



OCTOBER 2018

Snider Schmooze

A MESSAGE FROM DR. DAVID KESELMAN, CEO



Welcome to the October edition of the Snider Schmooze.

Last month, we celebrated the Jewish New Year – Rosh Hashanah. Depending on the origin, celebrating Rosh Hashanah took on a range of activities and festivities, and of course, a range of food and dishes such as the customary apple dipped in honey to symbolize the year to come to be filled with sweetness, health and success.

We are now celebrating **Sukkot** which began on **Wednesday, September 23 (Erev) and ends on Tuesday, October 2, 2018.**

The festival of Sukkot is agricultural in origin which is evident from the biblical name *“The Feast of Ingathering”* or *“Festival of Booths.”* The Sukkah is a booth where most eating, drinking (and for some folks) sleeping is done during Sukkot. The beautiful Sukkah at the Louis Brier is located in the Shalom Garden, it is ready and we welcome visitors during the first week of October.

Sukkot is a seven day holiday, with the first day celebrated as a full festival with special prayer services and holiday meals. The remaining days are known as **Chol Hamoed** *“festival weekdays”*. The seventh day of Sukkot is called **Hoshana Rabbah** *“Great Hoshana”*. Throughout the week of Sukkot, meals are eaten in the **Sukkah** and some Orthodox Jewish families often sleep there. Every day, a blessing is recited over the Lulav and the Etrog. The ‘lulav’ is made from a ripe, green closed frond from a date palm tree, boughs with leaves from the myrtle tree and branches with leaves from the willow tree and is held together by a woven ‘basket’. The Sukkah walls can be constructed of any material and can be free-standing or include the sides of a building or porch. The roof must be of organic material, known as skhakh, such as leafy tree overgrowth or palm fronds. It is customary to decorate the interior of the Sukkah with hanging decorations of the Seven Species. The Seven Species are the typical foods that the Jewish people ate while in the desert: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, dates and olives.

The second through seventh days of Sukkot are called Chol Hamoed *“festival weekdays”*. These days are considered by Jewish Law to be more than regular weekdays but less than festival days. All regular programs and activities take place at the Louis Brier and Weinberg during Chol Hamoed. The seventh day of Sukkot is known as Hoshana Rabbah, meaning the *“Great Supplication”*, *“Great Hoshanah”* or the *“last of the days of judgement”* which began on Rosh Hashanah. The holiday immediately following Sukkot is known as Shemini Atzeret the *“Eighth Day of Assembly”* and is viewed as a separate holiday. For Jews living outside of Israel, a second additional holiday, Simchat Torah *“Joy of the Torah or Dancing with the Torah”* is celebrated.



During Sukkot, I invite you to take a few minutes out of your day and come to the Shalom Garden, sit down and take in the sites and scents of the Sukkah. Gud Yontef!

Dr. David Keselman, CEO

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE READY

As we begin to say goodbye to summer and welcome the cooler breeze of fall, we should also be aware that the influenza season is just around the corner. To help us be ready for the flu season, here is some information regarding influenza:

KEY POINTS:

- Influenza kills
- More people die from influenza than any other vaccine-preventable illness
- Get immunized
- It is the best way to protect yourself, your residents and your loved ones from getting the flu
- Wash your hands
- Follow proper hand washing technique using soap and water or using the alcohol-based hand rub

HOW IS THE VIRUS TRANSMITTED?

- Droplet
- Person sneezes or coughs unto you
- Contact
- Physical contact with hands
- Contact with infected surfaces
- Infected individuals are highly contagious and can transmit influenza for 24 hours before they show symptoms

WHO ARE AT RISK?

- Seniors are at greatest risk
- Children
- Pregnant women
- Individuals with specific chronic medical conditions
- Health-care workers

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Fever
- Sore throat
- Extreme fatigue
- Runny nose
- Cough
- Muscle ache
- Headache

WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS?

- Viral Pneumonia
- Pneumococcal Pneumonia
- Dehydration
- Worsening of chronic medical conditions

WHAT IS AN INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) OUTBREAK?

- When there are two or more cases of ILI in residents and/or staff within a 7-day period, with at least one case identified as a resident
- The Medical Health Officer (MHO) from the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority declares the Outbreak
- Restrictions are implemented in the facility until the outbreak is declared over by the MHO
- Outbreak notification signs will be posted on door entrance of the facility and the unit

HOW CAN INFLUENZA BE PREVENTED?

- Get an influenza vaccine
- Wash hands with soap and water whenever you can
- Use an alcohol based hand sanitizer
- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue to cough or sneeze. Cough into the upper sleeve if a tissue is not available
- Stay home when sick. People are most infectious in the first few days of illness
- Keep common surfaces and items clean
- Eat healthy foods and stay physically active to keep your immune system strong

Being proactive is still the best way for us to prevent the development and spread of infection. Keep yourself healthy so you can enjoy the enchanting beauty of the red, gold and orange leaves of fall.

Lunadel Daclan, Infection Control Practitioner

Reference: <http://www.vch.ca/Documents/Annual-Residential-Care-Update-Influenza-2015-2016.pdf>

FLU VACCINE CLINIC

As we are approaching the flu season, we are happy to announce that we will be holding the Flu Vaccine Clinic in the coming months.

It will be open to all staff, companions, and volunteers requiring the flu vaccines. The residents will have their vaccines given to them by the Nursing Team assigned to their unit.

BELOW IS THE SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER

FLU VACCINE CLINIC

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|---|
| October 8 <i>Monday</i> | CCC/E Office | 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |
| October 12 <i>Friday</i> | CCC/E Office | 10:00 – 11:00 |
| October 15 <i>Monday</i> | CCC/E Office | 07:00 – 08:00 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |
| October 19 <i>Friday</i> | CCC/E Office | 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |
| October 22 <i>Monday</i> | CCC/E Office | 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |
| October 26 <i>Friday</i> | CCC/E Office | 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |
| October 29 <i>Monday</i> | CCC/E Office | 07:00 – 08:00 10:00 – 11:00 14:00 – 15:00 |



THE LOUIS BRIER GIFT SHOP



Goldie and Soree

The Gift Shop at the Louis Brier is a special place where the residents of the home come not only to get treats and necessities, but to enjoy some friendly social interaction.

The shop allows residents to buy items by themselves and allows a feeling of independence. It is staffed by volunteers who give their time willingly to help the community. At the shop, one can buy a variety of items including scarves, handbags, small decorative items and of course snacks and toiletries. The money raised by the Gift Shop is given to the home to purchase items that contribute to the well being of the residents. Since January 1st of this year, the Gift Shop has given \$31,000.00 to the home.

The Louis Brier Gift Shop is a source of positive activity for the residents, for the home, and for the volunteers who give their time. Come visit us! We are located directly opposite of the reception desk.

Shane Tova!
Goldie Kassen

FOOD SERVICES



This month in food services, we're showcasing our coffee program. The coffee served fresh daily from the kitchen is from a local roaster that has made us a special blend using Arabica beans. Better Bean is a family run business has been one of our partners for over 20 years. We're proud to serve our residents a high quality beverage that supports a local company while accommodating our needs.

We also have some exciting and new baked goods and treats for tea time. We've added Achva Cakes (honey, lemon, and marble), Gefen Wafers as well as our in-house made cookies and treats. You talked and we listened! We had requests for Jello and Lokshen Mit Kaese (Cottage Cheese Noodles) and we now have those items on the menu.

As always, our team makes the meals right here in our kitchens from scratch. We only use the very best Kosher and Pareve ingredients.

Thanks,
The Food Service Team

WEINBERG RESIDENCE



Did you know the Weinberg Residence offers a GUEST SUITE?

Open to rent for family members of the Weinberg Residence and the Louis Brier Home and Hospital
Based on availability. **\$150/night or \$900/week.**

For further information or to make a reservation contact:
Regina Lvovski, Sales & Marketing Coordinator at 604-267-4756
or **Vanessa Trester**, Manager at 604.267.4722

www.weinbergresidence.com

 Check us out on Facebook at
<https://www.facebook.com/weinbergresidence/>



FAMILY COUNCIL

Welcome to Louis Brier,

On behalf of the Family Council, we would like to extend and offer support and help with making the transition to Louis Brier as positive and smooth as possible.

The family Council is a voluntary body comprised of family members whose primary focus is to advocate for the delivery of safe and quality care. The council meets regularly on a monthly basis and in collaboration with the Louis Brier's leadership, reviews and discusses relevant opportunities to enhance the residents' experience.

We welcome all families to join the council and hope that you will make the choice to get involved. If you are interested in joining the family council and/or have additional questions please email us at lb.familycouncil@gmail.com.

Charlotte Katzen and Nancy Chang
Co-Chairs, Family Council

ALZHEIMER SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

SUPPORT GROUPS

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. offers Caregiver and Early Stage support groups. These groups are for people who want to inform themselves with current information that will help improve the quality of life with the disease. These are safe environments, providing an opportunity for emotional support and the sharing of common experiences, practical tips and strategies.

CAREGIVER AND EARLY STAGE SUPPORT GROUPS

Please contact the Vancouver Resource Centre:
604.675.5150 or email: info.vancouver@alzheimerbc.org

CHINESE-SPEAKING SUPPORT GROUPS

Cantonese & Mandarin-speaking Support Groups
For more information, please contact Sharon Tong:
604.687.8299 or email: info.chinesecentre@alzheimerbc.org



Ministry of
Health

TELE-SUPPORT GROUP

If you are unable to attend a support group in person, you can join others in a support group meeting by phone from anywhere in B.C.

General Tele-Support Group

3rd Friday of each month, 2 – 3 p.m.
Please call Julie Cameron:
1.800.936.6033 or email: jcameron@alzheimerbc.org

Tele-Support Group

For caregivers of someone diagnosed with behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD)
4th Monday of the month, 7 – 8 p.m.
For information:
250.382.2052 or 1.800.936.6033 (First Link Dementia Helpline) or email: info.victoria@alzheimerbc.org

Kristina Zoë
Social Worker

Source: Alzheimer Society of British Columbia

“I HAVE A STORY TO TELL YOU”

On Wed Sept 5th, residents and staff were rapt with attention as Seemah Berson explained the daring context for her book ‘I Have A Story To Tell You’. Seemah shared her experience as a researcher, the challenges she faced, and some of the stories themselves, including a reading from her book. Seemah spoke with courage and tenderness, honouring those who had chosen to trust her with the representation of their experiences as Jews fleeing Eastern Europe and then working in sweat shops in Canada. Look out for return visits from Seemah during the Fall.

Ginger Lerner
Recreation Therapist

HUMAN RESOURCES

THE STAFF APPRECIATION EVENT AND PEER RECOGNITION AWARDS

The Employee Recognition and Social Committee will be hosting a Staff Appreciation Event on December 11. As part of this event there will be Peer Recognition Awards to recognize staff who have made outstanding contributions within our organization. During the month of October, all staff will be given an opportunity to nominate their peers for an award. Award Categories include:

- **Unsung Hero** – Effective, valued and appreciated.
- **Spirit of Optimism** – Passionate & positive.
- **Exemplary Service** – Provides outstanding service with attention to detail.
- **Mission, Vision, And Values Advocate** – Embodies the Louis Brier Home & Hospital and Weinberg Residence Spirit.
- **Sensational Care** – Personifies the Resident and Family Centred Care philosophy.

Please refer to the **Peer Nomination Guidelines and Awards Terms & Conditions** for more details.

Who will you nominate?

2019 ANNUAL VACATION REQUESTS GUIDELINES

All regular full/part time employees 2019 vacation requests should be submitted **starting October 1, 2018 through SSC**. Guidelines on how to complete this process were distributed by Human Resources via email. Please note:

- No paper or verbal requests will be accepted.
- All approvals will be confirmed via email.
- There is no need to visit/call the Staffing Office for vacation requests. Please follow the guidelines.
- **Failure to follow the guidelines may result in your vacation not being approved.**

SAFE REPORTING

LBHH/WR fosters the highest standard of honesty, integrity and accountability and takes seriously all reports of wrongdoing. A wrongdoing is a wrongful act or misconduct by a LBHH/WR employee that contravenes (but is not limited to) the Standard of Conduct policy. Wrongdoing may include:

- Mistreatment of residents staff, family or members of the public;
- Actions that pose a danger to residents, public health, or the environment;
- Actions that are unlawful or not in compliance with any laws or regulations;
- Theft, fraud, bribery or corruption;
- Unethical or unprofessional conduct;

A new “Safe Reporting Email” account safereporting@louisbrier.com has been created for any resident, family member or visitor to report real or suspected wrongdoing by a LBHH/WR employee, companion or volunteer. Please refer to the “Safe Reporting” policy for more detail. This policy establishes a process for individuals to bring forward information about wrongdoing by LBHH/WR employees, in good faith and without fear of reprisal. It also provides for a consistent and administratively fair investigations process into reports of wrongdoing.

OCTOBER EVENTS

A number of events will take place in October including Fire Prevention Week on October 9 to 12, 2018 and Health Care Assistant Day on October 18, 2018. Please stay tuned for more details leading up these events.

Loren Tisdelle, Director, Human Resources

MED SAFETY CHECKLIST

All Meds Get Along. Consider the risks of multiple medications. If you are – or someone you know is – on 5 OR MORE medications, ask for a medication review when your doctor starts, stops or changes any of your medications. Otherwise, ask your pharmacist for a medication review when you are having a new or existing prescription filled or if you are considering adding, removing or changing any non-prescription medications or supplements. Good healthcare starts with good communication. Why not start with 5 Questions to Ask About Your Medications?

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT YOUR MEDICATIONS

when you see your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.

1. CHANGES?

Have any medications been added, stopped or changed, and why?

2. CONTINUE?

What medications do I need to keep taking, and why?

3. PROPER USE?

How do I take my medications, and for how long?

4. MONITOR?

How will I know if my medication is working, and what side effects do I watch for?

5. FOLLOW-UP?

Do I need any tests and when do I book my next visit?



Keep your medication record up to date.

Remember to include:

- ✓ drug allergies
- ✓ vitamins and minerals
- ✓ herbal/natural products
- ✓ all medications including non-prescription products

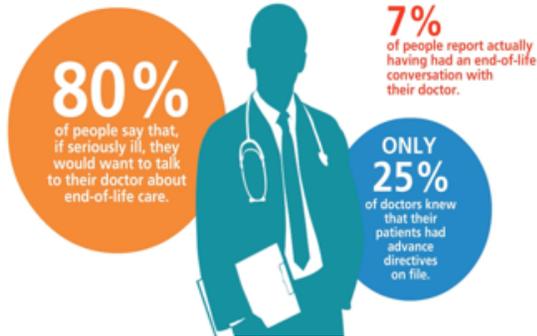
Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to review all your medications to see if any can be stopped or reduced.

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Visit safemedicationuse.ca for more information.

EMBEDDING A PALLIATIVE APPROACH IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS (EPAIRS)



"I know I am seriously ill. I'm receiving treatment to keep me alive but I want the best possible quality of care and the best possible quality of life while I do this, and if I have to die, I want to do it my way with access to care and support."

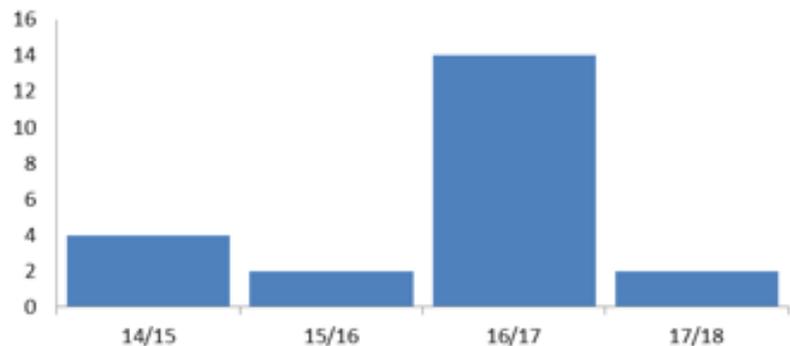
At Louis Brier we are taking the time to learn what is important to our residents towards the end of their life.

Annual comparison of residents transferred to ED and returned home without admission (in the last 3 months of their lives). Generally, these transfers occur when the resident is dying and acute care can only offer the same care as provided at home. These transfers may cause unnecessary distress and suffering, without additional benefit. Louis Brier has reduced these transfers by 85%.

ED visits >3 mths wo admission - annual

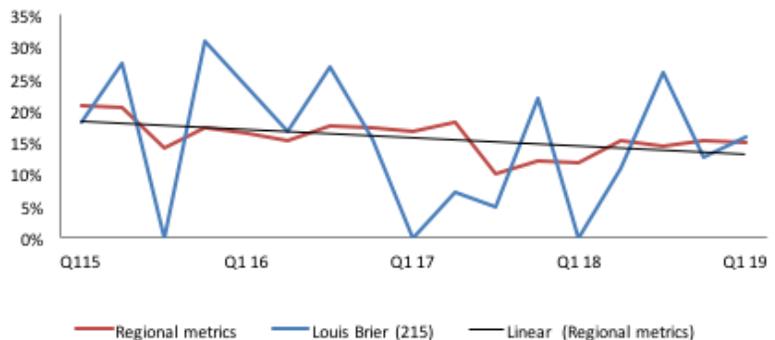
Comparison of VCH % of resident deaths occurring in acute (48 sites) and Louis Brier.

Louis Brier has reduced the number of residents who die in hospital by 42% (6 less residents a year)

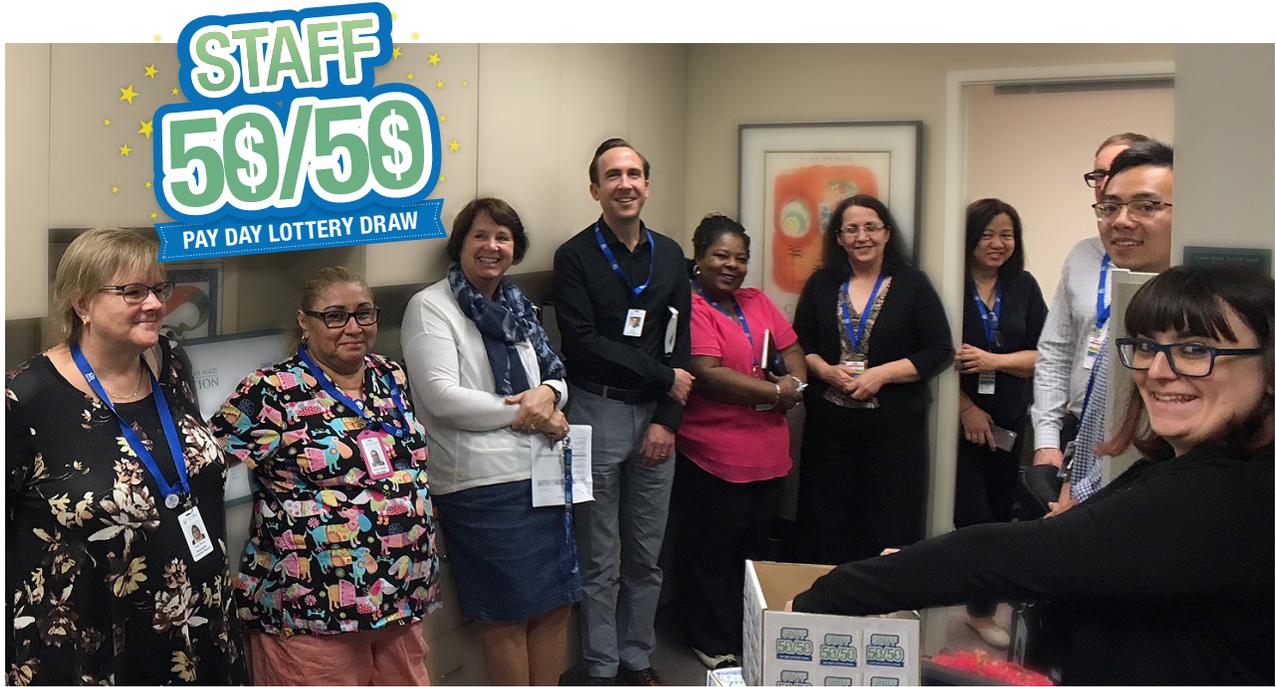


Last year, LB residents who died spent 50% less days in hospital in their last 3 months of life than the year before.

Residents would much rather spend time at home, in familiar surroundings, being cared for by people who know them well. There is a long road ahead of us as we strive to improve our palliative approach. We are committed in seeking improvement opportunities in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team, residents and families.



LOUIS BRIER JEWISH AGED FOUNDATION



THE WINNER IS...
Cecille Cleto \$168

Staff 50/50 Pay Day Lottery Draw Winner
September 20, 2018



On September 20, the Foundation held the first 50/50 draw for the Staff Lottery.

This draw is a new initiative, and everyone is really hopeful they will be the lucky winners. The 50/50 is open to all staff of the Louis Brier and Weinberg. Tickets are \$3 each, and only available via payroll deduction. Please come see Eva or Kim in the Foundation office to register.

The first winner was **Cecille Cleto**, one of our night nurses in the Weinberg. She takes home \$168. Congratulations Cecille!

Eva Bach
Development Manager
Louis Brier Jewish Aged Foundation
www.thelouisbrierfoundation.com



LOUIS BRIER JEWISH AGED
FOUNDATION

SPECIAL POLLING STATION AT LOUIS BRIER

VANCOUVER VOTES

OCTOBER 17, 10am – 12pm

**SPECIAL VOTING STATION
IN LOBBY OF LOUIS BRIER HOME & HOSPITAL**

The City of Vancouver will be holding a special polling station at Louis Brier Home & Hospital on October 17 for residents to vote.

City of Vancouver staff will be in the lobby from 10am – 12 pm

All residents are encouraged to participate.
Special bedside voting can be arranged.

Contact our facility social worker:
Kristina Zoe (604.267.4744)

The City of Vancouver is holding elections for:

- **1 Mayor**
- **10 City Councilors**
- **7 Park Board Commissioners**
- **9 School Trustees**



604.267.4744



kzoe@louisbrier.com

4 FUN WAYS TO WELCOME FALL

Fall is officially upon us.

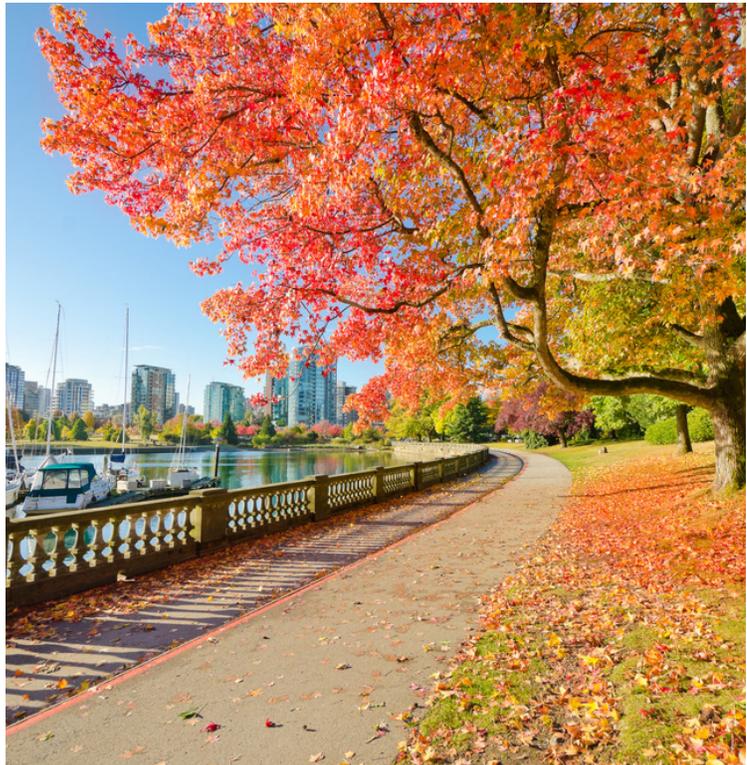
The leaves are changing, the sun is setting sooner, the wind is getting cooler and you're starting to pull sweaters and boots out of the closet. With the days becoming shorter, the darkness descending hours earlier and the temperatures dropping, you might not be too happy that autumn has arrived. Or maybe, quite the opposite, fall is your favorite season. Whether you love fall or you're already missing summer, here are seven ways to enjoy yourself.

1) Capture Fall with Your Camera

Whether you have a smart phone, digital camera or an old Polaroid, use your lens to describe the first signs of fall. Capture the towering trees with their vibrant leaves, the early sunset, the full milky moon. Capture your kids, your family, your friends and yourself playing in the leaves or enjoying an outdoor dinner. Send your pictures to us for our next newsletter!

2) Create Rituals

Think back to your childhood, what were your favorite ways to spend fall? Would you swim in heaps of crumpled leaves? Would you make specific dishes? Would you ride your bike or hike nearby trails? Did you visit the Farmers Market to indulge in the bounty of harvest? Remember that you're never too old to play or create meaningful rituals!



STANLEY PARK, VANCOUVER, BC

3) Reminisce in Fall Scents

What scents instantly give away fall? What are your must-have aromas? Maybe it's pumpkin, cinnamon, cider, firewood, apple pie or vanilla. Feel free to dig up recipes or make suggestions to food services about aromas you would enjoy coming from the kitchen...

4) Bring Fall into your Home

Fall is a beautiful time of year. Pay attention to the smallest details of your surroundings, bask in the outdoors and participate in whatever brings you joy this season. Pick up small piles of leaves, a few pinecones and other symbols of fall, and bring them inside. Engage your creativity by using your finds for centerpieces, wreaths, scrapbooks and artwork. It's a natural – and inexpensive – way to dress your home for the season.

Angela Millar

Director Quality and Risk Management, Accreditation and Resident Experience



Louis Brier Home and Hospital Preferred JCC Member Rates

Rates effective September 2018 to August 31, 2019

| # of Participants | Initiation Fee (New Members) | Individual (age 30 to 64) | Young Family/Young Couple* | Couple*/Family | Spa Upgrade |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 - 15 | \$54.00 | \$51.75/mo | \$80.25/mo | \$87.75/mo | 25% off |
| 16 to 30 | \$54.00 | \$48.00/mo | \$75.00/mo | \$82.00/mo | 25% off |
| 31 - 45 | \$54.00 | \$45.00/mo | \$70.00/mo | \$76.00/mo | 50% off |
| 46 + | \$54.00 | \$34.50/mo | \$53.50/mo | \$58.50/mo | 50% off |

Membership includes:

- Full access to our fitness centre and swimming pool
- Access to our Gymnasium based on open gym availability
- Discounts on all registered programs
- 6 guest passes
- 2 spa upgrades
- Parking is included for members for the time they are in the building

* Young couple and Couple category includes 1 complimentary month of spa upgrade

* One year commitment required on all memberships

* Capital Reserve Fund will be applied upon renewal and is based on 10% of the annual fee (maximum of \$100). A tax receipt will be issued for this fund.

* Must be a permanent employee of Louis Brier Home and Hospital (20 hours or more)

For more information please contact:

Alexis Doctor
Membership Director
alexis@jccqv.bc.ca
604-257-5163

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN!

STAFF 50\$/50\$ PAY DAY LOTTERY DRAW

HOW TO PLAY

Submit a **Staff Payroll Deduction Lottery Form** to the Louis Brier Jewish Aged Foundation office.
– JOIN ANYTIME!

TICKET SALES

Start Wednesday, August 8

FIRST DRAW

Thursday, September 20

DRAW DATES

Thursday AFTER Pay Day



Actual odds depend on number of staff participating.
BC Gaming Event Licence #107682.

Know your limit, play within it.
Problem Gambling Help Line 1-888-795-6111
www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca 19+



LOUIS BRIER JEWISH AGED
FOUNDATION

HOUSEKEEPING

Improving the Effectiveness of Environmental Cleaning

Visual Inspection vs. Environmental Marking Audit

Visual inspection is the primary method for assessing the cleanliness of healthcare environment. It detects visible dirt, dust, stains, soiling and moisture condition/s. Though it may look clean, does not mean that it's not contaminated with germs that cannot be seen by the naked eye.

On the other hand, environmental marking audit is used to check the effectiveness of cleaning by using a fluorescent marking gel and ultraviolet (UV) light. It works by applying a transparent gel to high touch surfaces such as door knob, light switches, grab bar, bed rails, tables, toilet flush handle, telephone, etc. before cleaning. After the area has been cleaned by the staff, we validate the thoroughness of cleaning by using the UV light to the areas where gel was applied. It's quantified by the amount of fluorescence left in the object.



Image: www.multi-clean.com

The latter is more effective. Environmental marking is an audit tool that was introduced to Louis Brier in April, a Housekeeping Quality Improvement Initiative to measure cleaning effectiveness and to ensure that practices are consistent from one person to the next and from one area to another. We have established our baseline and striving to improve the quarterly results through regular audits and staff engagement through self checking and auditing their own work. There is more awareness as a result.

Melissa Tadeson

Manager, Housekeeping & Laundry

PHOTO GALLERY



SHALOM GARDEN
SEPTEMBER HARVEST



THE CHAVA AND ABRASHA WOSK SYNAGOGUE
YOM KIPPUR



SPROTT SHAW COLLEGE
CO-OP CAREER FAIR

DEMYSTIFYING GENESIS

At face value, Genesis/Bereshit seems like a portion full of discrepancies. Here are just a few examples: It says that God created man in his image, male and female he created them. But then in a later chapter it says that man didn't find his helper compatible, so when Adam slept he took his rib and created a woman. But woman was already created. Then it says that God created waters with creates in it, and with other creatures (birds) to fly over the land. But then in a later chapter it says that God created beasts out of the ground.

The Zohar explains that things seem confusing because of our limitation. We just don't see the true reality. The physical world will do all it can to make us confused and crazy. It will try to make us feel that spirituality/metaphysical thinking isn't worth it at all; that it doesn't work. How can we prevent ourselves from getting confused? How can we prevent our falling when chaos comes? How can we maintain our certainty, no matter what happens in the physical world? The tool in this portion is in the word Bereshit. The thing is, it's not just a word. Genesis/Bereshit represents the seed level, the essence of everything, all possible outcomes in life. If you understand the seed of something, you can understand everything that comes from this. That's why it's so important to understand Bereshit – it's the seed of everything! If you want to understand your life, where do you go, what is your seed? Most people think it's your birth, but it's not – it's when you were conceived. What thoughts were in your parents minds that brought your soul down? If you know that, you can figure it out. Then you know how your life will develop. When we live life, what we see is usually illusion. We don't see a movie; we see only frames at a time. This is why we don't understand things. If someone dies that we think is relatively young, we think that they died before their time. But how do you know? What tools do you have to judge that? You have to go to the seed level of everything to understand anything. The portion of Genesis seems confusing, but really, it isn't. We think things are said twice and that they contradict each other, but really, there are two stories in Bereshit that are going on in parallel. There are no discrepancies, and there is no confusion.

What is confusion in the physical world? When you don't know what will happen tomorrow. But in spirituality, there is no confusion. Everyone knows a tree comes from a seed, and from a tree you can make anything with wood - from pencils to tables. But if you look at a seed, can you see a table there? Of course not, even though it will eventually come from it. There is no confusion in the potential, though; it's only in the physical plane. Confusion comes from what you see with your eyes. We talked about the two parallel stories in Genesis, they represent our potential and our actual. When the Torah talks about how the world was created, one day at a time, scientists try to figure out – what is a day? 24 hours or 1,000 years? What does "day" even mean? But these aren't even real days we're talking about here. It's a process – the order of how to draw Light. The first day is Chesed/Sharing, right column energy, all that comes out, Sunday, the seed of the week. So if you have a bad week, look at your Sunday to know why. If Sunday was great, then Monday was too, you probably just don't see it that way. This isn't about days at all. In spirituality, the scientific thinking doesn't apply; we're talking about levels here. It's about cause and effect and how the universe is organized. When do we learn this in life? Too late. We should be teaching it to our kids as soon as they can understand it. Spirituality teaches the order of life, and they need to know it. Genesis B is about the physical world, manifestation. It's already the trap of how it's all set up. There were two trees in the Garden of Eden. So why is it called a garden? Two trees make a garden? There was the Tree of Knowledge, Good and Evil and the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is our ability to see that life is just a graph going up and up, all the time. There are no setbacks, no ups and downs. THIS is the essence of life. The Tree of Knowledge is all the ups and downs in life. The illusion set in the physical reality with the idea of confusion. God didn't say not to touch the tree. Eve added that in with her own interpretation and her own belief systems. She did it because she wanted to restrict even more but it created more confusion. What's the

DEMYSTIFYING GENESIS *Continued...*

illusionary realm? When someone tells you you're wrong, that your good is bad; that your spirituality is non-spiritual. That's what happens here. Eve is coaxed to touch the tree, and when nothing happens, she believes it's okay to eat from it, then she shared some fruit with Adam. Were they punished, though? God said if they ate from the tree that they would definitely die. But Adam lives for 900 years! He didn't die. Here's confusion again! So why should we believe? Here is the proof – he didn't die! We are completely clothed in illusion. We live in a world of illusion. It's just a part of our lives. What does this mean? Think about the times when a friend or someone you trust tells you that you need to work harder to be more successful, you need to lose weight, change your job, or something like that. And you believe that it's good advice and you want to listen. Maybe you actually even go on a diet or look for another job. But what happens two weeks later? Usually, we go back to our old ways. Why? Did you have a lack of desire? No – you wanted to listen! The problem is, you don't have control over your desire. You want to do it, but you don't have the control. Our whole lives we always want to know what to do. We want advice. That's why people even want to learn and study so much. But the bottom line is, we know what's good for us internally. We don't need 10 people to tell us.

What does it mean to be clothed in illusion? Think of this – is breathing good for you? Do you think it is? Why? For starters, it's a sharing process – it balances your system. That's why we do it in meditation. You know it also balances because it calms you down – when you get upset, people tell you to take a breathe, or breath... Breathing even helps clear your head – it's as though it purifies. It clears the brain. So it's good, right? Think again... What breathes – the body or the soul? The soul doesn't need air, the body does. And what does the body represent? Physicality. The body needs air, but the body is illusion. The soul doesn't need it. So why breath? Because the body found the best tool available to interfere with us getting Light. The minute you breath, you're reactive! Why is the mikveh (ritual bath) so powerful other than the power of water? You stop breathing in it! It's the purest state of being! The point is, we have to realize that the illusionary realm has so much control, that we don't even see the extent of it. We don't realize how trapped we are by physicality. The fact that Adam was going to die is very relevant to us. We have to use it as a tool to know how the energy of death controls us the moment we lose our consciousness. When you fall into that trap, you're definitely dead. The moment you're affected by it, you're dead. If you can take the spirituality reality, regardless of physicality, you're dead. Because the energy of life is continuity, sharing and changing. We always have to understand more and more what illusion is. And that's why we keep learning – because every time you learn, even if you're hearing the same thing, you're learning it at a new level. If there's one thing to remember from all of this, it's the idea of the consciousness of breathing. It is not an instinct! It's something we do, and we can learn to do it with consciousness. We think dreaming is an instinct, too, but it's not either. Kabbalah can help you know how to get the right dreams with the right consciousness. There's consciousness behind everything. Otherwise, we're in a life of the Tree of Knowledge, full of ups and downs.

This portion starts with a large letter bet. The bet is open towards the future, closed to the past. People often say, "If I had only known..." Unfortunately, this is our excuse or answer for our mistakes. This large bet can connect us more with the potential level so that we can boost our ability to plant a seed for the whole year (or at least the whole week) to know the difference between illusion and true reality.

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DISCLAIMER: The views expressed by Neil Simces are neither endorsed nor represents the views of the Louis Brier Home and Hospital.



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