



# Aged To Perfection

...sharing the latest on caring for seniors

## HAPPY SOCIAL WORKER'S WEEK!

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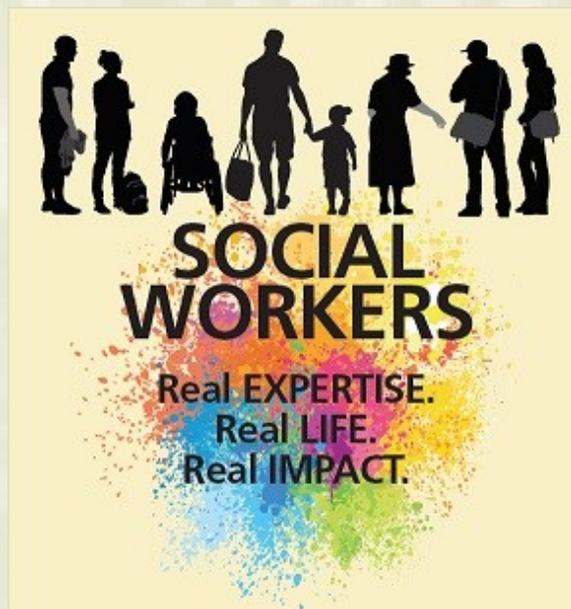
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Here in Ontario, the first week of March is Social Work Week, and is intended to highlight the important role of social workers in our local communities. Social workers assist people to improve their quality of life and achieve their goals.

This year's theme is: "Real Expertise. Real Life. Real Impact." The theme, selected by the Ontario Association of Social Workers, is focused on being real—finding realistic options for real, everyday people.

Social workers acknowledge that life isn't perfect and that the ups and downs faced in real life can feel overwhelming. Social workers want people to know that you can turn to them for sup-

port because they have the skills and training to help people get counselling, access to resources, and tap into their own inner strength.



Take the opportunity to acknowledge and thank the social workers in your life. You will find social workers throughout our community—in hospitals, nursing homes, social agencies, and even making

home visits. Social workers empower people in each of these locations to find realistic solutions that will have an impact in real life!

From everyone here at Warm Embrace Elder Care, we want to thank social workers for the important role you play in our community, recognizing and growing the strengths and potential of both individual people and our community as a whole. We especially appreciate the support you provide to seniors and their families. Your efforts are appreciated!





## WHY DO SENIORS FALL?



Do you know a senior who has suffered a serious fall? Likely you do, since approximately 30% of seniors who live in the community suffer a fall each year. The consequences of a fall can be quite serious—injury, hospitalization, even death from complications. It is essential to keep seniors strong and steady on their feet.

Why do seniors fall in the first place? While some falls can be attributed to tripping—such as tripping over floor mats or pets or curbs—other falls seem mysterious. The person will report that they just went down and were not sure why. In many of those mysterious cases, the fall is due to a lack of balance and stability. As we age, our balance and stability is affected.

To remain balanced, there must be a stable base of support—the wider the base of support the more stable it becomes. The base of support is the invisible box that can be drawn around your feet when you are standing.

Added to this is our centre of mass—which is approximately where our belly button is located.

When someone's centre of mass is in the middle of their base of support, they are perfectly balanced. When their centre of mass begins to reach the outer edge of their base of support, they are more prone to falling.

For example, a ballerina narrows her base of support to being only one square inch when she is en pointe. Her balance is quite precarious because her base of support has been reduced. The only way that she remains upright is by perfectly hovering her centre of mass over her base of support.

She is constantly adjusting to ensure that her centre of mass doesn't sway too far away from her base of support.

If it does, she is at great risk of falling. Ballet may be a beautiful art form,

but it certainly isn't something you want to try at home unless you're experienced!

In contrast, a football player crouches low and spreads his feet wide so that he has a wider base of support than he normally would. He may even



*A ballerina en pointe has reduced her base of support to only one square inch on tip of her toes. Her centre of mass must remain perfectly balanced to prevent falling.*



## ...CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2



*A football player spreads his legs wide to create a wide base of support, then he touches the ground for a third point of contact to create even more stability. His navel is centred in the middle of his base of support—he is very unlikely to fall or be pushed over in this position.*

put one hand to the ground adding a third point of contact and expanding his base of support further. He has a stable base of support, and his centre of mass is positioned in the middle of his base. It would be very difficult to push over a football player as his base of support is so stable. The football crouching position is something that you could try at home and feel the difference in stability between standing regularly and crouching with a third point of contact for support.

These examples demonstrate the importance of a strong base of support and keeping the centre of mass in the middle of that base. In the case of a frail senior, their feet may ache or have bunions, causing that person to only walk on the edges of their feet, which reduces their base of support and their balance. Instead of using the full surface area of their foot, they have reduced their base of support much like a ballerina. As well, the senior's posture may be more forward-leaning, pushing the cen-

tre of mass to the outer edge of the base of support, causing instability.

A senior will not likely be crouching down to touch the ground for support, the way a football player does. What can they do to increase their base of support? The best way to create a strong base of support is to use a walker. The four wheels of the walker expand someone's base and provide the necessary support. Much like a football player, a well-balanced senior using a walker is less likely to fall than a senior who is precariously balancing on sore feet. If their posture is forward leaning then the walker extends the base of support ensuring that the centre of mass remains in the middle of the base of support.

Encourage the seniors in your life to carefully assess their centre of mass and base of support to ensure that they are as safely balanced as possible. Enlist the support of a physiotherapist to assess exactly what device would best suit their needs. Every fall that is prevented is a great success and ensures a longer and healthier life for that senior!



*Above article is based on information presented by Susan Brown, Research Coordinator for the Schlegel-UW Research Institute for Aging at the "Don't Let This Fall Be on You" falls prevention workshop, June 8, 2010.*



*...a mother & her daughters  
providing meaningful  
assistance to seniors*

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Warm Embrace Elder Care is owned and operated by a mother-daughter team, Brenda Hamilton and her daughters, Chloe and Avery Hamilton. Their goal is to assist seniors to remain independent for as long as possible through offering various services such as homecare, memory therapy, and one-on-one home exercise for seniors. Inspired by personal experience with family caregiving for Brenda's mother, this mother-daughter team understands firsthand the benefits of enlisting help while caring for a loved one. Warm Embrace believes that independence does not mean that you can do everything by yourself, but rather that you get to choose how everything is done—we grant our seniors the respect and dignity they deserve by helping them to live as they desire.

## WINTER WARMER—THE GREAT WHISK(E)Y DEBATE

Canadian whisky versus American whiskey...is there a difference beyond the spelling?



This year's Winter Warmer will likely get heated as brand ambassadors for Canadian whisky and American whiskey debate which country is the best. Don't worry—it won't solely be up to the experts. You'll be taste-testing the various brands so you can decide for yourself which is best!

The annual Winter Warmer event is a fundraiser for the Alzheimer Society of Waterloo-Wellington.

**Date:** Thursday, March 23, 2017

**Time:** 7:00pm—10:00pm

**Location:** The Tannery Event Centre (151 Charles St. W. Kitchener)

**Cost:** \$100

**Tickets:** please call 519 742 1422

## Passion for Fashion

Women Helping Women  
rebuild their lives



Come out and enjoy 3 course dinner, door prizes, silent auction and fashion show featuring latest fashions from local retailers. Help us raise money for YWCA and Family Relocation Project of Waterloo Region and have fun with your friends. Women Helping Women rebuild their lives!

**When:** Monday, March 27th 2017

**Where:** St. George Hall, Waterloo

**Doors open at 5pm - Dinner at 6pm**

**Tickets are \$85.00**  
(Charitable receipt given)

To purchase tickets call Lifestyle Financial  
519 744-5433 or Purchase and register  
online by visiting:  
<http://www.passionforfashionevent.ca/>

