



BETTER LIVING

VOLUNTEERS' NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020

IN THIS EDITION:

- **BETTER LIVING COVID-19 UPDATE**
- **HEROES WORK HERE**
- **ONLINE AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS INCLUDING THOSE ON A CAREER STREAM**
- **INTERACTIVE BINGO FOR OUR FACEBOOK FRIENDS**
- **NEW FACES AT BETTER LIVING**
- **SELF-CARE IN SOCIALLY DISTANT TIMES**

Living in Unusual Times:

It has almost become cliché to say that “these are unprecedented times”, and yet indeed we find ourselves living in a reality that few of us have ever experienced...or could have imagined. While uncertainty surrounds us, here we are a small but vital community of caring people, holding onto each other and moving through each day with compassion and hope.

Thank you for your strength and your dedication to others. Please stay well with yourself and respect public health advisories.



All of us at Better Living miss you and we can't wait until we can invite you back to our centre. Unfortunately, this will be a gradual and cautious process. While some volunteers have continued to deliver Meals on Wheels (with our deepest gratitude), we can expect that in-home Client visits and volunteer roles with Client groups and at Thompson House will not resume until we are confident that it is safe for you and for Clients. New protocols and monitoring will have to be introduced. Please stay tuned for more updates and information regarding orientation to our new practices.



For the time being, our offices will have to remain closed to the public. Volunteers, Members and visitors will be cheerfully welcomed once it is safe to re-open. Staff, who are not designated “essential” service workers, have been working from home and on a rotating schedule at Overland. Our PSWs, nurses, maintenance and support staff at Thompson House, Margaret Bahen Hospice, Meals on Wheels and More, Meals on Wheels and transportation services have continued their heroic duty throughout the pandemic. Within the next few weeks, we hope to see more staff working onsite more frequently.

Select Client services have resumed, with precautions and safety standards in place. We are pleased to be providing the following services:

- Lawn and Garden services have been resumed through both our Home Maintenance team and through brokerage services.
- ADP has begun delivering 3-hour in-home respite visits to existing ADP Clients.
- PalCare education launched first virtual education sessions.
- Grief and Bereavement counselling is scheduled to resume in the next week.

- Home Support Services (housekeeping)
- Meals on Wheels (which has continued through the support of a core team of low-risk volunteers and staff)

Although the weather is getting nicer, we want to continue to encourage you to stay safe at home. During these times it is important to remember to;

- Stay home as much as possible, especially when unwell
- Only go out for essential shopping (i.e. groceries or medications).
- Practice physical distancing if you must go out
- Wash your hands often with soap and water
- Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands
- Cover your cough and/or sneeze with a tissue
- Clean and disinfect everyday items (i.e. tablets, phones, etc.)



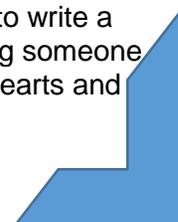
EVERYONE at Thompson House is COVID-19 free! We applaud the tremendous care and diligence of the nursing, care and support staff. You too can show your support by placing a sign on the lawn outside of Thompson House or go to <https://mybetterliving.ca/heroes-work-here/?fbclid=IwAR1FfTvTaxH9n3ak9sdIyoAVDBF1CapjW3EzSNgQifhMS-hVat14AgKmTxY> to send a message of thanks.

Better Living has more than 350 front line workers tirelessly working through the COVID-19 pandemic by caring for Residents in Thompson House and Margaret Bahen Hospice and helping Clients in the Community stay safe at home.

Let's cheer on all those who are caring for, comforting, feeding and keeping our Clients and Residents safe and thank them for their courage and unwavering commitment during this pandemic.

We have placed a few signs on our lawn and you are welcome and encouraged to place your sign at any one of our locations. Show the community we are all in this together!

It is a fun and easy way to show your support. You can also take this opportunity to write a message to a Client or Resident. Have fun with it and feel good about encouraging someone else to do the same! It's easy to do, just use grateful words and/or symbols (like hearts and rainbows) and keep it simple.



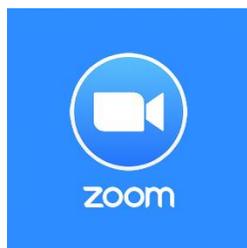
ZOOMING IN



A gathering of friendly faces: At our first Hospice and Companionship Volunteers Zoom meeting of the Covid-19 era in early June, some of our volunteers chatted about changes to their own lives and those of their clients.

Many have been able to keep in touch with clients via phone, and others reported their clients weren't able to keep the conversation going. Some are keeping in touch once a week, and others do short calls a few times a week.

Some volunteers found the qualities of the visit had changed in this virtual visiting. Using technology itself is challenging and may distract from the dialogue and sometimes we become self-conscious, and can't focus our attention on other participants. Carolyn and James have offered to put together a tip sheet on conversations by phone and video chat, and will offer an online education piece during a future meeting. Watch your inbox for that information or stay tuned to our private Facebook group for volunteers. Our next virtual volunteer gatherings are scheduled for



Membership:	Monday July 13th	2:00-3:30 pm
Adult Day Program:	Monday July 20th	3:00-4:30 pm
Meals on Wheels:	Tuesday July 21st	1:00-2:30 pm
Hospice/Friendly Visiting:	Tuesday July 26th	1:00 -2:30 pm

Please save some time for your friends and watch for the Zoom link to be emailed out.



This Volunteers Newsletter is delivered 4 times a year, but the private Facebook group is an ongoing conversation with new content and tips every few days. If you haven't joined the discussion yet, [here's the link to join](https://www.lifewire.com/facebook-groups-4103720). Facebook Groups can be like private chat rooms, so if you have ideas for us, this is the place! More on private groups and how they can work: <https://www.lifewire.com/facebook-groups-4103720>



And, “under the B” ... one more great reason to join our Facebook Group!

Virtual Bingo will begin August 4th and will be played out on the Volunteer Facebook page. **PLEASE join our private Better Living Volunteers Facebook group to play!** You must register to receive your Bingo card, which will be sent by private email to you once you have signed up. We will draw 2 numbers every day for the month of August. The numbers will be posted on Better Living Volunteers Facebook Group. And the first 3 volunteers to report a full line on their card (which will be verified) will each win a Tim Horton's gift card. Rule sheets will be distributed with Bingo cards.

To enter our volunteer virtual Bingo game, please contact Jenn at jtran@betterlivinghealth.org



Some highlights from our Facebook group this month include:

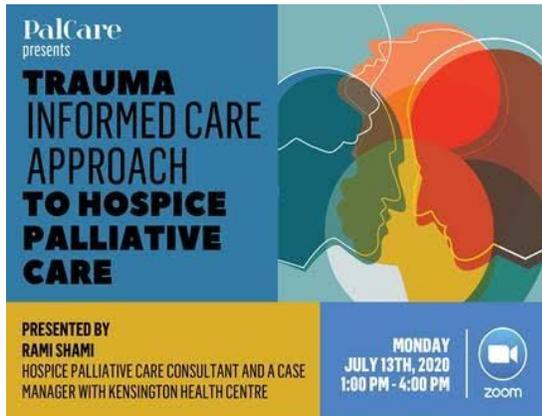


[Visiting Hospice and Complementary Therapy volunteer Shirley Wong, is also one of Better Living's Mindfulness & Meditation Facilitators. Here is a short, 5-MINUTE meditation Shirley has created for us. Namaste](https://www.facebook.com/BetterLiving/videos/10158203439589471/)
<https://www.facebook.com/BetterLiving/videos/10158203439589471/>



Training Opportunities

These two courses are among the many offerings posted to the Volunteers page. Join us and don't miss another opportunity:



Learning Objectives:

By attending this presentation you will be able to:

1. Define trauma within the context of a life-limiting illness or bereavement journey
2. Understand how the journey of living with a life-limiting illness can present through personal trauma
3. Become aware of the prevalence of trauma in Canadian society and how it can present in a Hospice Palliative Care setting
4. Recognize triggers associated with traumatic experiences
5. Articulate the basic neurobiology of trauma
6. Utilize a Trauma Informed Approach with clients, residents and patients

RSVP: egureva@myhospice.ca **FREE Register NOW!**



Core 1 is a 30-hour program that provides a basic introduction to hospice and palliative care for professionals, volunteers, and caregivers. Participants will learn about, discuss, and participate in activities including personal perspectives, communication skills, spirituality, grief, caregiver care, pain and symptom management, family dynamics, culture, and ethics.

CORE 1 SUMMER (via ZOOM)	CORE 1 FULL (via ZOOM)
TUESDAYS, AFTERNOON 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm	
July 21, 28, August 4, 11, 18, 25 September 1, 8, 15, 22	October 6, 13, 20, 27 November 3, 10, 17, 24 December 1, 8



For a complete listing of session dates and course content please visit www.palcarenetwork.org/education

PalCare

PalCare Core 1 training meets training standards set by Hospice Palliative Care Ontario (HPCO)

If you're interested in these **online training opportunities from Palcare (see images above)**, the registration is closing soon. You can email Carolyn or leave a comment on the Facebook post. This training session will be held online, and all you need to participate is the private Zoom link.

- **Three-hour afternoon session: Trauma Informed Approach to Hospice Palliative Care**
- **Intensive course: Summer-Fall 2020 Core 1 Introduction to Core Concepts in Hospice Palliative Care**

Coming Soon (dates to be announced)

- **Grief and Bereavement training for Hospice & Friendly Visiting Volunteers**
- **Grief and Bereavement Group Facilitation.**

There are dozens and dozens of such training opportunities each year for Volunteers and we are expanding the online training possibilities -- to make it easier and safer for everyone.

SPECIAL SELF-CARE ZOOM CLASS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Healing dance exclusively for Better Living volunteers!

Munni Subhani, Better Living Volunteer and Program Leader, has generously offered FREE online Healing Dance sessions for all Better Living Volunteers.

This new form of therapy involves body awareness and energy flow. One can think of it as a Meditative Movement or a Mindful Dance where every movement is intentional and every result varies on the effort of the individual. Therapeutic Indian Exercise is great for all levels and can help individuals reduce stress through 'tuning inwards' and finding their moments of bliss within their dance flow. There are many form of exercise and dance. However, this joins the two and makes it unintimidating and approachable. A technique that allows individuals from all walks of life to develop and enjoy their own practice and reap benefits beyond just the physical. Beyond that, there's a sense of creativity. Although there is a formulaic way to this dance, there is room for freestyle and adding personal style and flair.



Munni's Therapeutic Dance is appropriate for all levels of fitness and mobility, and can be done while sitting.

Please contact Carolyn at csmith@betterlivinghealth.org to register.

Classes begin Tuesday July 28th at 10am via ZOOM. You will be sent a link upon registration.

Join the Facebook group to follow our latest news on training sessions:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1526381684204704/>



WE NEED MORE PEOPLE ... **JUST LIKE YOU!**

Call for Voices!



Speaking of online training, Better Living staff are developing online training materials and handbooks. We are looking for some standout readers and narrators to give us a boost with the voice-overs and narration for these presentations.

Volunteer Narrators and advisors are needed as we develop departmental training materials (PPT presentations with voice overs, and handbooks). We're not yet sure of the timing but we can work around your schedule, with an aim of having these presentations online in September. So if you have the voice and heart for this kind of work, please get in touch with Carolyn.

New Faces at Better Living

Our new Hospice Case Manager is a familiar face to many of us. Some of you may remember **Kazue Kushima** from her time with Better Living as a placement student working with Sheila Berry, and as a hospice volunteer following her placement. We are very fortunate to work with her again.



Kazue's note to Volunteers offers a bit of her story:

I was born in the south part of Japan, where temperature seldom goes below zero during the winter. I worked as a medical social worker at a hospital for over seven years. In 2001, I came to Canada by using a special visa, which allowed many Japanese to study and work one year in several countries. I chose to go to Canada because I wanted to see the vast land and diverse cultures. I enjoyed studying English and working as a Japanese teacher. I also worked as a volunteer at a long-term care home to see the differences in the social service system between Japan and Canada. Then, I met my husband; Toronto became a new home for me.

After giving birth to three children, I felt something missing. I wanted to work as a social worker, so I went to University to polish my skills and increase my knowledge. As a social work student, I was placed at Better Living in 2016. I gained crucial clinical experience from wonderful clients, volunteers, and staff. I also worked as a hospice volunteer with Better Living after the placement. And now, I'm back to Better Living as a case manager! I'm grateful to be here and excited to work with you.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all.

Devora Waxman has joined us as Director, Social Work and Care. She is a registered Social Worker who comes to us after 11 years with Circle of Care in the Mt. Sinai Health Care System, and has completed the mini-MBA program at Schulich School of Business. She writes:

Hello Better Living Volunteers! I am looking forward to being able to meet with you in person down the road. In the interim, I am so pleased to introduce myself to you virtually. I joined Better Living on March 3rd in the role of the Director of Social Work and Care Coordination. My role includes working with our Social Work and Intake Departments. I have been working in Community Support



Services for Seniors for the past 12 years and am very familiar with this sector. Over the years, I have worked in many areas including Social Work and Intake as well as Day Programs, Caregiver Support, Hospice, Meals on Wheels, Assisted Living and many others. In many of these roles, I have had the opportunity to work with volunteers and know firsthand the importance and value that you bring to our clients and their families. In addition to my role at Better Living, I am also a Faculty Advisor for Master of Social Work students. I am looking forward to meeting you soon. In the interim, I hope you are staying safe and healthy and am wishing you and your families all the best. Thank you for all of your ongoing work and support!



Jennifer Adams has joined us as Director of Development for the Better Living Charitable Foundation, which focuses solely on providing fundraising support to the programs and services offered by the Margaret Bahen Hospice for York Region, Doane House Hospice, Meals on Meals and More, Palcare, Better Living Health and Community Services and Better Living at Thompson House.

Jennifer brings over 15 years of fundraising experience gained through her work with regional, provincial and national non-profit organizations. Her most recent role was with Earth Rangers, a kids' conservation organization, where she was a member of the senior management team and was responsible for raising \$4.3M annually. Prior to that, Jennifer was Director of Partnerships at the Ontario Science Centre and held fundraising management roles at Ronald McDonald House Charities

Canada and Kerry's Place Autism Services.

Jennifer has always had a passion for helping others and giving back to the community. She shares,

"What I have enjoyed most with each of my past roles has been the opportunities to connect with and help others. Whether it's a donor who wants to give back in a way that's special to them, or a foundation or corporate donor that is looking to support a deserving cause, I value the relationships I'm able to form that help the donor achieve their wishes that in turn improves the quality of life for people in the community."

Jennifer is eager to connect with staff, volunteers and families across the organization. She says, "I look forward to learning from everyone and to exploring new ways to engage our donors that will help build our organization for the future."



Many volunteers have already connected with Jenn, and will be working more closely with her as she provides support to the Volunteer Services, HR and Admin departments.

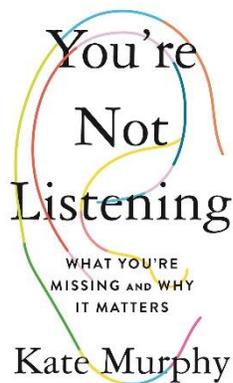
My name is **Jenn Tran**, and I am a Program Assistant at Better Living! I studied Adult Development (Gerontology) while at University and that is where I found my interest in working in the vulnerable sector. I have worked with non-profit organizations for many years, and I truly enjoy building relationships with the community. You can find me assisting in central services including volunteer services, human resources, and administration. I hope that I can be another friendly face to you all! If you bump into me one of these day, don't hesitate to say hello!

Self Care and Socially Distant Time

Watch for our next Zoom call for Volunteers, where we'll all be swapping tips for self-care during these isolating times. Meanwhile, here are some of our favourite web links and books:

<https://mybetterliving.ca/self-care-resources-during-covid-19/>

<https://mybetterliving.ca/covid-19-resource-page/>



[You're Not Listening: What You're Missing and Why It Matters](#)

Journalist and New York Times contributor Kate Murphy wanted to know how our listening skills had changed during the era of social media, text messaging and information overload. She talked to scientists, market researchers and professional interviewers about conversational behaviour and shares information on how to cultivate attention. With her journalist's skill for story telling, Murphy gets into the psychology, neuroscience, and sociology of listening.



[Kristin Lothman, Mayo Clinic: Mindfulness & Meditation - COVID-19 - Meditation Example](https://youtu.be/TOTv7FuvNJ8)

<https://youtu.be/TOTv7FuvNJ8>

[Ted Talk: How to cope with anxiety | Olivia Remes](https://youtu.be/WWlOlAQpMcQ)



<https://youtu.be/WWlOlAQpMcQ>

June is Seniors' month in Ontario!

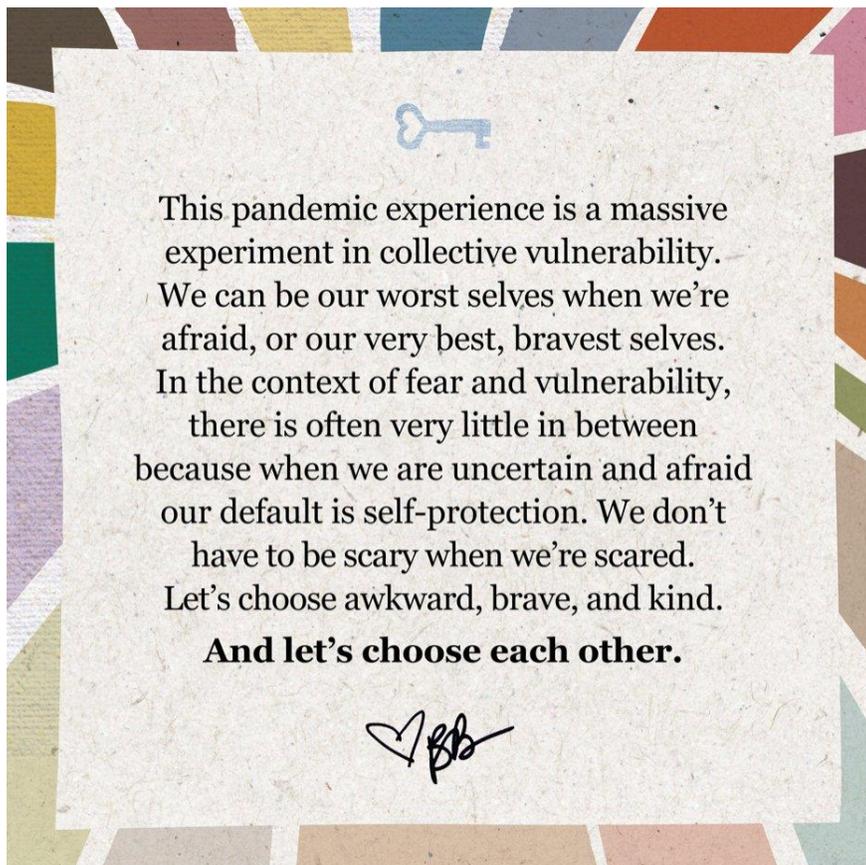
Our Active Living Team has been working hard to curate Virtual Active Living Programs to ensure our current members can stay in touch with their friends and engage in some health and wellness activity during this time. These programs are currently open to current members and Clients of Better Living and offer great opportunities for personal growth and well-being.

If you think you or a friend would benefit, please contact our Active Living staff at frontdesk@betterlivinghealth.org

Please visit the following link for our June Calendar and more information!

<https://mybetterliving.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/2020-VIRTUAL-PROGRAMMING-GUIDE-JUNE-updated.pdf>

Wisdom from Brené Brown



Feedback about this newsletter?

volunteerservices@betterlivinghealth.org

Thanks to our contributors:

Hester Riches, Friendly Visiting & Outreach Volunteer
Kathy Moffat, Senior Manager Human Resources & Administration
Moses Velasquez, Web and Graphic Designer
Devora Waxman, Director Social Work and Care Coordination
Jennifer Adams, Director of Development
Kazue Kushima, Case Manager
Jenn Tran, Program Assistant
Carolyn Smith, Supervisor, Volunteer Services