



Photo by Tuan Minh Nguyen

Dakota Mitchell, owner of The Shatter House, smashes a bottle of wine with a hammer in the “rage room” on Front Street on Tuesday. The Shatter House is a place where people can freely smash items or throw paint on the walls.

# Business a ‘smashing’ success

By Tuan Minh Nguyen

“It was like the wreck room, or like the shatter room. I was just trying to figure out something that was like, catchy. So, I wrote “house” in it, and then it just became a thing.”

That is how Dakota Mitchell, owner of The Shatter House, describes coming up with the name she gave to her newly opened business in downtown Belleville.

Mitchell’s business is offering a unique way to relieve stress and frustration. The “rage room,” as Mitchell calls, is a place where people can freely smash items or throw paint on the walls. “You will get about 20 items in the room. They are all different things. It could

be monitors, furniture, dishes, glasses, printers, anything really,” she shared. “I’ve had people add on 65-inch TVs to their package.”

There are four rage rooms arranged by Mitchell next to each other, separated by plaster walls. Every item in each room was purchased in stores, thrifted, or found on Facebook Marketplace.

“I have been getting some unique items,” Mitchell said. “I have gotten some VCRs, and I know some people probably don’t know what those are. They are just some things that are fun.”

All customers must sign a safety commitment before participating. After that, each customer is provided protective gear to join the “rage room.”

“You get like a suit, like a full cover-

all suit, face shield, and no cut gloves.” Mitchell describes each step for a customer to experience the service she provides. “And then we go into the room, and it is like already pre-set packages. So, if two people are coming in, it’s \$80 for a half an hour.” Hammers, baseball bats, crowbars, etc. are all provided by her to customers to use on the items.

Serenne Baker, a customer who learned about The Shatter House via Facebook, said that she was excited to experience the “rage room” for the first time with her two friends.

“I am glad that we did it because it was really fun to watch them destroying stuff. That was, like, the best part, just watching your friends do it,” she shared.

Taylor Andrews, Baker’s friend, had sweat on her face after 30 minutes of smashing things.

“I like smashed, like, the little glass, the bowls and the plates and everything. Those are the easiest. So, I felt like got a lot of rage out,” Andrews said.

Mitchell has always wanted to own a business by herself, but it was only after the COVID period ended that she really moved forward with this business idea.

“I actually underestimated myself about how stressed people were,” she said. “A lot of articles that I have done already focused on mental health, which is really important because there are a lot of times where a lot of people are stressed out, and they take it out

on something. So here you come. You come here, you have an outlet. It is just a reset button coming here, instead of being destructive to yourself.”

Mitchell shared that she plans to open another “rage room” if the current business goes well. Currently, she is in the process of decorating and finishing up the basement of The Shatter House to be ready to open for an upcoming new experience in the next few months.

On Mondays and Tuesdays, The Shatter House is open by appointment only; on Wednesdays, it is open from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m.; on Thursdays, it is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.; on Fridays, it is open from 11 a.m. to 1 a.m.; and on Sundays, it is open from noon to 10 p.m.

# College students feel the impact of rising basic food costs

By Danielle McPherson

2022 was the year that affected the wallets of many Canadians.

With gas hitting \$2 a litre, and basics such as cooking oil going up by 27 per cent, it is no wonder so many people are facing food insecurity.

Students across Canada have been sharing their own thoughts on how the “starving student” stereotype has become normalized to the extreme. An opinion piece written by Abby Jenkins of the website YorkRegion.com in August 2022, stated that 40 per cent of Canadian post-secondary students are dealing with food insecurity.

With so many people struggling to make ends meet, Loyalist College’s Student Government is trying its best to support students in the best ways it can.

From the rise of gas, to the increased cost of food at the dining hall, Student Government President Ravi Patel says that he sees and understands the struggles facing many students in the Loyalist community.

“Inflation is here, and it isn’t going anywhere anytime soon... and students have not been able to make ends meet.”

The student government is aware of the problems many students are facing, and Patel encourages students to use the available resources, such as the Food Cupboard and the Free Market.

As listed on the school website, the Food Cupboard (room 3L1B) is open:

Monday: 12 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
 Tuesday: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
 Wednesday: 12 p.m. – 5 p.m.  
 Thursday: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.  
 Friday: 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

At the Food Cupboard, students can ‘shop’ for items such as non-perishable food, school supplies, and personal hygiene items. Each student is limited to six items per week.

The Food Cupboard was contacted for more information but was unavailable for comment.

While some students may not know much about these resources, Patel says that the new advertisements during orientation weeks and over the school’s social media have helped, and he believes word of mouth is their best method to promote the available resources.

“There are still so many students who are unaware of these services and in desperate need of them... (and people) need to start talking about it more. If one person tells it to five, and then 10, and its multiples.”

Shantal Manzo is in her final semester of the global business management program and is grateful to have her winter semester fees paid off.

Since paying her fees, the money she earns from waitressing and working in the SAL goes directly to her groceries and her monthly rent for residence. With peace of mind, she says she doesn’t worry as much about her spending as she did last semester.

Manzo said that currently, she does not worry about money, but will be more careful if prices continue to increase.

During her first year, first semester, when money was tight, Manzo would meal plan or watch for sales; she would cut out take-out and snacks; even a \$3 coffee would be off limits in Manzo’s mind.

In addition to watching her spending, Manzo would use a visit to the Food Cupboard for the items that she was cutting out. While she did not use it as frequently as some, Manzo said she would go about once a month depending on what she needed.

“It was a great help for me for all the snacks I didn’t buy. I could get them there.”

For students who are in need, Patel and Manzo both recommend the Food Cupboard.

Manzo added, “It’s useful whenever you are struggling. It helps to just have pasta or rice, or to just have basic food.”

But for those who feel that their needs are not being met, Patel encourages students to reach out to any student government members via e-mail, or the online suggestion box, at <https://loyalistlife.com/chat-student-govt>.

Patel says student government members are currently doing what they can with mostly trial and error to see what works for students, but they need students to reach out and speak up for what is needed.



Photo by Danielle McPherson

Shantal Manzo, is an international student from Mexico, digs through the fridge that she shares with the five other girls who live in her apartment.



Photo by Danielle McPherson

Local business owner Lori Foster of "The Dressing Room" says she is proud to sell designs exclusively made by Canadian designers. She noted that all of the pieces in her store are sourced from all over the country, and she has designers from Montreal to Vancouver.

## Canadian designs featured at business

By Danielle McPherson

The Dressing Room fashion boutique welcomes fashionistas of all ages, sizes and styles.

From the moment you walk in for your appointment, the team at The Dressing Room leaves every customer embracing her inner dressing room diva.

Lori Foster, who worked as a competitive figure skating coach, then turned designer, and is now a personal stylist and small business owner, is a force to be reckoned with.

After 26 years of business, Foster said while the business has had its ups and downs, she couldn't be happier if she were doing anything else, even when she reaches her golden years.

"I can't see myself ever retiring. I get to do what I love every day. I get to work and meet great people every day and I get to work with my community. I hope that when I am in my eighties, I'll still be doing this."

From the moment Foster chooses a design to wrap it in a bag full of love, she is constantly working with both her designers and the customers who come into the store.

Foster prides herself on selling designs made by Canadian designers, and her

customers are always thrilled with the clothes made for them.

"The beautiful thing about dealing with Canadian designers is that the styles fit a woman's body," Foster added that she tried using European designers before, but found that the clothes made by Canadians for Canadians always made her customers happiest.

Across social media and The Dressing Room's website, customers leave rave reviews on all aspects of the business and the team Foster has built.

This is one of those reviews: "I am so in love with my FDJ - French Dressing Jeans! They fit beautifully in the waist and give me ample room in the hips. Why would women wear anything else when the fit of these is so amazing? I love the colours; the way French Dressing (Jeans) makes them so comfy and I am thrilled that they are *Canadian!* I look forward to shopping at your store and continue to be delighted each season. Thanks for selecting clothes that fit real women with curves." Annette is one of the many customers who have left amazing reviews similar to hers.

French Dressing Jeans (FDJ) is a women's denim and clothing company based in Montreal, and is one of the many Ca-

nadian designers featured (and loved) by Foster's customers.

While part of the reason Foster sells exclusively from Canadian designers is because of the fit, it is also because she is always trying to give back to her community, whether that is putting money into Canadian pockets, or helping out local charities.

On occasion, the clothes seen on the hangers in The Dressing Room get the chance to walk the runway closer to home.

Helping the community, and spreading joy and donations is one of the many ways Foster pays it forward.

"To me, my business is more than just selling clothes. It's about bringing the community closer and supporting each other."

Over the years, not only has Foster had the pleasure to build genuine connections with her customers and staff, but she has also endured many struggles that could've sunk her business.

Many businesses had to change plans and find new ways to connect with clients during the COVID-19 pandemic, and The Dressing Room is no exception. The boutique started hosting Facebook Live videos and later on, appointment-only shopping. The Live videos have now be-

come a staple in the daily routine of customers. Foster said that there have been days when she will be off, and customers are texting her about why she isn't posting a video. The Live videos also led to The Dressing Room becoming a boutique known across the country. As pandemic mandates are being lifted, The Dressing Room still limits only four customers in the store at a time, but not for the same reason as when they were first implemented.

What started as a health and safety protocol has now turned into an even more personalized way of shopping for customers.

With fewer customers, it means that Foster and her team become customers' personal stylists. "It's like shopping with your girlfriends even if you came alone," Foster said.

For the customers who are a little closer to the store, Foster shared that it makes her smile thinking back to COVID times when customers were needing a little retail therapy and would be changing in the parking lot or their cars just to try on the latest designs. Both the staff and the customers were having a blast with the new change rooms.

But Foster says of all the compliments she has received on her business, her fa-

vourites were when customers told her how she and her staff saved their mental health during the dark times of the pandemic.

With her recent accomplishment of being named Retail Business of the Year by The Quinte Business Achievement Awards in October 2022, Foster said she couldn't have come this far without the outpouring of support and love from her loved ones, staff, and customers.

"Their support allows me to be a better business owner, colleague, mother, wife, sister, and daughter, it just allows me to be a better person."

At The Dressing Room, the motto is 'We empower lives through fashion; building confidence one outfit at a time.'

Age and size are nothing but numbers at The Dressing Room. In the words of Magen Trainor's hit song *All About the Bass*, "Every inch of you is perfect from the bottom to the top." With a range size of 2-18, and XXS to XXL, the staff at the dressing room are known for making every woman feel and look her best after every appointment. Whether that be a 30-year-old mom of three trying to find the perfect casual office look, to their oldest customer who is rocking blinged-out jeans at 102 years young, as Foster says, "Bring on the fashion!"

## Community offers classes for fitness

By Shelby Holmes

The Municipality of Tweed, with assistance from Hydro One, has been working to keep its residents active with Let's Move Municipality of Tweed events.

They currently have cardio kickboxing on Mondays at 6 p.m. at the Actinolute Hall as well as beginner boot camp at 6 p.m. Thursdays at Thomasburg Hall.

The Let's Move program hosts a variety of events, which are hosted at the Municipal Halls in the community, and all of the activities involve some version of fitness. The program offers these free classes to encourage physical activity and social interaction within the community. Instructors are hired and people register for the event ahead of time and are able to ask any questions about the event when they register.

Some of the programs Let's Move has done in the past include self-defence, intro to martial arts, hip hop dance lessons, family crossfit challenge, ball hockey, and more. The programs first started in February 2022 with bird watching, and over 35 programs have been offered with 1157 residents participating.

The second cardio kickboxing class was hosted on Monday evening, and the people that signed up for the group, alongside the instructor, showed up

with their gear for the class and ready to go. The group spread out around the room with the instructor in the middle and began to warm-up and stretch.

The cardio kickboxing class combines martial arts moves with cardio, and is a fast-paced, non-contact workout. Music is played to fit the pace of the workout, and the instructor leads the group through the workout by giving a demonstration and having the group copy him. The instructor keeps both his and the participants' energy high and encourages them to do their best while being able to joke around with them. Classes can last from 35-40 minutes, sometimes longer, and breaks are given throughout so people can get water and not over work themselves.

"This is cardio kickboxing, cardio karate, is like a bunch of different karate moves and kickboxing moves all put together," said Brad Goodfellow, instructor of the cardio kickboxing classes.

Goodfellow has been involved with karate and cardio kickboxing for many years, having done karate from the time he was 15 and getting involved with a cardio kickboxing class at the karate school he was at. Goodfellow has been an instructor for about 20 years. He has taught other Let's Move classes, including self-defence and cross-fit classes.

"It's a good cardio workout," said Goodfellow.



Photo by Shelby Holmes

Brad Goodfellow, instructor for Let's Move Municipality of Tweed cardio kickboxing, leads the class in their workout.

# Women wearing turbans, too

By Nguyen Tuan Minh

“It is our choice. If someone wants to tie turban, they can. Girls can also,” says Ranjit Kaur, as she places a teacup on the table and fixes the turban on her head.

The aroma of chai tea fills the tiny dorm that Kaur is staying in. Chai is a traditional Indian tea, made from dried tea leaves, milk and some other ingredients. Kaur often makes chai when someone comes to visit her.

## “The main reason why I tie a turban is because I love it.”

Ranjit Kaur

Kaur dresses discreetly and neatly. She wears a navy-blue denim jacket with a white fur collar, an Indian traditional small sword on her waist, and her jeans are the same colour as the jacket. In contrast

to the dark blues of Kaur’s outfit, her bright pink pagg (a name for turbans worn by Sikh Indians), covers the top of her head and her dark hair. “This is a new pagg I brought from India.”

Kaur is from Punjab, India, which is the home of Sikhism. Like most other people there, she and her family are followers of this religion. Recalling her days in her hometown, Kaur said that her whole family used to go to the temple to pray every day.

Since she was a child, Kaur has wanted to wear a pagg, but she only started wearing paggs two years ago.

“I was very fond of tie turban from my childhood. But as I was child, I can’t tie the turban, and that moment my parents denied me,” she explained. “But when I completed my high school, I’m able to learn how to tie a turban.”

Nectar ceremony, also known as The Amrit Sanskar, is the Sikhism initiation rite. Kaur will have the choice between wearing a pagg or a chunni at the ceremony. Another common term for a chunni is a dupatta. A chunni is typically draped over the head and left behind the shoulders.

“I have to cover my hair all the time, so covering a chunni is a little bit tough for me. It is easier to tie a turban since coming to Canada. Over here, most people are wearing jeans, shirts, or tops and I can’t have chunni,” Kaur said. “The main reason why I tie a turban is because I love it.”

To wrap a six-metre long scarf neatly on the head is not a simple thing. In the beginning, Kaur practiced wrapping pagg five times a day on her head and learning from those around her.

“There was a girl who used to live in the Gurdwara (a holy temple for Sikhs) where I was living with my parents, and she taught me how to tie a turban,” Kaur said. “There were also many other girls who tie turban in the Gurdwara, and they all helped me to learn it when I started.”

Now, Kaur can wrap her pagg in about 15 minutes. A year after coming to Canada, Kaur always starts her days with this routine, even before leaving her bedroom.

On a clear, winter day, Kaur is fixing her pagg. Rather than going to the temple, Kaur is preparing to go to Walmart for groceries. Starting a new life in a foreign country with an unfamiliar culture, her pagg was the one thing that provided Kaur with a sense of confidence.

“It means a lot to me. I have many friends here who all are wearing turban. It is like when I was living in the Gurdwara, everyone there was wearing turbans,” said Kaur, “so, I feel safe.”



Photo by Tuan Minh Nguyen

Ranjit Kaur wraps her new pagg in her dorm at Loyalist. Kaur started to wear the pagg two years ago. This is the first thing she does every day before leaving her room. “Pagg” is the name of the turban that Sikhs often wear on their heads.

# Scalliwag Toys offers in-store game nights

By Shelby Holmes

In February 2020, before COVID-19 shut down the world, Stacey Kerr and Stuart Long became the owners of Scalliwag Toys in downtown Belleville.

Taking over during that time presented many challenges, but Kerr and Long were able to work through those challenges and get their feet on the ground.

“As far as struggles go, COVID has been a real pain,” said Long.

Scalliwag Toys has been part of the local community since 1985. When previous owners Karin and Richard Belanger retired, Kerr and Long took over. Due to lockdown restrictions and constantly changing rules, Scalliwag was unable to host in-person game nights, but are happy to now host game nights similar to how the previous owners did.

They host a variety of games on different nights, such as role-playing games, an open game night focused on board games, in-store play where people can schedule to play certain games one on one, and more. Kerr has a history of event planning, and both of the owners keep having idea after idea of what they want to do. As time goes on, the owners intend to make more changes in the future to be able to add more events for people to go to, including Pokémon events for the younger crowd, crafts and learning how to play certain games, and setting up more walking tours.

“Events for us were what we were most excited for when we took over the store,” said Kerr.

They want to encourage people to play more. At Scalliwag Toys, Kerr and Long are encouraging the people of Belleville to tap into their inner child, and they believe that people should be able to have fun no matter the age. They host these events so people can have a bit of fun and bring it back into their lives.

They chose board games because of the diversity of themes and mecha-



Photo by Shelby Holmes

Stuart Long and Stacey Kerr, owners of Scalliwag Toys, are behind the desk trying to find information for a customer. They are coming up on three years of owning the business, and plan to bring more events that bring the community together.

nisms they have. Whether it’s a more educational game, or a game that’s more fantasy-based, they believe that there is a board game people could find, no matter what their interest is.

“Stuart and I were both really big

fans of board games, even before we took over the store,” said Kerr. “They’re a really good social game, but it’s also just a really cool casual thing that anyone can play. There’s not a lot of things that are like that these

days, that can just appeal to such a broad audience and have that really fulfilling experience of just having a good time.”

They enjoy being able to foster the different kinds of communities the

games bring. Even though it can be difficult due to the pandemic and cost of things, they try to carry games that they love, believing that if you love something, it’s a lot easier to get other people to love it too.



Photo by Kennedy Babutac

**Greg Magwood, a martial arts teacher, leads participants at Loyalist College for a relax and wellness day. He taught tai chi and other forms of martial arts. On the day he came, he held a free session for anyone who wanted to join.**

# Relaxation and fun at Loyalist

By Kennedy Babutac

Relaxing is the key to success.

Greg Magwood is a tai chi, chi kung internal martial arts instructor who has been doing tai chi for 32 years. Back when he was learning martial arts, his teacher recommended tai chi and now he is now teaching others the importance of the art and other martial arts skills. He was invited to Loyalist College to take part in the health and wellness week and to introduce students to tai chi and chi kung.

"Although their movements can be complex, the range of motion work is suitable for using up body issues, but it

also focuses the mind," said Magwood.

Tension ends up in your body whether you're stressed with work, school, or life. Tai chi helps de-stress your body, so it's not tense, and helps with mobility and mental health.

Dr. Paul Lam, a family physician, tai chi practitioner and teacher for over 40 years, is a world leader in tai chi for health improvement and is now focusing on preventative health.

According to his website, Lam says, "On a physical level, tai chi improves strength, flexibility, aerobic conditioning, and balance. It's been proven to improve cardiovascular fitness, lower blood pressure, prevent falls and help people

who have arthritis."

"There are also immense emotional and mental benefits," he goes on to explain. "The deliberate movements help people to feel more relaxed, grounded, and present in their bodies. This lowers anxiety, stress, and depression, while improving memory, focus and sleep."

Tai chi is a series of gentle physical exercises and stretches. Each posture flows into the next without pause, ensuring your body is in constant motion. According to the Mayo Clinic website, tai chi is sometimes described as meditation in action because it promotes serenity through gentle movements connecting the mind and body.

During Magwood's session, he taught students how a relaxed mind is more vital than a tense body. Magwood explained the importance of posture and how you stand, relax your muscles and breathe deeply. Not only was he teaching tai chi, but he was also teaching martial arts moves that came from tai chi movements and one to two self-defence moves.

Loyalist College student Hayley Wilkins has never done tai chi or anything like it, but she said she'd "definitely do it again."

Wilkins added, "After tai chi, I feel more relaxed, instead of all tense from school."

Magwood explained what he has seen people achieve from his classes.

"Martial arts study can be a positive mental and physical experience for its participants. I have seen many people achieve goals and mobility that they didn't consider possible. I have seen many people gain courage and empathy through their training. A good martial arts experience should help people gain self-defence skills and confidence and build strong relationships."

At the end of the lesson, students said they felt more relaxed and energized than before. This was just a reminder to take a breath and relax, whether in meditation or tai chi.

# Dogs provide much needed stress relief for students and staff

By Kennedy Babutac

Earlier this month, Loyalist College invited St. John Ambulance and its team of therapy dogs to the college. Seven therapy dogs took part in a Rest and Wellness Day.

Each dog was different by age, size, and social skills. The need for therapy dogs has risen in the time of the pandemic. The dogs have worked harder in these past few years than before but still do their job just fine.

"St. John Ambulance's Therapy Dog Program takes a volunteer and their dogs into hospitals, seniors' residences, or nursing homes weekly. Through petting, affection, and regular visitation, many people benefit physically and emotionally from the unconditional love of a dog while also providing the volunteer with a unique and rewarding experience.

The program continues to grow, boasting over 3,500 volunteer dog teams, providing over 275,000 hours of their time visiting hospitals, retirement residences, care facilities, schools and universities.

The close attention and acceptance of these four-legged volunteers are always greatly appreciated," according to the St. John Ambulance website.

Handler and volunteer Bev Bannister and her dog Sheldon have been working in therapy for seven years. Sheldon, an eight-year-old mini poodle, was a rescue when Bannister first got him and could go through the evaluation to become a therapy dog.

Sheldon had a second evaluation done so the duo could help and support vulnerable children under the age of 12.

After second evaluation, therapy dogs can provide support slow readers inside a classroom. Sheldon becomes their reading buddy. Typically, on his

classroom days, four children will be assigned to read to Sheldon, practicing reading aloud.

Bannister said that she started working in the therapy dog program to help and support people.

"That's why I got into the program, but I believe in visiting places like hospitals, schools, and retirement homes," she said.

Some of the opportunities provided by the therapy dog program include a chance for individuals to talk with the volunteer and dog; feel touch, pet and cuddle the dog; receive unconditional love from the dog and carry out or practice activities with the dog.

The program offers many benefits, improving quality of life. Some of the reported benefits include greater social engagement with individuals/residents talking more, participating more in activities, and smiling more, stress relief and distraction from pain and comfort and calming.

The program varies across Canada based on community needs and the availability of volunteers. Therapy dogs routinely offer comfort and companionship in senior residences and care facilities. In hospitals, they may be providing relief and distraction for patients awaiting cancer treatments, notes the St. John website.

Hayley Wilkins, a Loyalist College student, enjoyed her time with the adorable little doctors. "Scarlett's my favourite!"

While Scarlett is just in training and learning from the other dogs, once she is a year old she will take a test to see if she qualifies or not.

From students to staff, everyone interacted with these beautiful therapy dogs. Walking past or joining in, everyone got the small break they needed.



Photo by Kennedy Babutac

**Sheldon, a mini poodle with the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog group, greets students and staff during the rest and wellness day hosted by Loyalist College.**