



Photo by Paige White

City of lights

Nordic Lights is an outdoor display of Nordic and Canadian light art, co-produced with Fjord Studio. The exhibition is at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto from Jan. 27 to Feb. 21. For more photos, see page 7.

Vigil remembers those who have died

Those who have died from homelessness acknowledged at event

By Ethan Cairns

Homelessness takes hundreds of lives each year across the country. The Ontario Coalition Against Pov-

erty (OCAP) hosted a community vigil Friday evening outside of Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre or SHARC at 129 Peter St. The vigil was held to hold space for and honour those who have died from homelessness, as well as a call on the city of Toronto to act immediately to add safe injection sites, safe supply, and proper PPE to everyone. Also needed is more support housing, beds, or even 24-hour access to a warming centre.

Many anonymous stories were shared on the evening of the vigil to bring awareness about the lives and the suffering that was experienced personally by people or by friends and family.

"I can only imagine what goes through someone's mind when freezing to death," said a speaker who asked to remain anonymous. OCAP officials also asked that all names be kept anonymous.

According to its website, OCAP is a direct action-based, anti-poverty or-

ganization based in Toronto but works on issues that affect people across the province and are in solidarity with similar movements across the country and around the world.

"The people on the street become your family, friends, your brothers and sisters," said a supporter.

The housing crisis in Ontario continues to expand and hundreds of people are left on the streets because indoor space is so limited. This results in people

experiencing conditions like hypothermia, trench foot, frostbite, and sometimes death.

"Just last week there were six more cases of people in our community perishing from the cold, including an unnamed person who died at St. Mike's hospital from hypothermia," said the OCAP spokesperson. "This is unacceptable. We demand they do better immediately."

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New housing initiatives can't come soon enough

Especially for those dealing with precarious housing situations

Story and Photos by Ron Lavoie

Housing affordability is on almost everyone's mind these days, including the government. This week, an expert panel convened by the Ontario government released its recommendations on housing. They call for 1.5 million new homes in Ontario within the next 10 years.

Chaired by Jake Lawrence, CEO of the Bank of Nova Scotia, the panel also calls for wide-reaching changes to local zoning regulations and glacial approval systems. Among other recommendations is making multi-tenant housing (rooming houses) legal everywhere. While affordable housing was not an explicit focus of the panel, it is believed that an increase in housing stock will increase the level of affordable housing.

These changes can't come soon enough for two Belleville residents in precarious housing situations.

Mary Duquette has a full-time job. She's also been unhoused for seven months. Duquette sleeps at the Grace Inn Shelter. Shelter policy is that guests must leave by 8 a.m. On her days off, Duquette has been spending time at Bridge Street United Church, which runs a warming centre. The warming centre has been busy this winter, with about 900 visits so far. At the beginning of last year, Duquette was living with her mother and son. Her mother had disabilities and needed lots of care. The Ontario Disabilities Support Program does provide some support, but with her minimum-wage job, and son and mother to care for, Duquette had trouble making ends meet. Rent and extra expenses for her mother were too much for their income. In May, they lost their place for non-payment of rent. On July 27, Duquette's mother died



Mary Duquette stands outside Bridge Street United Church, where she spends her days off from work. Duquette and her son have been forced to stay in the Grace Inn Shelter for almost seven months.

from septic shock. Duquette and her son are still living at the Grace Inn Shelter.

"Here I am after going on almost seven months, and no affordable housing."

It's not for want of trying. Duquette has applied online and gone to viewings with her son, to no avail. "Because I'm honest - I can't lie - we don't get the place. Landlords do not take into consideration that sometimes things happen because of circumstances, not because we're addicts or anything like that. It's just circumstances."

Words fail as Duquette tries to express her frustration. "And to how long we keep it anyway... you know, it's just, there's no affordable housing - nothing."

Joseph Gauthier has two children. He's on his own now as a result of marital breakdown. He has not been able to secure housing since the breakup three years ago. Gauthier applied for low-income housing and then started looking for a place. "Break-up happened, ghosts in that

apartment, so I couldn't stay, so I left." He stayed with friends and began his search for secure, affordable housing.

While waiting on the list, Gauthier searched for an affordable place through the Hastings Housing Resource Centre and online. Leaving Belleville is not an option for Gauthier, as his children live in town. Despite being on the emergency housing list, he has been unable to find a place. Gauthier has been staying at the Enrichment Centre for Mental Health on Sidney Street. The other options were not attractive to Gauthier. "I needed a home, and I didn't want to live at Grace Inn, I didn't want to live in a tent. I really didn't want to have to start asking friends, you know, 'Yo man, can I borrow your couch? Can I use your floor?'"

Gauthier also touched on the feelings of shame that many unhoused individuals feel about their situations.

"I really didn't want to have to start explaining to my two kids, you know, daddy's living situation. It's hard enough trying to explain daddy's liv-



Joseph Gauthier has been without adequate housing since three years ago, when he went through a marital breakup. Despite ongoing searching, he has been unable to find a place he can afford.

ing situation now."

Ontario's supports for people in situations like Gauthier's result in some tough math. According to him, he receives \$1,169 per month. Rooms that are available for rent cost upwards of \$800 per month. That barely leaves enough left each month for food. One-bedroom apartments in Bel-

leville are often more than the amount Gauthier receives from the Ontario Disabilities Support Program, leaving no money for food or other expenses.

While the expert panel on housing did not specifically address affordable housing, Duquette, Gauthier and many others hope that our governments will look more closely at the affordability factor.



Protesting continues

(Above) Protesters of the Freedom Convoy are pictured in front of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto last weekend. The city shut down core sections of downtown anticipating the convoy protest, that started in Ottawa, to move to downtown Toronto.

(Left) Throngs of protesters leave Queen's Park with the park's iconic King Edward VII Equestrian Statue in the background. The statue was given to the City of Toronto by India in 1969.

Photos by Sabah Rahman



Vigil...

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The event is a call and demonstration for people who may be overlooked by society and falling through the cracks.

"I know the feeling when there were no recourses left to help me," said a demonstrator.

I know the feeling of leaving a warming building due to capacity limits and not knowing how to stay warm that night."

As demonstrators gathered in front of the warming centre at the corner of Peter Street, signs were handed out. On each piece of paper was a name written, and each of those represented a person who had died due to homelessness in 2021. The stack of papers was large, more than the number of supporters. As the event went on, names continued to be read, most as Jane or John Doe. A demonstrator said, "At least give these people the dignity of having a name or sex. On many occasions, we will never know who these people are."

It was a powerful gathering to remember those who lost their lives and an important reminder to the City of Toronto.

Photo by Ethan Cairns

A supporter tells her story and reads names of those lost last year due to homelessness. A community vigil was held to remember all those who lost their lives over the last year. Many gathered at the corner of Peter Street in Toronto.

Taking a stand against injustice

By Ethan Cairns

At a frigid Friday morning in Toronto just before traffic was starting for the day, supporters of the Wet'suwet'en Land Defenders gathered to plan and share songs before making their way to a major intersection leading to the heart of Toronto.

Approximately 15 supporters occupied the intersection of Lawrence Street and Allen Street, to stand against the Coastal GasLink Pipeline in British Columbia and what the group calls mistreatment from the RCMP on Wet'suwet'en land.

"We are here because we are moving in the wrong direction nationally and globally," said the co-ordinator of the day's demonstrations and member of Extinction Rebellion GTA, who asked to be known as Alex. "There is no clearer convergence of two major in Canada than the CGL pipeline going through unceded territory. Not only is it completely counterproductive to all of our climate goals and any hope of reconciliation but also all hope for justice in this country is completely undermined by inexcusable projects like this."

TC Energy plans for the Coastal GasLink natural gas pipeline to start at Dawson Creek in British Columbia and pass through the Rockies. The problem is that the pipeline is routed to pass through numerous First Nations land, some of which is unceded.

Protesters carried signs and stood at the offramp entering the intersection, occasionally letting cars through to remain peaceful. Rush hour traffic was at a standstill, horns were blaring, curses were shouted to supporters, and as the traffic picked up, the drivers became more impatient and irritated.

"Seriously, I'm going to be late for work now!" shouted a commuter.

"Other people can hear that call, and come out here in the cold to get yelled at by strangers," said Alex.

"It's amazing when anyone comes at all," said Alex. "It's great we are not the only ones co-ordinating this... that feel the way we do."

The demonstration was part of the



Photo by Ethan Cairns

A supporter calls out reasons for blocking the intersection of Allen Road and Lawrence Avenue as a stand in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en and against the Coastal GasLink pipeline.

global movement Extinction Rebellion. This event was organized by XRGTA, a group of supporters located in Toronto or the surrounding area. Their website states they act with "non-violent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency."

Over the last few months, the Toronto chapter has held other public disruptions within the city.

"For asking people to meet at eight in the morning in the middle of winter just after a snowstorm, I think today went well," said Alex. "We have had bigger turnouts and we have had smaller turnouts."

Police presence was heavy, but there was no intervention from the Toronto Police with around 10 police cars parked half a block away, the protest remained peaceful.

Extinction GTA has more events that are currently in the works, but have yet to be announced to the public. "We are plan-

ning to organize new actions on a regular basis," said Alex.

"If you are interested in coming out or participating, you can easily find us with a Google search, or our social media is XR.GTA on Instagram and Facebook."

"Hopefully, we changed some minds today."

Health centre provides services to students, free of charge

By Kayla Isomura

A school-based health centre in Seattle, Wash. is celebrating 10 years of service at Seattle World School.

Over the last decade, the teen health centre has offered primary health and mental health services, dental care and immunizations at no cost to its patients.

"It's been a non-stop blessing for our district to have this service," said Samara Hoag, health services manager of Seattle Public Schools. "When these kids first arrive, their families don't know anything and so the very first moment that they walk to the door, there's a team to greet them and talk to them."

In the Seattle school district, Hoag said seven health agencies operate a total of 29 school-based health centres, with the majority in high schools and middle schools.

Typically, they are placed in schools with higher poverty rates, as well as acknowledging social determinants of health, including housing status, immigration status, economic status and language, she said.

"There are so many mental health issues and physical health issues that impact learning, especially for kids like this, many [who] are refugees," said Hoag.

At Seattle World School, which offers students a combination of English language and academic skills, having a health centre helps to acknowledge the many barriers to health, she explained, including academics.

"Having counsellors and social workers and everybody right there can smooth it out," she said.

Due to the range of situational backgrounds of each student, Hoag said many students have never been to a high school or have not been in an academic setting for years.

"We also can allow them to go there until they're 21 so it's a pretty unique school," she said.

While the school is entirely populated with "new arrivals," Hoag added that a large population of students are unaccompanied minors, often unhouseed, living in motels or parks, for example.

In understanding the needs of each student, she said the school depends on interpreters, although that can be a strain on staff depending on the language spoken.

"A huge number of [students] have very traumatic paths to getting here, especially in the last few years," said Hoag. "We've got a lot of refugees from Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and some of them are Indigenous people so Spanish is not their first language."

At Seattle World School's teen health centre, services are provided by International Community Health Services (ICHS), a Seattle-based non-profit organization providing "culturally and linguistically appropriate health and wellness services."

Janni Sun, school services administrator at ICHS, said patient navigators contracted by Neighborhood House are key in addressing language barriers.

"They help bridge these gaps because if you talk to somebody who's just arrived from some other country... telling them you need to go see the cardiologist doesn't mean anything, you need to help them understand," she said. "They might give up after some time so you have to call them and make an appointment."

Additionally, Sun said working with school staff and the district has been instru-



Photo by Kayla Isomura

Sharissa Tjok, community access manager at International Community Health Services (ICHS), stands outside Highland Middle School on Feb. 5. Highland Health Center, located on the school's campus, is the second school-based health centre operated by ICHS providing basic primary care services to students.

mental to the health centre's work.

"There's been a lot of advocacy done throughout the years with regards to making sure that the district is paying attention to our students, prioritizing our students, which doesn't always happen," she said. "We've worked really closely with our previous school nurse who retired last year. She helped us secure funding to get a second behavioural health provider a few years back because she knew that a Spanish-speaking behavioural health provider [was needed]."

Sun said adjustment assistance is required for Seattle World School students in recognizing the traumas their students have experienced in their home countries.

As a staff member of ICHS, she said providing care at Seattle World School makes sense to the organization because of the overlap in the population they serve.

Over the last 10 years, the health centre has reduced many barriers to healthcare for students, said Sun. However, the overarching goal is to continue providing preventative care and health education to their patients.

"This is a countrywide, worldwide phenomenon where people are realizing if we want kids to be healthy, we need to start introducing them to healthcare in their schools, especially here in Washington State," she said.

Sun said healthcare staff at Seattle World School emphasize meeting students where they're at.

"A lot of our students financially support their families back in their home countries," she said. "The constant pressure to leave school and work full-time instead is pretty high."

During the pandemic, Sun said this was especially true as many students prioritized work due to a loss of family members, which has resulted in a loss of income.

"All of these kids have stuff that they're balancing so we try as much as possible to not be an additional thing, that [we] have to be as understanding as possible," she said. "That's what I really tried to bring to the culture of school-based health is understanding when kids aren't going to be able to make it."

For the teen health centre, this meant bringing services to students during the pandemic, said Hoag.

"They have one of the highest COVID vaccination rates of any of our schools and it's because of their teamwork," she said. "They bend over backwards."

According to Hoag, over 90 per cent of students at Seattle World School have been vaccinated against COVID with staff willing to meet students in their front yards or their workplaces to provide vaccinations.

"There's a personal relationship that the clinic staff have with all the kids and getting to know them and know their story," said Hoag. "I don't think we see that mostly at a regular clinic."

Sun said the health centre's vaccination efforts are due to a combination of education

and patience from staff.

"That's just tireless effort of fighting misinformation, being patient, being available," explained Sun. "Like whenever you're ready, we're ready. You know, we don't want to force you to get this vaccine, but we promise you, it will make so much of a difference."

"I'm really proud of the fact that we've been working really closely with the school nurse, we've been offering COVID vaccines here every Tuesday for our students, and we have one of the highest vaccination rates in the district for our students."

In addition to the teen health centre at Seattle World School, ICHS operates a second school-based health centre out of Highland Middle School in Bellevue.

"There was an increased funding for some more school-based health centres through the Best Starts for Kids levy, and we opened our second school-based health centre at Highland Middle School in Bellevue, the first school-based health centre in the Bellevue School District and the only still to this day," she said.

As a bilingual English and Spanish school, Sun said she feels the area is underserved due to public perception of the city.

"People assume that [they] don't need anything but you know, people are experiencing economic systemic barriers everywhere," she said. "Highland was one of those schools over in Bellevue that was demonstrated the most need for additional supports."

School-based health centres are one example of how ICHS is aiming to create access to healthcare, said Sharissa Tjok, ICHS community access manager.

"We're trying to fill in the gap where the community people have barriers," she said. During the pandemic, Tjok said ICHS has focused on providing access to vaccinations to underserved communities, for example.

She cited technical issues, language barriers and trust as some of the biggest challenges in access to vaccines.

"We're really addressing the people who are in need and their struggles, and then we are here to also be very flexible to understanding and giving them time, and also we're here to address their barriers," said Tjok, who noted that non-patients and walk-ins are welcome at ICHS medical locations.

According to ICHS, they were one of the first health providers in the Seattle region to receive COVID-19 vaccines on Dec. 23, 2020.

Since last February, ICHS' community health services team along with the school-based health centre staff have administered over 5,300 doses of COVID vaccines at more than 130 pop-up vaccine clinics.

Tjok said this includes working with places of worship, schools, senior homes and community organizations.

As of November 2021, ICHS said they have administered over 26,000 COVID-19 vaccines.



A Valentine surprise

Ruby Curtis-Cowen has made her selection for a blind date with a non-fiction book at the Belleville Public Library. This year, for Valentine's Day, the library is promoting non-fiction books by suggesting that readers go on a blind date with a book. After checking out the book at the circulation desk, Curtis-Cowen checked out what book was to be her blind date. See her make her selection by clicking here:

<https://vimeo.com/loyalistphotoj/blinddate>

Photo and video by Ron Lavoie



Michaella Fox hugs Kona, a two-year-old mixed Australian Shepherd and Blue Heeler, near a mobile clinic held by Seattle Veterinary Outreach on Feb. 2. Kona, who is also a service animal, belongs to Fox's street sister.

Vet clinic serves pets and their owners

Story and Photos by Kayla Isomura

A mobile veterinarian clinic in Seattle, Wash. is working with King County to provide COVID vaccinations and booster shots.

Seattle Veterinary Outreach (SVO), an organization that offers services to low-income and unhoused pet owners, began offering vaccinations last month, which are available to the general public.

"Our main goal is to make sure that the people are taken care of as well as the pets," said Brianna Sherman, resource manager at SVO.

While the clinic primarily offers services for pets, free or on a sliding scale, they also partner with organizations to provide services for pet owners, including access to pet insurance and wireless phones.

With the vaccinations, Sherman said those receiving their first or second COVID vaccine will receive a \$50 gift card as an incentive from one of their partners.

Additionally, a group of Master of Public Health students are conducting surveys at each clinic to assess vaccine hesitancy and accessibility needs.

"We want to make sure that we're getting to the root of why these issues are happening, as well as treating the issues themselves," explained Sherman.

Ultimately, she said it's important that the entire family unit is "healthy and happy."

"They're not just pets the way that we quantify pets," she said. "It's a very different relationship so that's important to also understand, especially when it comes to, for instance, housing and pet restrictions or breed restrictions."

"That's a huge barrier for folks because a lot of times people will forego their housing if they can't bring their pet."

Kim Andell, a regular client at the

clinic, said these are challenges she's faced in the past due to her dog Chase who is a mixed German Shepherd.

As a service animal, she said Chase is exempt from this housing rule that prohibits his breed. However, that hasn't stopped her from being asked about specific paperwork, she said, something she feels is unnecessary.

Living with PTSD, Andell said is a service dog tailored to her needs, while her family's other service dog, Kona, provides seizure support for her partner.

"When he goes into a seizure, she comes and starts barking at me like she does, and says, 'Hey, you need to call 9-1-1,'" said Andell. "But when [my partner] comes to, he'll say, 'Don't call 9-1-1, we don't need that hassle, I'll come to' but if it's that bad, then she'll come to me say, 'Hey, you need to get the ambulance, daddy needs to go in.'"

"Chase is like that, too. Chase is also his seizure dog [but] he's not made for that, he's made for me."

With multiple pets, including a pair of cats, Andell said she's made regular visits to SVO clinics for nearly three years.

Despite living over an hour away by transit to a clinic that took place in Burien last week, she said it's one of the few ways for her to afford services and resources for her animals.

"I don't care how many buses I take, I'll do it," she said.

"At first I used to pay like \$100 or \$200 for my dog but since I found out that there's a free vet, I take advantage because I make low income," she said. "Now I only get like \$841 a month and that's already gone."

Although Andell doesn't require veterinary services each visit, she said she visits for additional resources, such as food or bedding, using a stroller to transport everything home. Sometimes, she brings family members to visit the



Leandra Burt, veterinary assistant with Seattle Veterinary Outreach, holds Kahlua, a patient of the mobile clinic, outside Transform Burien as Anna Ludwig (far left) and Vanessa Skantze look on.

clinic as well.

During her most recent visit, her mom and auntie took their dogs to the clinic, she said. Her street sister, Michaella Fox was with her, too.

Fox, who is in a temporary living situation, said she's planning to adopt two dogs in the coming weeks. Visiting the clinic early means stocking up on supplies for when her dogs come, she said.

As a mobile clinic, SVO provides services twice a week in alternating locations to meet the social service or referral needs of their clients, said Sherman.

In addition to Burien, other clinic locations include Seattle's Ballard, Bitter Lake and SODO neighborhoods.

With the range of locations the clinic visits, she said it's important to show compassion.

"There are so many people who are your neighbours that might be struggling," said Sherman. "It could be the person right next to you who is about to lose their housing and you have no idea."

"Being kind and understanding of people's situations and what they're going through, and coming from a place of compassion, I think is the cornerstone of our work here."



Photo by Ron Lavoie

Mabel Mercer makes bagels in her kitchen. Her home-based business, Mabel's Bagels, sells Montreal-style bagels directly and through a variety of outlets in the Quinte region.

Montreal bagels come to Belleville

Pandemic distraction becomes family business

By Ron Lavoie

Authentic Montreal bagels can be tough to find in Belleville. Now, they are increasingly available, thanks to Mabel Mercer. For her, a pandemic distraction has evolved into a family business.

A French teacher originally from Montreal, Mercer has also lived in Kinston and, for a year, Egypt. Learning that there was a shortage of French teachers here, Mercer moved to Belleville three years ago. How did a French teacher from Montreal get into the bagel business?

It was the COVID-19 pandemic that got the family started. Nostalgia and boredom also played a role. The family

couldn't get to Montreal in December of 2020 to see family. Missing Montreal and being locked down, they had had enough. Feeling stuck and not able to do anything, on Christmas Day, they made a decision. According to Mercer, "We can only do so many puzzles and games. We decided that we'll, you know, do bagels for something else to do.

"We're just going to make our own bagels and see what happened. And so, we made our first batch of bagels. It wasn't perfect, but we were like, 'Oh my gosh, this is incredible. We can replicate, pretty closely, our bagels that we love so much in Montreal.'"

Batch after batch, they refined the recipe, "until we found a recipe and a method that we thought was almost identical to the bagels that we loved in Montreal."

They also knew that there must be other people in Belleville craving authentic bagels. So, Mercer hung a sign outside of her East Hill home and went into the ba-

gel business. A Facebook page was quickly followed by a website, and the business started to take off. It was fun for the whole family – and a lot of work. Mercer's kids got involved. "They're fantastic apprentices. They also love Montreal bagels, and they thought that it was incredible that it tastes so closely like Montreal bagel. So, we all started baking, and it just became a family business."

While traditional Montreal-style bagels are baked in a wood-burning oven, Mercer eschewed this approach, for a couple of reasons. She was concerned with the environmental impact of burning lots of wood, as well as her concern for her neighbours being annoyed by the amount wood smoke that would be produced making the bagels. Instead, they use a convection oven.

Eventually, word spread like soft cream cheese over a toasted poppy seed bagel, and Mercer looked for other outlets, aside from her own home. "Soon after we were

selling to a cafe Hello Bonjour in Wellington, and we're very, very popular with them because the owner, Amanda, you know, the cafe being Hello Bonjour is bilingual and very Quebec-oriented and local. And so, she loved the bagels and that we were baking fresh in the area." The bagels are also sold at Kate's Kitchen in downtown Belleville and in Trenton.

Mercer remembers fondly a call she got in the early days from Bowmanville. "There was a little old lady, Ruth, from Bowmanville, who called out of the blue and she wanted like, 200 bagels. She and her son came down during COVID from Bowmanville to pick up like 200 bagels."

During school closures, the children did the seeds for the bagels and of course, helped out with social media promotion. "We learned a lot about Instagram; the kids learned a lot about business. They were having fun. We were having fun. It was bringing us closer together as a family and we were making money."

What does the future hold for Mabel and her bagels? Originally, she was thinking about a bagel business as a retirement gig, but she is committed right now to spreading knowledge of French in Belleville through her teaching.

"I would love to say I would love to give up teaching. But I'm not there yet. I still really enjoy what I do. I love teaching the culture and food and everything to my students. The French culture, the Quebec culture is, I think, really something really important that I wanted to transfer into the next generation. So I don't think my job there is quite done yet. But at the same time, I'm loving making the bagels, I have to find a balance here. So I'm not really sure what's going to happen.

Mabel's bagels come in a variety of flavours, including sesame, poppy seed, "everything" blueberry, chocolate chip, cinnamon-raisin, and cranberry. What's the favorite? Mercer is clear: "Hands down, sesame."

Puzzles a passion for Peterborough man

By Luke Best

Everyone loves a good jigsaw puzzle, at least the idea of beginning one. During the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an influx of people staying at home, so many dusted off the old games trunk and started a puzzle, some even purchasing new ones.

Ravensburger, a game-making company based out of the United States, saw a 370 per cent increase in sales within North America during the start of the pandemic in 2020, averaging around 20 puzzles sold every minute. While many people rediscovered their passion for puzzling, a retired teacher in Peterborough never lost that passion.

"I got started with puzzling as I understand it when I was two," says Paul Mitchell, remembering his earliest memories of doing puzzles. "Back in the day, when you didn't need seat belts in cars, we had a big back window area. So as we were going down the road, I did puzzles on the back window ledge. They kept me entertained."

Mitchell estimates he has around 100 puzzles currently in his Peterborough home and completes one or two every week. To him, there is a satisfaction of the tactile nature of a puzzle that you can't get in any other way. Even an online jigsaw is not nearly as fulfilling, relaxing or as fun.

"I can do anything under a 500, probably in a night if I want to. A thousand-piece puzzle, depending on the puzzle, usually takes me three days," he says.

When completing a puzzle, Mitchell feels a sense of satisfaction and will usually let it stay on the dedicated



Photo by Luke Best

Paul Mitchell works on his current puzzle, an entirely blue, 654 piece puzzle with unusual cutouts. Mitchell aims to finish one to two puzzles a week and has an estimated 100 additional puzzles in his home.

puzzle table for the night. He then will take a picture of it for his Instagram account @puzzleguy to log that this one has been completed before finally boxing it up and sending it to a new home.

Mitchell had quite a puzzle collection growing up, as he refused to let

them go. Even after moving out of his childhood home, the pieces kept stacking up in his parents' closet, and they eventually worked he had to take them. He has been doing on passing them along now so others can enjoy them as he does.

"I pass them on to people that also enjoy doing puzzles. Sometimes it's my older brother. Sometimes it's friends. I have passed on some to Value Village if they've come full circle through everybody," he says.

Mitchell thinks he probably spends

about an hour or two every night working on them, whether it is multitasking while watching television or just to clear his head.

"I'll sneak down midday and think, 'I just need quiet time,' and I'll sit and work on this for a bit, or I'll even reward myself after exercising. I'll say, 'okay, I've got that done. Now I can do a puzzle for a little bit,'" Mitchell says.

But the passion for puzzling doesn't just stay at home. When Mitchell was a teacher, he would always make sure to have puzzles available in the classroom for the kids. He even had one set up in the back of the class for when students finished their work. He admits every now and then that he would add a few pieces.

"I remember being in a seniors' residence once, and they had a puzzle on the table as they may often do. And I'm thinking, 'I wish I could just sit down and work away,' and I have actually done that once or twice if I'm visiting someone," he says with a laugh.

Arguably the worst possible thing that can happen when you're doing a puzzle is coming to the end and realizing there is a piece missing. It's a heart-wrenching feeling. Mitchell typically won't give away a puzzle missing pieces, but he sometimes finds an empathetic workaround to the problem.

"When you do a puzzle, and there's a piece missing, it's just such a letdown and but I almost feel so sorry for the puzzle. Sometimes I will try to make a handmade piece to fit into the missing spot. I don't know if I'm crazy, but I go through life thinking life is like a jigsaw, you grow and mature and change. It's just like the evolving jigsaw puzzle building and coming together."



Photo by Saddman Zaman

Selar Khan, 23, an international student at Loyalist College, does an online class. Khan came to Canada in September 2021, and is currently doing his diploma in Biotechnology.

Online learning a challenging experience

By Saddman Zaman

"It is quite difficult to manage, or to attend the lectures online," said Selar Khan.

In early January, Loyalist College decided to move most program learning online until Jan. 31. That was later modified and classes will now resume in person on March 7.

Khan, an international student who is studying biotechnology at Loyalist, shares his experiences about online curriculum.

"It's difficult to interact with the professor," he said.

At first, Khan was having difficulty understanding Blackboard and Microsoft Teams. He also said, managing class lectures through a hybrid system was a bit tricky.

Khan prefers in-person classes over online lectures, but Ontario's current COVID-19 regulations are making it difficult for him.

According to Khan, two-way communication is quite difficult compared with in-person classes. He says it is more helpful when he attends in-person laboratory classes.

"We had no idea about Blackboard Collaborate," said Khan.

When assignments were being posted in Blackboard, he said it was not possible for him to email faculty every now and then when he ran into difficulty. He said such a situation could have easily been solved during an in-person lecture.

Khan came to Canada when the program started in September 2021. He was 23 years old when he left India to pursue his diploma. In India, he completed his bachelor's degree in botany. After coming to Canada, Khan had some difficulty blending in with the program online.

Khan also talked about certain advantages of online lectures. The first thing

he discussed was travelling. He said online classes reduced his travelling time to campus. In a COVID-19 situation, it is actually a good thing, which reduces the chances of getting infected, he said.

Another thing Khan talked about was content sharing. With online integrated system, it is easy to share information, starting from discussions to file sharing.

Furthermore, Khan said, being in online classes helped him to stay updated with lectures if he missed any classes. Most of the classes are recorded which he can view later.

Khan also said if he misses any lab

classes, he will not be able to understand any more lectures while recorded classes will help him not to lose track.

Khan also discussed some drawbacks about assignment submissions. "We have difficulties like while submitting assignments, while completing assignments while scanning them, the photos."

Even though the classes are online, Khan said his social life was not much of an issue. Since the program is hybrid, he was able to get along with his classmates and faculty easily.

Khan would prefer the program be on campus, however, as said communication is a lot better that way.



Photo by Luke Best

Oscar Fuchs, Mirin Patil, and Marcus Fuchs pose for a photo before hanging their banner advertising the 11th annual TKE in-a-Box charity fundraiser. Members of the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity will spend 48 hours outside in a makeshift shelter raising funds and awareness to combat homelessness.

Sleeping outdoors helps to raise awareness

By Luke Best

Most of us prefer to stay inside during the cold weather, keeping warm. But even an extreme cold warning from Environment Canada cannot keep the boys from one of Trent University's fraternities inside.

The 11th annual TKE in a Box took place this past weekend in Peterborough. Members of the fraternity, Tau Kappa Epsilon, spent 48 hours out in the elements to raise awareness about homelessness in the community. This year, they decided to partner with One City Peterborough, raising donations for the organization to use in various

outreach, employment and community development projects.

"Last year, we were able to raise over \$3,000, so this year, we're hoping to raise over \$5,000, and we're already about halfway there so far," said Marcus Fuchs.

Fuchs is the vice president of TKE. This is the third consecutive year that he has participated in the event. This year's event ran from 4 p.m. on Friday until 4 p.m. Sunday and the temperature hit a low of -23 C, but with a wind chill, that felt more like -30 C. Fuchs and the other two members who were starting off the event said they weren't so worried, because previous years'

events were even colder.

"This year, we're lucky enough to have one of our friend's mothers come by and cook us some food. So we're thankful for that," Fuchs added.

The participating students camped out in the parking lot of the Venture North building, at the corner of George Street and King Street. They stayed in a makeshift shelter constructed from pallets, hay and a tarp. Although maybe not the most comfortable, at least they would be slightly out of the snow.

This year, the event has also chosen to take on direct sponsorships with companies who wanted to help the

cause and also let it be known that they want to fight housing insecurity. Their names were listed on a large banner hung across George Street. The banner also featured a large QR code that allowed people to donate directly online via Canadahelps.org, but organizers also accepted cash donations on-site.

"We hope to see all of you come out, whether it's for five minutes or five hours," stated a post on the TKE Instagram account before the event. "Whether you donate five cents or 500 dollars, every little droplet becomes an ocean."

Fuchs said he was looking forward

to chatting with people over the weekend who came by. They were visited by Tim Farquharson, the deputy chief of police for Peterborough, as well as Michelle Ferreri, the MP for Peterborough and Kawartha, who took selfies with the boys and shared it to Facebook.

At the time of publishing, TKE in a Box has exceeded their goal, raising \$5,695 of the \$5,000 target. The fundraiser officially ends on Saturday, Feb. 12. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible donation, you can visit: <https://www.canadahelps.org/en/pages/tke-in-a-box-2022/>



Nordic Lights is an outdoor display of Nordic and Canadian light art, co-produced with Fjord Studio. The exhibition is at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto from Jan. 27 to Feb. 21.

Nordic Lights up Toronto skyline

Story and Photos by Paige White

The Nordic Lights display is an outdoor display of Nordic and Canadian light art, co-produced with Fjord Studio. The exhibition is at Harbourfront Centre in Toronto from Jan. 27 to Feb. 21 and features six different pieces to interact with every night from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

The co-producers, Fjord Studio, are a Norwegian duo based in Oslo: artist and curator Anastasia Isachsen and producer Frank Isachsen. They have experience bringing installation art around the world with things like the light art festival Fjord in Oslo. Fjord Studio worked in conjunction with other artists and collectives to put together the six art installations that make up this exhibition.

When you first walk off Queens Way West to Harbourfront Centre, you're greeted by a display that looks something like a neon brain glowing in the dark. Great Minds by Aleksandra Stratimirovic is the front piece of the show with neon lights that intermittently change colours and invite you into the exhibition.

CONTROL NO CONTROL by Iregular, a new media art studio based in Montreal, is a highly Instagramable piece worthy of attention. It features a larger-than-life black cube covered in LED panels. The cube gets interesting when people walk up to it because the glowing lights move in reaction to how people interact with the piece. It has been shown over 35 times around the world and made its Canadian debut in 2011.

Aside from neon lights, both Gorzi by Outi Pieski and Equinox by Anastasia Isachsen are projection-based works that illuminate the East-facing exterior wall of The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery. These works had viewers watching as animated pictures flashed across the brick wall. These projections are viewed with the city's CN Tower holding its ground, and city lights serving as the ultimate backdrop to an exhibition of lights.



Nordic Lights is an outdoor display of Nordic and Canadian light art, co-produced with Fjord Studio. The exhibition features various installations (above, right, bottom left and bottom right) at the Harbourfront Centre in Toronto.

