

WINTER 2020

## Volunteer-led initiative shows the smiles behind the masks



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by Andrea Tomkins

Sometimes the smallest act of kindness can have the biggest impact: That's the idea behind The Royal's "smile buttons," custom-made pin-back and magnetic badges that many staff members will be wearing at work in the weeks and months to come.

The buttons feature a photograph of the wearer without a mask and sporting a big smile. The hope is that the buttons will reassure clients and remind them there's a caring smile behind the mask.

"Masks are very off-putting – and we know they're necessary – but we also

*...continued on page 2*



Client Advisory Council volunteer Alexis Milne took portraits of staff members and helped make The Royal's new smile buttons.

### *Volunteer led initiative continued...*

know the value of a smile and how just receiving a smile from someone can make your day," says Glenda O'Hara, chair of the Client Advisory Council. "These days a lot of people don't see a lot of smiles, and they might not have a lot to smile about."

The idea for the smile buttons

has been spreading between health care providers over the past few months. O'Hara spotted a Facebook photo of a front line health care worker at Sick Kids in Toronto wearing one, and thought it'd be a fitting initiative to introduce at The Royal. By happy coincidence, another member of the Client Advisory Council, Alexis Milne, had the

experience and equipment needed to make it happen.

Milne has been snapping staff portraits (from a safe distance of course) and using them to make the custom smile buttons. Many staff have also been sending in smiling selfies for their buttons.

The initiative is funded by the Morale Boosters, a group that was formed in March 2020 to bring good cheer to staff and clients across all campuses of The Royal. The group includes staff from different campuses and programs, as well as the Foundation. Volunteers, clients, and families are also represented.

Although it's still early days, feedback from staff has been overwhelmingly positive.

Jacqueline Desrochers, manager of client & family relations, calls the smile button a "win-win" idea that fosters engagement and connection, and not just for clients. Button production gives volunteers like Milne and O'Hara an opportunity to stay involved and give back. Funnily enough, staff have realized the buttons help them recognize each other as well, especially when encountering colleagues they haven't seen in person for awhile.

"I'm even tempted to wear it at the grocery store!" laughs Desrochers. "I pass people all the time with my mask on when I'm out and about. Obviously in a service industry like ours it's



Alexis Milne takes a photo of staff member, Jacqueline Desrochers, for her smile button.

*Volunteer led initiative continued...*

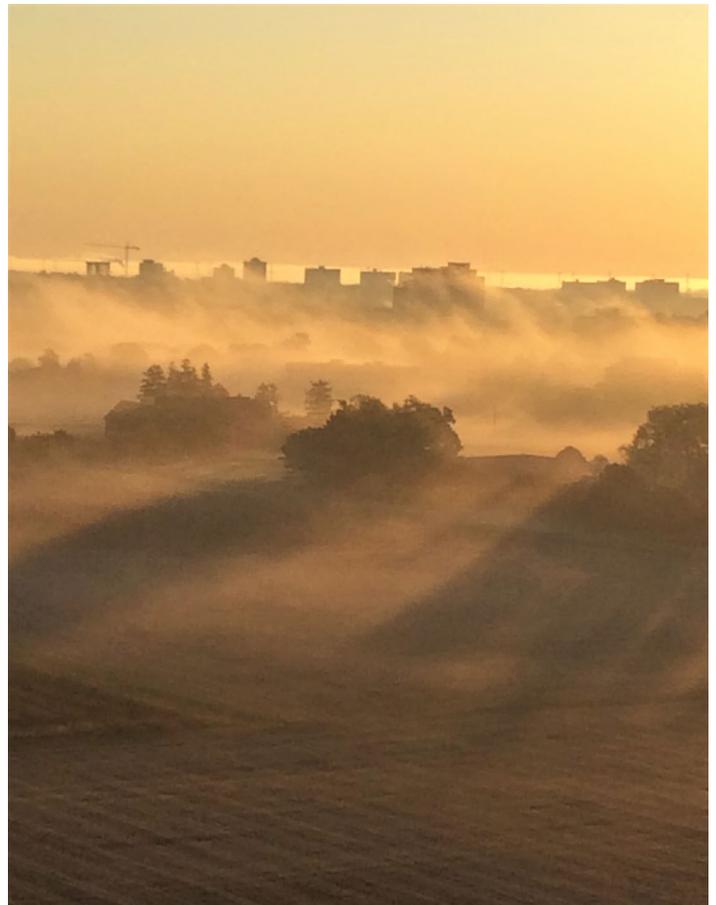
nice to have, but it's something we could think about for the community too."

"We need smiles right now; we need to keep that alive, and not forget."

Photos by VDM



Photo by Debbie McFarlane





## This section includes family stories and opinions

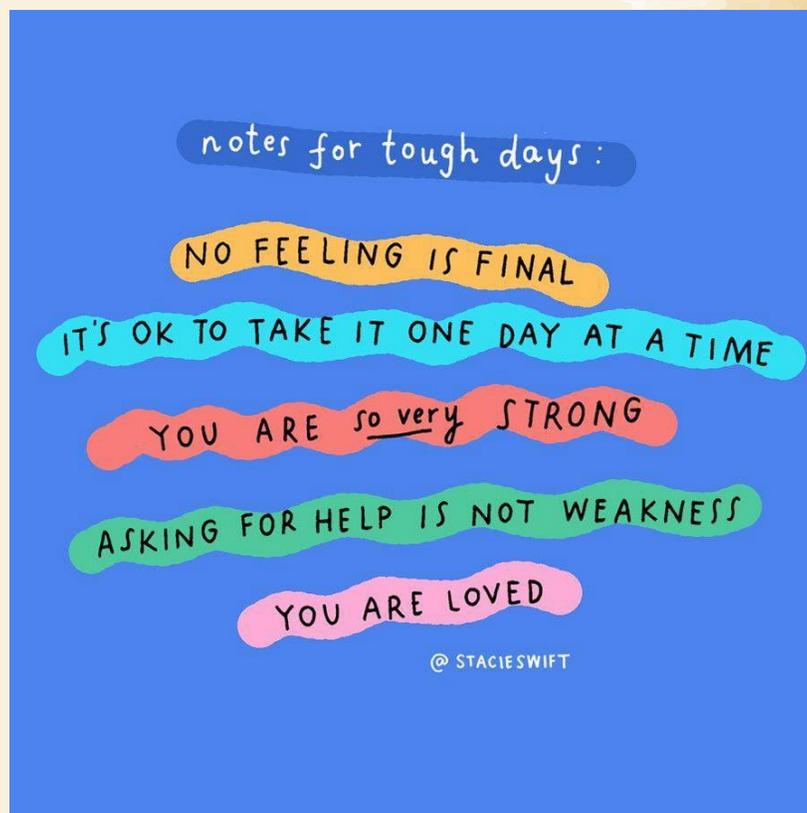
by Judy Thomas

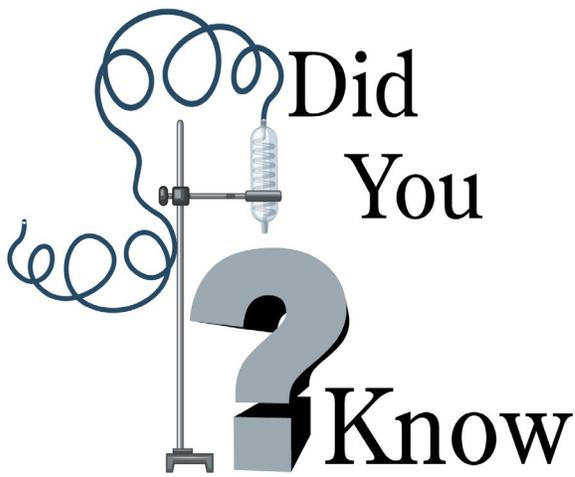
As a member of The Royal's Family Advisory Council (FAC) and caregiver for my son and 91 year step-mom, surviving the COVID 19 pandemic has certainly provided our family with some time to consider how we would like to approach the "new normal", the unknown for our future with so many unanswered questions. Do we look at the glass half full or half empty. We have embraced the "new normal" and have created new opportunities for our self care. It has forced

us to be creative in different communication approaches with our family members, who would have known how important the invention of zoom would be. Time together has allowed us to think proactively and reach into our tool kits that we developed in the FWRAP workshops.

When our lives feel unsettled we need to consider how to get back on track. Establishing a routine that provides us with some achievable goals, such as consistent sleep hygiene, being engaged in a fitness program - a 28 day one to be exact

and we are on day 24. Being considerate of what we feed our bodies - both physically and emotionally has helped us to embrace the new normal. Ongoing communication with our family is a high priority in order to gauge their well being and simply hang out with them. As a proud member of the FAC, we support each other with our innovative ideas that support the wellbeing of our clients and family members. We have a "voice" that is respected and recognized.





## In order to prevent the transmission of illness and infection, did you know...?

- Hand hygiene, using either soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub, is the best way to prevent illness and infection.
- Please wash your hands before and after eating, before and after entering The Royal and after going to the washroom, coughing or sneezing.
- You should not cough or sneeze into your hand. It is better to use a tissue or your sleeve if no tissue is available.
- The flu shot is the best defense against seasonal influenza. The flu vaccine cannot give you the flu.
- If you become sick while admitted to an inpatient unit, you will likely be placed on "additional precautions." This means that you will have reduced access to unit activities and will be asked to remain in your bedroom for a period of time. This is done in an effort to reduce the transmission of illness to others.



Thank-you for your help in preventing the spread of illness and infection!



### What people think support sounds like

- 'You'll be fine'
- 'Just think about something else and you'll feel better'
- 'That sucks, anyways...'
- 'Don't worry, it's not a big deal'
- 'Stop worrying so much'

### What support actually sounds like:

- 'I'm sure that is really difficult'
- 'Thank you for trusting / telling me. How can I help'
- 'I can't imagine what that must be like, let's try and take 6 deep breaths together'
- 'I want you to know that this will pass, and I am here for you'

## Elephant in the Room



## Open Window

I leave the window open  
And breathe in the autumn air  
As I drift off on cool sheets  
To dreams of an open space  
Where happiness lives.

Glenda O'Hara

## Be kind

It is not about who has more,  
it is not about the rich or poor  
What it is truly about,  
is being kind without a doubt.  
It is not about who is right or  
wrong,  
it is not about where you are  
from.

What it is truly about,  
is being kind without a doubt.

No matter who or where you may  
be from,

You deserve the respect of  
everyone.

What it is truly about,  
is being kind without a doubt.

Kindness builds trust, trust  
builds respect, respect builds  
friendships that do last forever.

You don't know where they have  
been, nor what they may be  
going through,

Stop and think a moment how  
we treat each other is completely  
up to you.

So what it has always been about  
is simple,

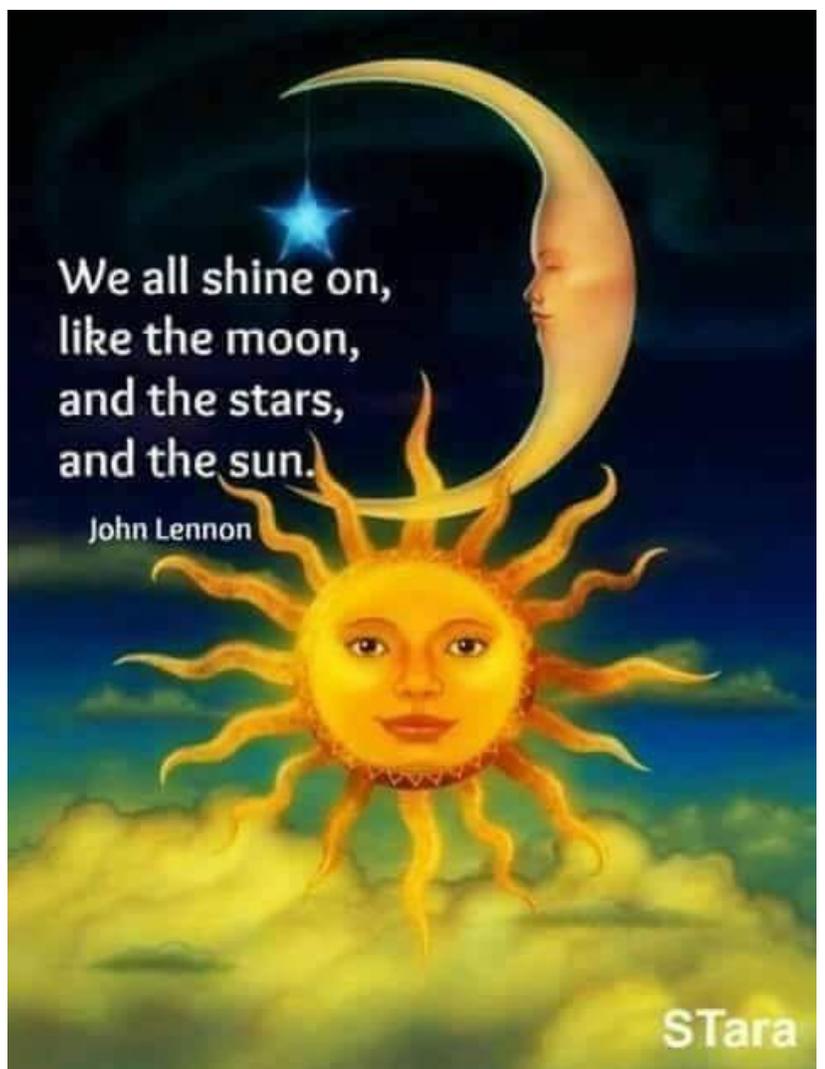
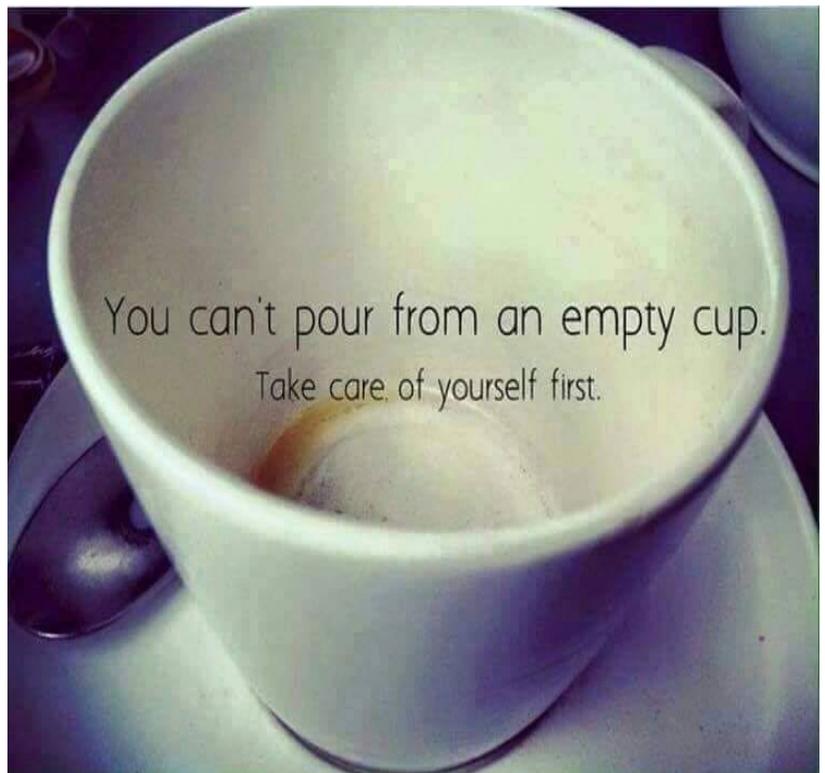
Be Kind.

Brenda Buckley

## Six little stories with lots of meanings

1. Once all villagers decided to pray for rain. On the day of prayer, all the people gathered, but only one boy came with an umbrella. That is faith.
2. When you throw babies in the air, they laugh because they know you will catch them. That is trust.
3. Every night we go to bed without any assurance of being alive the next morning, but still we set the alarms to wake up. That is hope.
4. We plan big things for tomorrow in spite of zero knowledge of the future. That is confidence.
5. We see the world suffering, but still, we get married and have children. That is love.
6. On an old man's shirt was written the sentence 'I am not 80 years old; I am sweet 16 with 64 years of experience.' That is attitude.

Have a happy day and live your life like these six stories. Remember – Good friends are the rare jewels of life, difficult to find and impossible to replace!



# we want to hear from you!



**Show your artwork**

**Share your poems**

**Tell a funny story**

**Show your photos**

**Share your wellness journey**

**Tell us your favourite quote**

**Contact Us** We would love to hear what you have to say about *The Client's Voice* or if you would like to become a member of the Client Advisory Council, feel free to call, write or email your questions and comments to:

## **Client Advisory Council**

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Art and photo by Alexandra

