
No actual medications will be used in this study.


Participation in this study involves: 2 hours of your time
Testing medication devices: pillboxes, blister packs, automated dispensers, bottles, etc.
Completing a questionnaire to evaluate the products.
One on one interview with research assistants.
Flexible location and times, up to $\$ 50$ renumeration for your participation

If you would like to participate in this study or have any questions: Contact Deanne Gillies 519-893-1609 or email

## Special Days to Remember

## Family Day

February 19th


## Good Friday March 29th



GOOD FRIDAY
Easter March31st Easter Monday April lst


## Daylight Saving Time Starts

March 10th, 3:00 AM


## Special Days to Remember

Lunar New Year

February 10th


## Ramadan

March 10th -April 9th


## Program Closures

Monday February 19th - Family Day Friday March 29th - Good Friday
 Monday April 1st - Easter Monday

## Special Days to Remember

## Valentine's Day

 February 14th

St. Patrick's Day March 17th


Purim March 23


April Fool's Day
April 1st

NOM,

## Activities Survey

## K-W Seniors Day Program

Dear Client,
We need your input to improve our program!
The staff would appreciate it if you could take a moment to complete this short, anonymous survey. Feel free to add your own suggestions.

Thank you for your cooperation!

## Activities I enjoy and/or would like to see more of <br> (select all that apply)

## Organized Activities

BingoCraftsBall GamesDancingSingingBBQGuest SpeakersTriviaOther: $\qquad$

## Active Games

$\square$ Shuffleboard
$\square$ Ladder Ball
$\square$ Bean Bag TossAxe ThrowingBowlingMini PuttRing TossLawn DartsKerplunk

Other: $\qquad$

Tabletop and Card Games
$\square$ EuchreSkipboSequenceBoard Games
Uno
Other: $\qquad$ |
Solo
$\square$ Carrom
$\square$ Scrabble
$\square$ Snakes n Ladders
$\square$ CribbageDominos/TriominosChess/CheckersYahtzee正 I

## Creative Arts

PaintingDrawingsColouringPastelsCraftsCookingHome décor$\square$ CollageMusic Programs

Other $\qquad$

## Lifestyle Pursuits

$\square$ Chair YogaBook Club
Hymn SingsReminiscingGroup Discussions
Armchair TravelEducational PresentationsScrapbookingMeditation

Other $\qquad$

## Multisensory Activities

Sensory stimulationPet TherapyGardeningSing-alongsRelaxationCultural food partiesOther $\qquad$

## Existing Activities Program

 Do you feel the existing Activities Program adequately meets your needs?YesNoComments $\qquad$
$\qquad$

What can we do to make it even more relevant to you? (optional)

Comments $\qquad$
$\qquad$
Thank you for your Feedback!
If you wish to further discuss privately with staff, please leave your name here: $\qquad$

## Health and Wellness in Winter

## Leisure activities may improve longevity for older adults.

Physical activity is vital for your health. Exercise helps you maintain a healthy weight and prevent chronic diseases ranging from heart disease to diabetes. The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults get a minimum of 2.5 to 5 hours of moderateintensity aerobic physical activity each week, or at least half that amount of vigorous-intensity activity.

Previous studies have found that a wide variety of leisure-time physical activities can provide health benefits. But these studies have largely been done in younger adults. And many did not track different levels of various types of activities.


To understand whether older adults benefit from various types of exercises, NIH researchers led by Dr. Eleanor Watts analyzed data from more than 272,000 participants in a national health survey. The participants were first surveyed in the mid-1990s. When they responded to a follow-up questionnaire between 2004 and 2005, they had an average age of 70.

The study captured information on health conditions, habits like smoking and alcohol use, socioeconomic status, and diet. It also recorded participation in seven different recreational activities. These were running or jogging, cycling (outdoors or on a stationary bike), swimming, other aerobic exercise (such as aerobics class or using exercise machines), racquet sports, golf, and walking.

The researchers examined the risk of death during the 12 years of the study. They compared reductions in that risk provided by different levels and different types of physical activity.
Among older adults who exercised regularly, walking was the most common activity. That was followed by other aerobic exercise, cycling, golf, swimming, running, and racquet sports.

Older adults who participated in any combination of these activities but did not meet the recommendations in the physical activity guidelines had a $5 \%$ lower risk of death during the study then those who were inactive. Those considered active - with at least the amount of aerobic activity recommended by the guidelines - had a $13 \%$ lower risk of death compared with inactive participants. Participation in racquet sports and running was associated with the greatest risk reductions, but all activities provided benefit.
The risk of death continued to decrease with additional activity beyond the recommended levels. But these returns diminished as activity increased to high and very high levels.
Running was associated with the greatest risk reduction for death from cancer. Racquet sports were associated with the greatest risk reduction for death from heart disease. However, people who got the recommended amount of exercise, regardless of activity, had a reduced risk of death from both cancer and heart disease. "We found that all types of recreational activities that get people moving are associated with greater longevity," Watts says. "So, the most important thing an inactive older adult can do to improve their health is find an activity that they enjoy and can stick with."

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## Recipes

## Cinnamon Raisin Bars

A diabetic friendly recipe
Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 1 cup raisins
- $1 / 3$ cup water
- 2/3 cup margarine
- $1 / 2$ teaspoon cinnamon
- $11 / 3$ cups flour

- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 egg, beaten slightly
- 1 tablespoon Splenda
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract


## Directions

1. Preheat oven to $350^{\circ} \mathrm{F}$.
2. Spray an 8 " $\times 8$ " baking pan with cooking spray.
3. Mix raisins, water, margarine, and cinnamon in a large, microwave-safe bowl. Cook for 3 minutes in the microwave, stirring every minute.
4. Stir in flour, baking soda, applesauce, egg, Splenda, and vanilla.
5. Pour into the pan and cook for 20-25 minutes.

Makes 16 squares

To make a recipe card, print on card stock paper. Cut out along dotted lines.
Glue the front and back of the card together.

## Easy Mexican Breakfast Chilaquiles

## Ingredients:

- 6 corn tortillas
- $1 / 4$ cup canola oil for frying
- 10 ounces salsa verde or green enchilada sauce
- 2 eggs, fried or scrambled

- Optional toppings: avocado, crema, cilantro


## Directions

1. Cut the corn tortillas into quarters.
2. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Lightly fry each side of the tortilla quarters until they are golden brown and crispy.
3. Place the fried chips on a plate covered with a paper towel to drain the oil. Remove the oil from the skillet.
4. In the skillet, heat the green sauce over medium heat. Add chips and toss until all the chips are coated.
5. Add eggs and any additional toppings and serve immediately.

Makes 2 servings

## Highland Oat Balls

no-bake recipe

## Ingredients:

- $1 / 2$ cup plus 2 tablespoons old-fashioned oats, divided
- 1/4 cup carrots, cut into 1 -inch pieces
- 1/4 cup pitted dates
- 1/2 cup raisins, divided

- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract


## Directions

1. Process $1 / 2$ cup oats and carrots in a food processor for 10 seconds.
2. Add dates, $1 / 4$ cup raisins, brown sugar, cinnamon, and vanilla, and process for 20 seconds.
3. Transfer to a medium bowl. Mix in 2 tablespoons oats and 1/4 cup raisins with a wooden spoon.
4. Roll dough into 1 1/2-inch balls. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

Makes 2 dozen

## Activity Page

Word Search
HONEYBEE WORD SEARCH
U X D Y J R V L H O N E Y C

J $\mathbf{F}$ X K $\quad$ K W Z UM A N U K A
P H R E W Z E B G G K W $\quad \mathbf{F} \quad \mathbf{U}$
N O U M U M X Y E E S I F Y
W Q X B S M H V U E J N E E
Q V K I Z U I S S E T G H L
S NE C TA R TV W J X W L
T W H O I E I I S U A S B O
R K N L W N H N M WM R U W
I WK O U ES G S N J FM A
X EL N H O N E Y CO M B V
X $\quad$ F $\quad$ E $\quad$ Y $\quad$ J $\quad E \quad E \quad R \quad C \quad K \quad C \quad Z \quad L \quad H$


Honey
Wing
Buzz
Swarm
Colony

Bee
Yellow
Fly
Flowers
Manuka

Hive
Queen
Nectar
Insect
Pollen

Honeycomb
Bumble
Beeswax
Stinger
Worker

Word Search

## TEA TIME

I L B LA

$\begin{array}{llllllllllllll}R & R & P & Y & F & P & C & A & C & R & H & N & \mathbf{O} & \mathbf{G}\end{array}$

S E P P O H $\quad \mathbf{H}$ E JA $\mathbf{G}$ E CO A
 H LE S $\quad$ R $\quad$ S O
 P O M L A U H I I C G A D V T D I EL C N N LT I L M X M Y N A L E I G E IN D IA I M T F C R C V $\mathbf{I}$ C $\mathbf{C}$ G M T L C HA I F


| Tea | Black | Green | Oolong |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Herbal | Iced | Earl Grey | Cup And Saucer |
| Chamomile | Chai | Lemon | Darjeeling |
| Peppermint | Rosehip | China | India |
| Loose Leaf | Milk | Fine China | Ginger |

## Crossword

## ST.PATRICKS DAY CROSSWORD

## Across

1. Kiss this stone to be cured from shyness - 7
2. The name of a famous Irish beer - 8
3. Dug from the bogs of Ireland to use as fuel - 4
4. What does the three leaf clover symbolise - 11
5. The four leaf clover symbolises this - 4
6. Language group that includes Irish and Scottish - 6
7. Month that St Patricks Day falls on - 5
8. Another name for a 3 leaf clover - 8

## Down

2. What is the name of the Irish County featured in a famous song - 9
3. Popular short and humorous verse often nonsensical-8
4. You find this at the end of a rainbow 32-9
5. Color representing St Patricks Day - 5
6. Capital of Northern Ireland - 7
7. St Patrick converted the Irish to this - 12
8. He makes shoes and guards gold - 10
9. He banished these reptiles from Ireland - 6

## Crossword ST.PATRICKS DAY CROSSWORD



## Colouring







## Short Story Anniversary Gift

Hattie sat at a booth beside the window, where she did every Thursday at 7 p.m. She'd been coming to the same diner for over fifty years, her newspaper tucked under her right arm, a navy-blue umbrella dangling from her wrist in case of rain, and her small black purse with the gold clutch.
> "Good evening Ms. Hattie, how we doing tonight?" her regular waitress, Stella, asks pleasantly. Stella's been waitressing here for nineteen years, a dainty Asian woman in her fifties, no more than eighty-five pounds and about four foot nine, her hair mostly silver these days.

"Just fine, my dear. I'll have my usual," Hattie smiles wide, her eyes a piercing blue and happy. Stella's witnessed how time has etched its mark on Hattie's face over the last two decades, but it's never robbed the old woman of her bubbly spirit.
"And don’t forget the extra gravy for my biscuit," Hattie reminds Stella.
"Of course, Ms. Hattie," Stella replies as she scratches her order on the ticket. She walks behind the counter, delivering the slip of paper to Ed in her high-pitched voice, "Chicken fried steak with a side of broccoli, heavy on the gravy," slapping the ticket onto the ledge of the kitchen window.


Ed, the cook, a burly man with a receding hairline, knows the routine well. He's anticipated the old woman's order and started preparing it moments before the bell chimed and he heard Stella's familiar greeting to her; although Hattie will occasionally order the roast beef on rye toast with mashed potatoes. Every meal has its' choice of potato, but Hattie always gets mashed.

While she waits for her meal, Hattie spreads her newspaper out in front of her and retrieves the magnifying glass from her purse. She squints, even with the magnifier, to read the fine print, flipping through each page, reading what catches her interest while sipping the hot cup of tea Stella brought to her table before Hattie even got seated. There are a few patrons still lingering in the joint after finishing their meals. A couple of older gentlemen are sitting on bar stools at the counter discussing crops and weather and the next big election. Hattie pays little attention to anything but her paper.

All the employees who have ever worked here know Hattie's story. She and her husband, Benjamin, met at this diner. They came every Thursday evening after their first encounter and on the anniversary of their wedding each year. When the children came, they set aside Thursday as their official date night. It gave Hattie a chance to get away from household chores and children underfoot for a few hours. And, Ben appreciated the uninterrupted time with his wife equally so, up until he was called to serve in the war. He was said to have been taken prisoner and never returned home.

Stella brings a tall glass of ice water and Hattie's meal to the table. Hattie folds the newspaper and sets it down on the red vinyl booth cushion and pushes the magnifier off to the side to make room for her plate.
"Let me know, Ms. Hattie, if I can get you a sliver of nice warm apple pie when you're through," she grins playfully, knowing exactly what Hattie's reply will be; she'll snicker and politely refuse and say something on the lines of keeping her girly figure just in case.

Hattie sprinkles a bit of pepper on her chicken fried steak, broccoli, and potatoes and gravy, then cuts her steak into bite-sized pieces and begins to eat. She takes Stella by surprise and says, "You know, honey, I'm going to take you up on that offer. How 'bout you bring me a nice hunk of that pie with a hefty scoop of vanilla ice cream on top," Hattie announces, wringing her wrinkly hands.
"Well, alright then, Ms. Hattie, good for you, I know you’ll just love it. The apples have the perfect flavor and texture this year," Stella declares, practically skipping to the front counter. She wipes down countertops and fills coffee cups for the gentlemen still sitting on bar stools, waiting for Hattie to finish some of her meal before cutting into the apple pie.

When she notices Hattie dab at her mouth with the dinner napkin and move the plate away from her, Stella cuts a slice of pie, then goes to the back for a bucket of vanilla ice cream. She puts the scoop in a cup of warm water while removing the lid from the bucket, then digs out a firm, round scoop of ice cream, topping the flaky lattice crust.
"Here you are, Ms. Hattie, the best apple pie in town," Stella sets the dish in front of her.
"My, this does look tasty," Hattie declares, her eyes bright and eager. Stella carries on with other duties while Hattie indulges her taste buds, savoring every morsel. She gazes out the window, peers down the street and captures the image of a well-dressed man in a trench coat. It starts to drizzle, raindrops tapping lightly at the window. The man pulls his trench coat over his head and rushes closer to the diner. Hattie's eyes are fixed on him as he approaches. Her heart races. She trembles as her fingers touch the glass, eager to see his face. She presses her face against the pane.
"Can it be? My Ben, is it you?" she mumbles ever so softly. "Oh, you've come home to me, my Benny, you've come home for our anniversary!" She smiles wide, her eyes as shiny as diamonds.

It was the best slice of apple pie Hattie ever had and the best anniversary gift she could've hoped for. It was a Thursday and their 50th wedding anniversary. Her husband Benjamin met her at their diner to take her home.

By Rhonda Rieck-Rush

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Fun and Social Time at K-W Seniors Day Program



[^0]:    National Institute on Aging, September 20, 2020, https://www.nia.nih.gov/news/leisure-activities-may-improve-longevity-older-adults

