

Spring Brunch Highlights



Financial Therapy

by Simon Massicotte, Registered Psychotherapist

What relationship do you have with money? For some, it is marked by avoidance: unopened credit card statements, rising anxiety, or even incapacity to discuss compensation with a future employer. For others, it looks like impulsive spending, compulsive saving, or crippling anxiety with every bill that comes their way. But what if managing money is less about discipline, budgeting, or willpower, and more about our emotional world: our relationships, attachment patterns, and our underlying anxieties or search for safety?

Aseel Elbaba, a therapist with a background in Bay Street portfolio management, explored this idea at the annual Shalom Spring Brunch. Drawing from both her financial expertise and her psychotherapy practice, she shared insights shaped by years talking to people about their wealth. She suggested that money functions much like any significant relationship in our lives. Understanding the nature of that relationship, the stories we tell about it, the emotions evoked when we think about it can help explain many of the financial choices we make... and help us heal other parts of our lives as well!

In my work as a therapist at Shalom, I frequently meet clients facing financial challenges. For some, these struggles arise from external circumstances such as illness or instability. For others, however, deeper beliefs and feelings are at play such as worthiness, security, sense of trust or duty, or even grief and anger.

Ultimately, our behaviors with money, like those in our closest relationships, are shaped by how we see ourselves, what we value, and how we see the world. This talk was a wonderful opportunity to question how finances reveal some of these deeper challenges.



Sun, Water, and Mental Well-Being: A Lifeguard's Perspective on Safety and Mindfulness

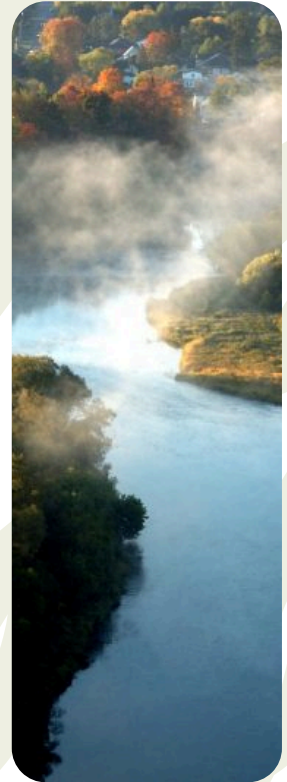
by Amy Ross, Fundraising and Engagement Director

Spending time outdoors by the water isn't just a great way to enjoy the summer; it's a much-needed aspect for your mental health. As a qualified lifeguard, I know firsthand how our rivers, lakes, and pools offer more than just recreation; they provide opportunities for relaxation, connection, and mindfulness.

Whether you're fishing, canoeing, kayaking, rowing in our Grand River's beautiful settings or swimming in a backyard or outdoor municipal pool, you're not just exercising your body - you're nourishing your mind. The sunlight around an outdoor pool is my favourite spot, and the combination of sun and water can calm the mind, reduce stress, and foster a sense of peace.

However, as much as we celebrate the mental health benefits of these activities, safety must always come first. My experience as a lifeguard has always taught me the importance of staying alert, swimming with a buddy, and, most crucially, keeping my phone away when I'm near the water. Drowning happens quickly and silently and a single glance at your phone can mean missing the only chance to prevent an accident.

Staying off your phone ensures you are present, deepening the mental health benefits of being outdoors. You'll notice the sounds of the splash, the warmth of the sun, and the laughter of children, all of which foster happy memories of summer. So next time you head out to the water, remember to prioritize safety, embrace the moment, and watch the water, not your screen!



Coming Up: 10,000 Steps for Mental Health



Get ready to make a difference at this year's "10,000 Steps for Mental Health" event! We invite you to join us on Saturday, September 19, for a fun, community-focused day on the Iron Horse Trail. Walk, ride, or hike your way to 10,000 steps and help us reach our ambitious goal of raising \$50,000 in support of mental health services. Enjoy a high-energy warm-up, inspiring speeches, lunch, and more as we unite to promote wellness and positive mental health throughout our local community. We are excited to announce that we have partnered with the GOHL Waterloo Siskins to support our annual event. Remember, every step counts!

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"I am going through the most difficult time in my life. I would not be able to get counselling if it were not for the sliding scale fees at Shalom. I am incredibly grateful for the donors who make this possible."

Shalom Client

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