



February 2026  
Newsletter

# WOMEN'S CANADIAN CLUB LONDON

Welcome to Women's Canadian Club London's February Newsletter. Hopefully, you are enjoying or at least, coping with the winter that Mother Nature is serving up for us! The weather forecast does appear somewhat improved for next week. Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup> is forecast to be cloudy and milder than we have been experiencing ... it's unfortunate that they aren't forecasting a bright sunny day ... but no imminent snowstorms is at least an improvement. It may just be the perfect day to come out to the BW Plus Lamplighter and Conference Centre. Be sure to drop off your donations at our Community Service Table if you have any this month before joining friends for lunch at Shelly's Luncheon Buffet. After lunch, be sure to visit the Information Kiosks provided by our Annual Sponsors and the February 12<sup>th</sup> Event Sponsor-Lawson Research Institute and the Cognitive Clinical Research Group and place a bid or two on a chance to dine at Vineland Estates Winery and Restaurant, rated as one of Canada's Best Restaurants (silent auction), and then sit back, relax and enjoy a top winning piano performance provided for us by our WCCL 2025 Kathryn Sells Award Recipient – Daniel Thiessen, before listening to our keynote speaker – Dr. Michael Borrie update us on Alzheimer Disease. It all sounds like a very pleasant way to spend a February afternoon. Hopefully, our newsletter will provide you with the information you need to have to navigate your way through our February Speaker Event, reflect back on last month's speaker event and get a peek at our March Speaker Event too. We hope you enjoy the newsletter. **Note: Single Event Tickets are still available. \$30 at the door or on [Eventbrite](#).**

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## February 2026 Community Service Initiatives Making a Difference Together!

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*"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."*  
Anne Frank

**Submitted by:**

**Betty Dietrich,  
Chair –  
Community Service  
Committee**

**On Behalf of the  
Community Service  
Committee**

Happy February everyone and thank you for your continued generosity. Donations to our Community Service charities are always voluntary. The WCCL budget covers our annual Poppy Fund donation of \$100 to the Byron-Springbank Legion. All other support for the Legion, Food Bank, aluminum pop tabs and My Sisters' Place comes from member donations at our meetings.

Despite a winter storm and lower attendance in January, members showed incredible support for our *Declutter Your Closet Campaign*. We collected warm clothing for My Sisters' Place, craft and jewellery items for the Micro Enterprise and food and funds for the Food Bank – thank you!

The extreme, ongoing cold weather we have had this winter has put a significant strain on many local charitable organizations. Please see below for the very specific current needs of both My Sisters' Place and the London Food Bank.

**My Sisters' Place is still in need of the following items:**

- Snow pants and long underwear
- Warm, dry winter boots and winter socks
- Warm gloves/mitts and hand warmers
- Boot dryer
- Phone charging cords
- Cups of Mac & cheese/Cup o' Soup, Mr. Noodles etc.
- Grab and go Snacks (applesauce, fruit cups, cereal bars, soft granola bars)
- Blankets

To date we've raised \$2,530.<sup>72</sup> in food and funds for the London Food Bank.

**Items most needed by the Food Bank include:**

- Canned vegetables and fruit (no salt or sugar added)
- Peanut butter
- Canned tuna and salmon
- Special diet foods (gluten free, lactose free)
- Dried vegetables (lentils, chickpeas, legumes)
- Healthy breakfast cereals
- Cash or cheques

We will also continue to accept reusable grocery bags and aluminum pop tabs. Any donations will be gratefully accepted at our Community Service Table at our February meeting.

***Let's Continue to Make a Difference Together!***

## LUNCHEON BUFFET ON FEBRUARY 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026

*If you are thinking of enjoying lunch at “The Lamplighter” before our February Speaker Event on Thursday February 12th, 2026, please note the following message:*

**PLEASE NOTE:** THE REGENCY ROOM IS UNDER RENOVATION FOR FEBRUARY AND MARCH, SO WE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO HAVE THE REGENCY ROOM BUFFET AS WE HAVE BEEN ENJOYING THE PAST FEW MONTHS.

**INSTEAD, THE LUNCHEON BUFFET WILL BE SET UP IN SHELLY’S RESTAURANT THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2026.**

If Shelly's fills up, the overflow will be in the Oak Room, right next door.

**Reservations are required!**

***THERE WILL BE NO REGULAR SHELLY’S MENU ON THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12, 2026.***

The price for the buffet is \$20 - but there is a new menu.

**FOR RESERVATIONS, call (519)691-3402**

### **BUFFET LUNCHEON MENU on February 12, 2026**

Two Hot Soups, Crackers and Dinner rolls

Chef's choice of Three Specialty Salads

BYO Green salad bar

Mini deli Sandwiches

Turkey Pot Pie

Beef Stew

Penne Pasta in Tomato Sauce with Italian Vegetables

Mashed Potatoes and Vegetables.

Coffee, Tea

**Reserve soon, it sounds delicious!**

We hope you will enjoy lunch. If you have any questions about the changes this month, please send them via email to [wcc london.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:wcc london.pastpresident@gmail.com)

*Sharon Miller*

WCC London Immediate Past President, Speaker Chair

***Our Speakers on Thursday February 12, 2026, ... 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.***

## ***Our Keynote Speaker:***

**BUY ADDITIONAL  
TICKETS**

### ***Dr. Michael Borrie***



Join Dr. Michael Borrie, MB ChB, FRCPC in person on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026 to explore the latest research-based information about Alzheimer Disease. His Presentation: **“REDUCING YOUR RISK of DEMENTIA: Alzheimer’s Disease Biomarkers and Disease Modifying Therapies”**.

Michael Borrie, MB ChB, FRCPC is a Geriatrician and Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Geriatric Medicine, The University of Western Ontario.

He is the Medical Director for the Aging Brain and Memory Clinic, an investigator with the Cognitive Clinical Research Group (CCRG), and Past President of the Consortium for Canadian Centres for Clinical Cognitive Research (C5R).

His research interests include investigator-initiated studies for predictors of conversion from mild cognitive impairment (MCI) to Alzheimer Disease (AD), including sensitive neuroimaging techniques, blood and cerebral spinal fluid biomarkers. He is the platform lead for the Comprehensive Assessment of Neurodegeneration and Aging (COMPASS-ND) observational study of the Canadian Collaboration on Neurodegeneration in Aging (CCNA).

Since 1995 the CCRG has been a leading Canadian research site conducting randomized controlled trials of new potential treatments for Subjective Cognitive Decline, Mild Cognitive Impairment and Alzheimer's Disease.



Thank you to our **Event Sponsors (Joint), Lawson Research Institute and the Cognitive Clinical Research Group (CCRG)** for your sponsorship of this event.

## ***Our Youth Focus Speaker: Daniel Thiessen***



**Daniel Thiessen** – Kiwanis Festival Top Pianist and the 2025 *Women’s Canadian Club London Kathryn Sells Memorial Award Recipient* – Video Presentation as we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of our Youth Focus Program, created by Cathy Cave, WCCL President 1999-2001.

**Daniel** is just 12 years old but already has many accomplishments to his name and talents. Daniel began studying piano at the age of five. He has performed at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in the 2022 *Celebration of Excellence* in recognition of achieving the highest RCM exam score in Canada that year. He has also performed at the 2024 and 2025 *Stars of the Festival* showcases in London. In 2025, he was awarded first place in both the OMFA Provincial Music Festival and the ORMTA Provincial Competition for piano solo. Currently, he studies piano with Dr. Kyung Kim at Western University. A student of St. Mary’s Choir and Orchestra School in London, Daniel also plays cello in the school’s orchestra program.

**2000 – 2025 CELEBRATING YOUTH FOR 25 YEARS!**

## ***Also Happening on Thursday February 12, 2026, A Special Silent Auction***

### ***Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant - Silent Auction: February 12, 2026***

We will have a fabulous single item silent auction during our February Speaker Event. **Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant** has generously donated a **Gift Certificate worth \$362.00** for a *five course Chef's Creative Dinner for two, complete with wines expertly paired to each course*. This is a great opportunity to dine at a restaurant rated as one of Canada's Best.

**The History of Vineland Estates Winery:** Nestled on the slope of the Niagara Escarpment, the winery and signature restaurant are one of the most memorable stops on the wine route. Besides the store and tasting bar that reside within a circa 1877 "wooden cathedral" log barn, you can also visit the acclaimed "Top Twenty Winery Restaurant in the World" for true local cuisine. Chef George and his passionate team present all that is fine, local and fresh. The winemaker Brian celebrates near 30 years of devotion to the 180-acre parcel with world renowned Cabernet Franc, expressive Riesling, rare Pinot Meunier and memorable Chardonnay (Source: Business website)

**The Restaurant:** As one of Niagara's first winery restaurants and a forerunner of Niagara's flourishing wine and culinary scene, cuisine is offered featuring ingredients from local purveyors prepared by an internationally trained team of chefs.

Guests dine indoors in the renovated 1845 farmhouse or outdoors on the deck. Wherever you are seated, you will take in the views of rolling vineyards, the forests of the Niagara Escarpment and Lake Ontario and Toronto in the distance. Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant is situated at 3620 Moyer Rd. Vineland, Ontario.

This is an amazing opportunity to enjoy a masterful culinary & gastronomic experience in a breathtaking setting.

### **During WCCL's February Event – A Fabulous Single Item Silent Auction:**



**V I N E L A N D**  
ESTATES WINERY

*Vineland Estates Winery has generously donated a Gift Certificate worth \$362.00 - for a five course Chef's Creative Dinner for two, complete with wines expertly paired to each course.*

**This is a wonderful opportunity to dine at a restaurant rated as one of Canada's Best.**

*Submitted by:*  
**Eleanor Leatham,**  
**Chair**  
**Membership**  
**Committee**

*Tickets Available*  
*at the Door or on*  
*Eventbrite - \$30*

### ***SINGLE EVENT TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE***

**Come and join us at Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn & Conference Centre**  
**591 Wellington Rd. S. London**

**Single Event Tickets for our February 12<sup>th</sup> and March 12<sup>th</sup> Speaker Events**  
**will be available to purchase at our Membership Registration Table in the**  
**North Foyer outside the Crystal Ballroom on the Day of the Event.**

**11:30 a.m. until 1:45 p.m.**

**Questions? Please contact [wcclnmembership@gmail.com](mailto:wcclnmembership@gmail.com)**

## And ... a bit of fun...

*Nancy Hawkins wants to Challenge You to a Game this month ...*



### **Guess the # of Candies in the Jar**

*Is your Sweet Tooth calling? 🍬*

*Do you need a special gift for your Valentine? ❤️*

*Do you want to spoil everyone you know? 😊*

*Guess the correct ... or closest ... number of Candies in the jar and WIN!*

*Let's have your Best Guess 🤔*

*(Includes the vase!)*

**Tickets - \$2 each or 3 for \$5**

**Check out the Candy Jar at the Welcome Table on February 12, 2026**

## **Women's Canadian Club London Monthly Door Prize – London Symphonia Tickets**



Someone in the room at the Women's Canadian Club London's February 2026 Speaker Event, will be taking home a pair of tickets to London Symphonia's **"An Enchanting Afternoon: Peter and the Wolf"** - Sunday Afternoon, March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 3:30 p.m. - Metropolitan United, 468 Wellington Street, right here in London. Thank you to the London Symphonia for supporting Women's Canadian Club London and providing eight pairs of tickets to London Symphonia concerts over the season for us to share as door prizes with our members and guests.

We hope that Deb Willems and her guest enjoy Symphonia's concert "Love and Romance with Denise Pelley" - February 14, 2026, 7:30 p.m. at Metropolitan United right here in London.

### **WCC London Board of Director Nominations**

#### **Volunteers**

Please check out our website to contact us and learn more about the opportunities to [Volunteer](#) with Women's Canadian Club London.

YOU are encouraged to become a volunteer on the Women's Canadian Club London Board of Directors or on Non-Board committees.

We welcome Non-Board Volunteers on many of our committees at any time during the year.

These volunteers do not attend Board meetings and will serve a term of one year, which may be renewed annually.

\* Non – Board volunteers are welcome on the starred committees.

## Board of Directors

Submitted by:

Volunteer Coordinator

&

Immediate

Past President

Sharon Miller

For further details about committee positions and time commitments please refer to the [Women's Canadian Club London Committee/Officer Descriptions](#) available on our website.

**Nominations are open for the 2026/2027 WCC London Board until May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026.**

Are you looking for a new opportunity to contribute your skills and experiences to the community? The Women's Canadian Club London Board wants you!

As a Board member, you will work with people who are talented, dedicated and committed to fulfilling the WCC London's purpose and mission. You just need to attend 3 Board meetings during the year and give one hour of your time before each of our monthly meetings (September to April).

You may choose to work on a variety of different committees.

WCC London Board is especially looking for volunteers for **Secretary**, and as committee members on **Membership, Publicity, Silent Auction, Social and Welcome Committees**. Please contact Sharon Miller, Nominations Chair, at [wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com) or by phone at (519) 870-0544 if you have any questions about these specific volunteer openings or would like to volunteer for these positions.

You may also make contact for any volunteer positions using the following options:

1. Email Sharon Miller, Volunteer Coordinator @ [wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com) or call Sharon at (519) 870-0544
2. [Contact Form](#) available on our website.
3. Stop by the Community Service table in the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre in the north wing foyer at our events and leave your information with Betty Dietrich, Chair, who will forward the information to Sharon.

## Our Annual Sponsors

**Women's  
Canadian Club  
London  
Wishes to Thank  
our Annual  
Sponsors  
for their Support**



Platinum Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Gold Sponsor



Silver Sponsor



*Submitted by Sharon Miller - Immediate Past President, Speaker Chair*

**2026- London is officially marking 200 years since its founding in 1826.** WCC London, as a community organization is pleased to participate in the Bicentennial events. We are hosting a Bicentennial event on November 12, 2026 - Professor Michelle Hamilton - Western Public History Department will present on “Forest City Facts: Using Public History to Celebrate London’s Bicentennial”, \* as part of our 2026-2027 speaker series.

“Long before London was founded, this region was home to Indigenous peoples for more than 10,000 years. The Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Lenni-Lenape Nations have continuously lived, gathered, and cared for this land, and their stories remain an integral part of our community’s foundation”.  
<https://getinvolved.london.ca/london200>

“An important bicentennial initiative is London’s Forest Capital designation. “Due to the hard work and dedication of our Parks and Forestry teams, London has received the Forest Capital of Canada Designation from the Canadian Institute of Forestry for 2026 – 2027”! <https://getinvolved.london.ca/london200>

\*Forest City Facts is an initiative created in partnership by the City of London, the London and Middlesex Historical Society, and Western University Public History.

**Stories of London:** Community organizations are invited to share a story about their organization during the last 100 years. We have a long, interesting history of over 116 years. On behalf of the WCC London Board, Cathy Cave has volunteered to “write our story”. Cathy loves history, has been involved with our club for over 30 years and is the perfect person to write this story! Thank you, Cathy!

*A Sample of Upcoming Bicentennial Events:*

*Saturday 14 February 2026 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm Black History Month Opening Ceremony at Museum London.*

*Saturday 21 February 2026 10:00 am to 3:00 pm London Heritage Fair at Central Public Library, London*

The theme of this year's London Heritage Fair event is Honouring the Past, Celebrating the Present: Here's to 200 More

For more information, please go to <https://getinvolved.london.ca/london200>

I hope you are able to participate in some of the 2026 events!

## Reflections on Our January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025, Event

*Hekima  
Place*

*Youth  
Focus*

*Silent  
Auction*

The weather outside was frightful but many of you were still able to get through the snow to join us at the BW Plus Lamplighter for another great speaker event. Lorraine Jardine captured hearts with her presentation on *Hekima Place – Changing the World, One Girl at a Time*. Our Youth Focus speaker, Kyla Johnston-Potter is making a difference in her school and her community and is active in musical theatre too! A very impressive young lady who warrants watching in the years to come. *Congratulations* to our silent auction crew - Wendy Valhoff – Chair, Silent Auction Committee and Marie, Betty, Nancy, Eleanor and Pat S.!! January's silent auction was very successful and succeeded in adding \$800 to the WCCL's income that will help pay for our monthly operating costs. Did you know that your membership fees this year will pay for just over half of what it costs to bring our eight (8) speaker events to you this year? The remaining costs need to be covered through our fundraising initiatives.



*Silent Auction Poster*

*Executive Suite at Canada Life Place for  
hockey game between Soo Greyhounds and  
London Knights*



*Enjoy a London Knight's game in style!*

*Thank you, TD, for your Donation*



*Cathy Leeming & Eleanor Leatham  
Membership Table*



*Community Services Collection*



*Helena Steinmetz & Betty Dietrich  
Community Service Table*



*Nancy Hawkins & Irene Butler  
Welcome Table*



*Judy Farrell, Lorraine Jardine (Keynote), Sharon Miller  
and Elizabeth Spracklin*



*Kyla Johnston-Potter (Youth Speaker), Judy Farrell,  
Barb Dmitrienko and Sharon Miller*



*Judy Farrell, Lorraine Jardine (Keynote), Sharon Miller, Elizabeth Spracklin, Barb Dmitrienko*



*Wendy Valhoff, Betty Dietrich, Guest, Helena Steinmetz, Irene Butler*



### ***A Thank You from Lorraine Jardine***

***Keynote speaker at our  
January 11, 2026 Event***

To those of you were able to attend last month, thank you so much for your interest and support. Hekima Place is a home for abandoned and abused girls in Kenya. As their [website](https://hekimaplace.org) states, they provide the girls with the love, support and education they need to grow into independent, empowered adults who can create positive change in their communities and the world.

I have received lots of messages and questions, so I want to provide you with a bit more information. You are invited to pick up a brochure at the Welcome Table on February 12. To learn more, please visit the website: [hekimaplace.org](https://hekimaplace.org). For questions, please contact Lorraine Jardine at [LJardineHekima@gmail.com](mailto:LJardineHekima@gmail.com). Should you wish to donate, use the information below to be eligible for a Canadian tax receipt:

- E-Transfer – email to [ebensioniode@gmail.com](mailto:ebensioniode@gmail.com)
- Cheque – payable to Edith Benson Chapter IODE  
Hekima Place  
Ietje Kerhoff, Treasurer  
P.O. Box 445  
Ailsa Craig, ON NOM 1A0

**WE ARE CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE GIRL AT A TIME!**



***African Craft Table***



***Lorraine Jardine (Keynote)  
and African Crafts***



***African Craft Table***

## What's Coming Up on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026 ...

### Keynote Speaker

...



**Mark Daley**  
Chief AI Officer,  
Western University

Mark Daley is the Chief AI Officer at Western University and a Professor in the Department of Computer Science with cross-appointments in five other departments, The Rotman Institute of Philosophy, and The Western Institute for Neuroscience. He is also a faculty affiliate of Toronto's Vector Institute for Artificial Intelligence.

Mark was named in the MacLean's Magazine "Power List 2024" of the top 100 Canadians shaping the country and in Constellation Research's AI150, a list of top 150 top global executives leading AI transformation efforts.

In October 2024, Mark was appointed the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) Scholar in Residence in Artificial Intelligence.

Mark has previously served as the Vice-President (Research) at the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research (CIFAR), and Chief Digital Information Officer, Special Advisor to the President, and Associate Vice-President (Research) at Western.

### Our Youth Focus Speaker:



**Lamees Abdulla**

Our Youth Focus Speaker on March 12, 2026, is Lamees Abdulla. Lamees is in her first year at Western. In February 2025 Lamees was a student at Sir Wilfred Laurier Secondary School in London when she was presented with the Lewis Coray Trailblazer Award by the London Police Services.

Named after the London Police Service's first Black officer, this award recognizes young people from the African, Caribbean and Black Canadian communities.

The top three entries will be awarded bursaries & the winner will have the possibility to obtain a full-time summer job with the London Police Service.

## Special Single Item Silent Auction – March 12, 2026

Goodlife Fitness has donated one 12-month membership (Value \$1,175) to be auctioned by Women's Canadian Club London at our March 12, 2026 Speaker Event. The person who makes the winning bid for this silent auction item, will have 6 months to activate their membership and then 12 months of access to the GoodLife Fitness site of their choice.





## Women's Canadian Club London

Since 1910

### Speaker Presentations - April 9, 2026

- Kelly Drennan *"How Fashion Impacts People and the Planet"*  
Kelly is the Founder of "Fashion Takes Action" and Oversees "My Clothes, My World" youth education school program
- Two Fanshawe College Fashion Design Program Students presenting *"From Thrift to Runway: The Upcycled Effect"*
- Limited number of seats for members for the Speaker Presentation only.
- No Guests for the Speaker only - i.e. no single tickets.



### Spring Luncheon - April 9, 2026 Invitation and Registration

Submitted by Spring Luncheon Registrar - Sharon Miller [wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com)

The WCC London Board is excited to offer our first Spring Luncheon event at the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn and Conference Centre. Members and past members were emailed their Spring Luncheon invitation and registration form, menu, costs and speaker information at the end of January. If you did not receive this invitation, please email me at: [wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com](mailto:wcclondon.pastpresident@gmail.com)

Register early; seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Tables are reserved, with 10 (or possibly 11) people maximum per table. Complete the registration form and return it no later than **Friday March 13**.

You may also bring your registration forms and payment to the Spring Luncheon Registration table on February 12 or March 12 at the Best Western Plus Lamplighter Inn. (11:30am. to 1:55 p.m.) Cash, cheque, e-transfer, and credit or debit cards accepted.

If your group wants to be seated together, you must register together, with all registration forms and payments included in ONE envelope.

**Cost: Members \$45.00, Guests \$60.00**

- Make cheques payable to: Women's Canadian Club, London (**no post-dated cheques**)
- E-transfers: to [wcctreasurer10@gmail.com](mailto:wcctreasurer10@gmail.com) are accepted.
- Cash, cheque, e-transfer, and credit or debit payments, may be made in person on February 12, or March 12
- Please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and be sure to include your registration form(s) and cheque(s)

Mail to: **Spring Luncheon Registrar**  
PO Box 24025, London, ON N6H 5C4

Spring Luncheon Speaker - April 9, 2026 - Kelly Drennan

"How Fashion Impacts People and the Planet"

Fanshawe Student Presentation:

Two students from Fanshawe College Fashion Department will speak on: *"From Thrift to Runway: The Upcycled Effect"*. They will share a video they produced.

Luncheon Menu:

Please note that the WCC London Board has selected a Buffet luncheon called *Mama Mia* for this year's lunch.

- ☐ Crispy Caesar Salad, Herb Croutons
- ☐ Pizza style Focaccia Bread (3 Varieties)
  - 1. Pepperoni, Genoa Salami, Mozzarella, Marinara Sauce.
  - 2. Pesto, Diced tomato, Roasted Red Pepper, Artichoke and Bocconcini Cheese.
  - 3. Mozzarella and Marinara Sauce.
- ☐ Penne Pasta tossed in Sundried Tomato Pesto Cream Sauce with **Grilled Chicken**, Diced Tomatoes, Spinach, Parmesan Cheese
- ☐ Traditional **Beef Lasagna**
- ☐ Sweets Selection
- ☐ Seasonal Fresh Fruit
- ☐ Freshly Brewed Coffee, Assortment of Herbal Teas, Soft Drinks

PLEASE RETURN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM(S)  
NO LATER THAN FRIDAY MARCH 13, 2026

SORRY, NO REFUNDS

Member Name: ..... Telephone: .....

Address: City/Town: ..... Postal Code: .....

Membership Number: ..... Email Address: .....

I will also bring one guest for \$60.00 Guest's name: .....

My Dietary Restrictions: .....

My Guest's Dietary Restrictions: .....

NOTE: Please note that the WCC London Board has selected a Buffet luncheon called *Mama Mia* for this year's lunch.

## Youth Focus Then and Now

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*Last month we looked back at a couple of past Youth Focus Speakers to remind ourselves what these young people were doing when we first met them ... learn what they have been doing since joining us at our Speaker Events and what they are up to now. Let's Take a Look Back at a few more outstanding youths who spent a short time with us as Youth Focus Speakers over the past 25 years and see what they have been doing and where they are today.*

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### *Aidan de Salaiz*

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*Then ... October 19, 2000 – St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School, London-Youth Focus Speaker*

Cathy Cave introduced Aidan de Salaiz on that day, referring to other programs such as **Encounters Canada** and the **Kathryn Sells Memorial Award** through which Women's Canadian Club London had recognized outstanding youth. On October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2000, Cathy introduced a new monthly focus that would acknowledge a young person who had achieved excellence in a field related to the keynote speaker's topic. Aidan de Salaiz was the very FIRST Youth Focus Speaker to present to the WCCL audience as a part of that new monthly focus, what we often refer to today, as our **Youth Focus Speaker Program**.

That day, October 19, 2000, the Speaker was Sheila Johnston, author of *Buckskin and Broadcloth* (1997) and a new book soon to be published, *Let's Go to The Grand! 100 Years of Entertainment History at London's Grand Theatre*.

*This was the notation in the Women's Canadian Club London, General Meeting Notes for October 19, 2000...*

**Aidan de Salaiz** – “An OAC student at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School who has studied piano, voice and dance. Aidan has performed at the Grand and spoke of his vision for the future of the Arts. He thanked many "luminaries" in the theatre whom he regarded as role models. When Cathy Cave thanked Aidan for sharing his experience, she advised the audience to follow his progress as a future Canadian talent.

*Even before Women's Canadian Club London met Aidan de Salaiz, he had performed several roles on several stages ...*

1992 and 1993 - Aidan de Salaiz twice starred as Tiny Tim in the Grands' production of **A Christmas Carol** alongside Scrooge played by William Hutt.

June 1993 – Huron County Playhouse introduced a “newcomer”, Aiden de Salaiz, a resident of London Ontario who had previously starred in the title role of *Tiny Tim* in London's Grand Theatre production of **A Christmas Carol**. At Huron County Playhouse that year, Aidan performed the title role in **Oliver**.

1996 – **Goosebumps** –one of Aidan's earliest screen roles, playing the character Walker.

1998 – Aidan started performing in the High School Project at London's Grand Theatre. That year, Aidan performed in the very first Grand Theatre High School Project (HSP) Production, **West Side Story**.

*Aidan de Salaiz continued .../15*

## *What has Aidan de Salais been doing over the past 25 years?*

Aidan went on to finish his Secondary School education and continued to train and perform in his chosen career in the Arts. He has performed in many theatre productions locally, provincially and nationally. *I have tried to retrace the steps of Aidan's career and have found at least a few of the roles and performances Aidan de Salais has performed in.* Here are some of the highlights ...

2009 – Aidan appeared as a Persian in ***Caesar and Cleopatra*** at Stratford Festival, a play that was also filmed for release.

2009 - Aidan performed in ***Voices from Ireland Park*** at the MacKenzieRo Theatre in Toronto.

2012 – As an alumnus of the Grand Theatre's High School Project's early days, Aidan has since returned to the Grand Theatre as a professional actor.

February 2012 - ***Visiting Mr. Green*** - Aidan de Salais performed the role of Ross Gardiner showing at the Harold Green Jewish Theatre in Toronto Ontario.

2012 – ***Canadian Made***: Aidan appeared as “French Man” in the episode: Time Shifting, a television production.

2016 – ***Air Crash Investigation*** – played role of Jorge Da Silva in an episode of Air Crash Investigation.

2016 – ***Deus Ex: Mankind Divided*** – Aidan de Salais provided additional voices for this major video game title.

May 2018 – ***The Best Brothers***, performing as one of the leads (Hamilton Best) in various productions, including those at Theatre Northwest and Kay Meek Studio Theatre at the Vancouver Arts Centre Theatre.

December 2018 – performing as Fred (Scrooge's nephew) in the Grand Theatre's ***A Christmas Carol***, performing alongside an updated and modernized version with Ebenezer Scrooge played by Jan Alexandra Smith.

2025/2026 Season – Stratford Festival's ***The Winter's Tale*** – performing multiple roles as a Military Lord, Shepherd, Ram Satyr and the Second Gentleman

## *Today – Aidan de Salais*

Today, Aidan de Salais is a Canadian Actor with a career spanning theatre, television and voice work. In 2026, Aidan is continuing his extensive career in Canadian Theatre, with his current professional work centered in Southwestern Ontario.

At The Grand Theatre (London Ontario) – following his long history with this theatre, he remains active in its professional season. Notably, the Grand Theatre is hosting a production of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in April 2026 that Aidan will be performing in.

Regional Theatre – He continues to be a staple in prominent regional circuits, including past and recurring engagements with Drayton Entertainment and various Toronto-based theatre companies.

His work remains focused on high-profile stage performances, building on his established reputation from major Canadian Festivals and television roles. Theatre mentorship - Given his status as an alumnus of the very first High School Project (1998), he often participates in alumni and community-facing events at the Grand Theatre to support emerging talent.

Voice and Screen – while his recent focus is on-stage, Aidan maintains a presence in the voice acting and commercial industry in Ontario.

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## *Danish Mahmood*

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*Then ... January 11, 2018 – Central Secondary School, London – Youth Focus Speaker*

*Danish Mahmood, Central Secondary School London - Science Innovator*

*That was the notation in the Women's Canadian Club London, General Meeting Notes for Thursday January 11, 2018.*

In 2017, Danish had won the **Platinum Award for the Best Junior Project at the Canada-Wide Science Fair (CWSF)** and a **first place at the European Union Contest for Young Scientists (EUCYS)**. In 2018, he won a **second place in Biomedical Engineering at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF)**. ([Online Source](#))

*What has Danish Mahmood been doing over the past 8 years?*

On July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018, CBC News reported that Danish Mahmood, a 15 yr. old Central Secondary School student in London had won a national award from the Ontario Science Centre for an invention that monitors and wirelessly transmits patient vital signs to healthcare professionals. ([Online Source](#)).

Danish was presented with the 2018 **Weston Youth Innovation Award** for the device that he developed when he was just 14 years old, a device to assist first responders, paramedics and hospitals to monitor patients' vital signs. Danish explained that he felt there was a need for something that was very compact and user friendly, where you could get information from one source ... so, he developed a small finger sensor that used light absorption techniques to monitor multi-parameter patient vital signs.

Danish had observed busy emergency department waiting rooms as a result of several minor sports related injuries as a kid ... he identified a problem and developed a solution. It was known as: "W.I.N.I.T.S. .... the Wireless Interconnected Non-Invasive Triage System". It used a biomedical finger sensor to continuously measure patients' blood pressure, heart rate, arterial blood oxygen saturation and body temperature that were sent wirelessly to an online dashboard where first responders, paramedics and hospital teams could access them ... reducing human error while saving time and labour.

He also achieved the highest overall average in grade 11 courses, winning the **Alfred Raymond and Whiskard Estate Award**. His participation in the Thames Valley Science and Engineering Fair resulted in winning the **Best in Fair award and a gold medal**, showcasing his ability in scientific inquiry. Internationally, Danish has represented Canada on the global stage. As part of Team Canada ISEF 2020, he competed at the Regeneron International Science and Engineering Fair. ([Online Source](#))

Danish received the **Mary Louise Wyatt Award in 2021 and in 2022** for his academic standing and subject awards. He was offered the prestigious UWO President's Entrance Scholarship to Western University, as recognition of his academic achievements.

**Post Secondary Education:** Bioengineering, Computer Science at University of Pennsylvania

*Today – Danish Mahmood*

From 2021 to 2025 Danish studied at the University of Pennsylvania in Bioengineering and Computer Science. He graduated in 2025 and received his Bachelor of Science (BSE) with a major in Biomedical Engineering and a minor in Computer Science.

*Danish Mahmood continued .../17*

In 2025 Danish was also a member of a team (5 members) that were winners of the **University of Pennsylvania Senior Design Competition – 2025 Leadership Prize** for creation of Prism Optics. Prism Optics offers automated eye exams, allowing the hundreds of millions of people worldwide without access to optometrists to get eyeglass prescriptions. The device began clinical trials at Pennsylvania Medicine in the summer of 2025.

**December 2025 to the present** - Danish is back in London studying remotely for a graduate certificate from University of Pennsylvania and volunteers on weekends at a Muslim soup kitchen in East London. He noticed many people had basic yet important health questions. He was inspired by distributing health information documents at the soup kitchen such as information on where to get lung cancer screening for former smokers, how to sign up for temporary health coverage for new families, and how to obtain a health card for everyone.

Building on this, he created an artificial intelligence-powered online search tool that connects people to authoritative information and nearby clinics. It now indexes over 4,500 clinics across London, Toronto, and Ottawa, covering dermatology, orthopedics, cancer, and more, and continues to grow.

*A consistent theme I noticed while researching Danish and all that he has accomplished is the behaviour of watching events happen ... listening to what people are saying they need ... identifying the issue at the source of the problem ... finding a solution, or ... if there isn't a solution ... developing one! An amazing individual. (Editor's comment)*

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*I hope you have received the information that you need to navigate your way to and through our February Speaker Event next Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026*

*&*

*Taken a Look Back on Our January Event*

*&*

*Learned about some of the things that are Coming Up in the Next Few Months, and*

*&*

*Caught Up on What a Couple of our Youth Focus Speakers from the Past are Doing Today*

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***Our Community Service Table will be accepting donations for  
My Sisters' Place, London Food Bank and Aluminum Tabs for Mobility Devices***

*Check out p. 2 for Details*

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***Coming for Lunch on Thursday February 12<sup>th</sup>?***

***Remember you need reservations, and the Luncheon Buffet is being held in Shelly's this month.***

*Check out p. 3 for Details*

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***Considering Becoming a Board Director or a Non-Board Volunteer?  
Watch for an Opportunity to Hear More about these roles in our March Newsletter***

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*Happy Valentine's Day*

*Thank You! ... I hope to see you at our next event! ... Judy*