



Garden Valley Teachers' Association

# The Apple Core

Nov 2021

## Upcoming Events

- Nov. 16 - PD Committee Meeting
- Nov. 17 - Mini Mel Myers Conference
- Nov. 17 - Early Dismissal
- Nov. 19 - K-8 Admin Day
- Nov. 19 - 9-12 PD Day
- Nov. 23 - MB Gov Throne Speech
- Nov. 30 - Deadline for Dec. 31 resignations and retirements
- Dec. 1 - ESJ Book Club
- Dec. 3 - K-12 Admin Day
- Dec. 7 - GVTA Executive Meeting
- Dec. 15 - Early Dismissal
- Dec. 21 - PD Committee Meeting
- Dec. 22 - Last day of classes in 2021
- Dec. 23 - Jan. 5 - Schools Closed
- Jan. 11 - GVTA Executive Meeting
- Jan. 12 - ESJ Book Club
- Jan. 15 - Presidents' council
- Jan. 17 - Presidents' Learning Series
- Jan. 18 - PD Committee Meeting
- Jan. 19 - Early Dismissal
- Jan. 20 - Liaison Meeting

Hello GVTA Members,

It has been quite a month since the writing of our last Apple Core. It has been a month filled with schedule shifts, staffing changes, enrollment declines, and a lot of stress. It has not been an easy month and it's okay to admit that.

In report card writing season, outside of the stress of meeting one more deadline, I often see it as a time of reflection. When one is forced to reflect, it can be tempting to reminisce with rose-coloured glasses or shades of despair, but I hope that you take the time to acknowledge the growth regardless of the tint in your perspective. Looking back to September, we can see growth in our students and those around us. However, I have often found myself dismissing the growth because the students weren't "far enough" yet. In essence, I would trample over the growth of our classroom.

It is easy to see the damage that a good trampling can cause vegetation. However, most of the damage from trampling happens beneath the surface. This is due to the soil compacting and making it more difficult for the plant's roots to receive nutrients. Meaning that the damage of trampling may not immediately kill the plant but slowly starve it instead. In the same way, overlooking the growth we have caused and experienced can hinder our ability to survive— by making it impossible to replenish and rejuvenate ourselves. Allowing a narrative of "not good enough" to govern our self-worth and accomplishments only starves the good work that we do. It is imperative that you do not compress yourself into the "perfect teacher" box but instead give yourself room to get the nutrients and help that you need. Do not trample your growth; acknowledge the growth and be thankful for it.

Whether your past month has been pleasant, damaging, blasé, cherished, or anything else, I hope that you can be secure in the fact that you are enough. It is okay to acknowledge where you have been, where you currently are, and the growth that has happened in between. Do not make "perfect" the enemy of "good". In the same way, respect the growth that has taken place because what you water, grows.

In Solidarity,

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## We're moving (digitally)

The GVTA President email is changing to [GVTApres@mbteach.org](mailto:GVTApres@mbteach.org). Although emails you send to former addresses are likely to continue to be received through a brief transition period, please change the contact information in your address book or add [GVTApres@mbteach.org](mailto:GVTApres@mbteach.org) to your contacts.

## PDPS will seek leave from Supreme Court of Canada to hear wage-freeze appeal

The Partnership to Defend Public Services (PDPS) will be seeking leave from the Supreme Court of Canada to hear an appeal of Government of Manitoba's public sector wage-freeze legislation, announced Manitoba Federation of Labour President Kevin Rebeck on behalf of the PDPS.

"Over 120,000 public sector workers and their families are relying on Manitoba's unions to have their backs when it comes to their right to collective bargaining," said Rebeck. "When we launched our constitutional challenge to the Pallister government's wage-freeze law, we knew it would not be a quick process. But we will always stick up for the rights of workers."

In October, the Manitoba Court of Appeal overturned a ruling by the Court of Queen's Bench that the Pallister government's public sector wage-freeze law (Bill 28) was unconstitutional. Rebeck added that while it is up to the Supreme Court to decide whether to hear an appeal, the PDPS will be putting strong legal arguments forward on behalf of working families.

"We won round one and government won round two. Now we are asking the Supreme Court to consider round three," said Rebeck. "Manitoba's dedicated public sector workers have been there for us, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. They deserve to have their rights respected by government."

Rebeck added that the PDPS has until mid-December to submit their leave application to the Supreme Court.

## Rumballs

By: [Allrecipes](#)



### Ingredients

Makes 36 balls

- 3 cups vanilla wafer crumbs
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- ½ cup ground pecans
- ⅓ cup water
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- 2 teaspoons rum flavored extract
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar

In a medium bowl, mix vanilla wafer crumbs, ground pecans, cocoa, 1 cup confectioners' sugar, corn syrup, water, and rum flavoring together.

Roll mixture into 1-inch balls, and then roll in remaining confectioners' sugar. Store, covered, about a week before serving.

Garden Valley Teachers' Association members work on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabe, and the homeland of the Métis nation. GVTA respects the Treaties that were made on this territory.

# Social & Teacher Wellness

Brenda Richer & Brandy Springer

**I have come to believe that a great teacher is a great artist and that teaching might even be the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind and spirit. ~John Steinbeck**

I am excited to let you know that plans are being finalized for a few activities coming soon. Upcoming events will be for our members and/or their families following current Public Health Orders.

Please be sure to follow our media or keep your eyes open for the posters!

## SAFE Tips: Winter Driving

Excerpts taken from an article by Cheryl Reimer, Prevention Consultant, SAFE Work Manitoba, Submitted by Mary Eberling-Penner, GVTA WHS representative

It's getting to be that time of year again when we will be driving for work in the winter weather.

Drivers will need to start changing their driving habits to suit the conditions of snow and ice on the roadways.

Some important safety tips for winter driving are:

### Preparing Your Vehicle

- Driving in winter weather, snow and ice creates a challenge for vehicles and drivers. You want to be well-prepared to deal with the unexpected.
- Every vehicle should have a well-stocked winter driving kit in the trunk or someplace close by. That kit should include a shovel, snow brush, windshield washer fluid, cat litter for added traction, warm clothing and blankets ([click here](#) to see a full list of items). It's best practice to check your kit monthly and replace expired items.
- Don't forget to keep your gas tank full.

### Tires are Key to Increased Safety

- Tires are usually taken for granted, until the road puts them to the test.
- When it comes to safety, tires are the most important component of your vehicle. Your brakes stop the wheels from turning, but it's the grip of the tires that actually bring your car to a stop.
- Ensure you take the time to choose your tires. Tire companies can provide expert advice to safely choose the right tire for driving in the winter to keep you safe.
- Before the first snowfall or when temperatures drop below 7 degrees Celsius, you will want to change over to your winter tires.

### Preparing to Drive

Before you leave on your journey, plan your winter driving in advance, and take the time to make sure you and your vehicle are ready.

Call 511 toll-free or visit [manitoba511.ca](http://manitoba511.ca) to get updates regarding road conditions in the region you're going to travel.

- Check weather conditions for your travel route before you begin driving.
- Warm your vehicle before driving. It helps prevent moisture from condensing on the inside of the windows.
- Never warm your vehicle in a closed garage.
- Remove all snow or ice from your vehicle.

- Always wear a seatbelt. It's designed to prevent injury in case of a collision or sudden change in movement or motion.

Don't forget to bring a cell phone; however, don't leave it in your vehicle. The battery will freeze and it won't be usable.

### **Keys to Safe Driving**

These keys to safe driving for/to work will help keep you safe in the winter months:

- It's important that your vehicle lights properly: especially if it's dark when we are driving for work in the early morning and going home at the end of a work day.
- Avoid harsh accelerations and sudden stops to avoid slipping or spinning your tires and potentially losing control of your vehicle.
- Leave more distance between you and the driver ahead of you. It's best to use the 3-4 second rule in the city or the 6-second rule on highways in ideal conditions, which helps you maintain a safe following distance, especially in the winter. When the conditions are poor, leave more space and increase your following distance.

Remember that posted speed limits are for ideal conditions only. Higher speeds make controlling your vehicle much more difficult.





# Member & Family Assistance Program (MFAP)

## We can help.

Free and confidential support for eligible members and their families.



### HumanaCare's supports and services can assist in the following areas:

- Relationships and Couples
- Family and Parenting
- Stress
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Substance Use
- Legal and Financial
- Grief and Bereavement
- Career Coaching
- Behavioural Management
- Diet and Nutrition
- Work-Related Stress
- Bullying and Harassment
- Crisis and Trauma



## Coming January 1, 2022

## Why are we changing from our current EAP?

The mental health needs of teachers are growing and becoming more complex. The demand for EAP counselling has increased steadily for many years, resulting in lengthy wait times, program limitations and inequitable access to important services. The change to HumanaCare means more timely access to counselling services for a greater range of issues in all areas of Manitoba.

## How was all this decided?

MTS engaged an external consultant to conduct a review of our EAP in 2020-2021. The process included member and staff input to assess existing services, identify gaps, and consider a strategy for enhanced, sustainable, comprehensive counselling services. In September 2021, after careful consideration of the review findings, the Provincial Executive passed a unanimous motion to engage HumanaCare effective January 1, 2022.

## Is HumanaCare the same as EAP?

HumanaCare will provide counselling services—like our EAP did—and a lot more. Under HumanaCare, we're extending coverage to our members' eligible family members, and we've increased the range of services offered to include marriage and family therapy, and counselling in areas such as substance abuse, bereavement, stress management, finances, and more.

## I'm seeing an MTS EAP counsellor right now. What happens to me?

Anyone who is currently in sessions with our counsellors will be able to complete the sessions available to them until March 31, 2022, at the latest. We encourage you to speak with your counsellor about your therapy plan.

## What are the current EAP staff going to do next?

MTS has long recognized that educators have unique needs that require a comprehensive suite of services. Our current EAP staff will use their experience, expertise, and skills in working with our members to develop new services including mental health education programs, mental health advocacy, and research partnerships, as well as direct services to members and locals. We'll have more detail for you by the end of the school year.

## So MTS wasn't dissatisfied with the EAP counsellors' service?

Not at all. Our EAP counsellors are highly skilled professionals who provided a vital service to MTS members for many years—and we still need them. They remain an essential part of the Society's focus on teacher mental health, shaping programming and initiatives that will become an integral part of our ongoing professional services to members. The challenge for the EAP was the ever-growing demand for services, lengthy wait times, and inequitable access to service for members outside of Winnipeg and Brandon. We knew change was needed in order to provide timely, comprehensive support to all MTS members. And we wanted to offer services to our members' families, too.

## Who are considered "eligible" family members?

Eligible family members include an MTS member's spouse/partner and dependants under the age of 21 who reside in the home. Eligibility is also extended to dependants in the home who are between the ages of 21-25 and enrolled in post secondary schools, as well as disabled dependants of any age.

## **How do I register myself and my family?**

There is no need to register. In mid-December MTS will distribute an access code which will identify you and your family as eligible for services starting January 1. Watch your email and the MTS website for more information. Posters will be distributed to all schools, as well.

## **Do I have to keep the access code?**

No. You only use the access code once, to create your personal, private profile with HumanaCare. Once that's done you can start booking services right away.

## **Do my eligible family members need their own access code?**

No. All MTS members and those eligible use the same access code. The code connects to a HumanaCare landing page where each of you will set up your own separate profile.

## **Can more than one family member access HumanaCare at the same time?**

Yes.

## **Can I contact HumanaCare now and get on a wait list or set up an appointment for January?**

No. MTS members are not covered by HumanaCare until January 1, 2022. At that time, you and/or family members can contact HumanaCare any time, day or night, to request services. From there you will be connected with a counsellor. The best part: no wait list.

## **If I'm using my extended health benefits to see a counsellor right now, do I have to switch to HumanaCare?**

Not at all. Your extended health benefits are separate and additional benefits for you use as you see fit. You can set up a profile with HumanaCare at any time.

## **January 1, 2022, is a holiday. Will I really be able to contact them that day?**

Absolutely.

## **How many sessions will I have?**

All counselling assistance programs—including our current EAP and HumanaCare—are intended to address emergent, short term counselling needs. Psychiatric or long-term counselling is covered under our members' extended health care plans.

## **Is this covered through my union dues?**

It is.

## **Can I see a counsellor in person?**

HumanaCare offers in-person counselling as well as phone, virtual and online/text services, all in multiple languages. However, not all provider specialties will be available in-person.

## **Will I be accommodated if I have a preference for counsellor, i.e. BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, female identifying, etc.**

Yes, you should ask for your preference at the time of your intake. Keep in mind, though, that your preference for counsellor may not be available in your community, or in person. However, HumanaCare has a vast network of counsellors and will work to meet your needs.

## Where do I see these counsellors? Is there a HumanaCare office?

HumanaCare contracts with counsellors in communities throughout Manitoba. Services may be provided on the phone, through video conferencing, or in person at the counsellor's own office.

## How many sessions will I have with a counsellor? Is there any discretion from the counsellor?

Members and their eligible family are provided with a clinically appropriate number of sessions (within the short-term nature of the MFAP). The average is from four to eight sessions, however some people may require more support and some less depending on their individual circumstances.

## What if I see a counsellor, and then a year from now need counselling again. Can I see the same person?

Yes, this is an option. As long as the counsellor is still in HumanaCare's network and has maintained their credentials, individuals can be set up with the same counsellor where requested.

## 24/7 intake, including holidays? We are live January 1 – does that mean members will have someone answer the phone that day?

Correct. Intake is 24/7 live answer, 365 days a year. It's important to note that since phones are answered 24/7 it is recommended that if anyone is dealing with an urgent matter/crisis to call in and not use the mobile app or website to initiate support. While HumanaCare is quick to respond to inquiries via the app or web, they are not as immediate as a call in.

## What if I miss the email with the access code?

No worries. In addition to the information provided by email in mid-December (watch for it in the MTS member newsletter, The Sub) you'll find information posted on the MTS website and at your school, too. Your local association will have the information as well. Remember, though, that **HumanaCare services are only available starting January 1, 2022**, and the access code will be provided in mid-December.

## I can't get into EAP before January 1 and I need counselling services now. What do I do?

MTS members can access their extended health benefits for counselling services before HumanaCare goes live on January 1.

Extended health providers, such as Blue Cross, cover the following: clinical psychologist, social worker, psychotherapist, clinical counsellor and marriage/family therapist. Members can access up to \$850 per calendar year for these services, so those benefits will be renewed and can continue into the new year. Alternatively, members can switch to HumanaCare in January.

In addition, click the following links to search for counsellors/psychologists near you.

[The Psychological Association of Manitoba \(cpmb.ca\)](http://cpmb.ca)

[Find a Canadian Certified Counsellor \(CCC\) or CCC-Supervisor \(CCC-S\) – Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association \(ccpa-accp.ca\)](http://ccpa-accp.ca) Just select Manitoba, city of choice, and hit search.

The Province of Manitoba also offers some services free of charge at [Province of Manitoba | Be Well](http://Province of Manitoba | Be Well)