

# Point spread

THREE SEPARATE PROJECTS COULD ADD HUNDREDS OF NEW HOMES, APARTMENTS IN POINT EDWARD

CATHY DOBSON  
THE JOURNAL

Venetian Boulevard in Point Edward is positioned for a building boom next spring.

“There are very few good locations like this left in our area, that are close to the water, close to downtown, and within walking distance of golfing,” says local developer Alan Merrington.

He hopes to start construction next spring on 22 town homes and six semi-detached homes on five acres beside Venetian Boulevard, across from the federal Customs building.

Merrington says the up-scale project features spacious, 2,000-square-foot, two-and-three bedroom units. Pricing isn’t confirmed, but they will be less than \$800,000 per unit, he said.

“It will be a fenced community with a boardwalk along the canal and eight docks.”

Merrington purchased the land known as 1600 Venetian Blvd. three years ago and has been working his way through the planning process.

Work crews are already removing trees to make way for fencing, geotechnical work, and an archeology study.

“The plan is to replant as many as we can,” he said.

*Continued on 3*

## Still going strong



SARNIA'S RARE WHITE SQUIRREL, recently recorded by nature photographer Ronny D'Haene, seems to be doing well one year after residents first noticed it living in Germain Park. The Eastern grey squirrel is normally black or grey but carries a gene that occasionally produces a white coat. It's believed white squirrels are so rare because their bright colour stands out and makes them an easy targets for predators.

RONNY D'HAENE Special to The Journal

# Agency lauded for child placement success

CATHY DOBSON  
THE JOURNAL

Sarnia-Lambton's Children's Aid Society is being lauded for breaking with convention and stopping the practice of placing children in group homes.

The agency's commitment to place children and youth only with families, and not

group homes, has far-reaching implications for their welfare and safety, experts say.

A handful of Ontario's 50 children's aid societies have stopped group-home placements off and on, but the local CAS is the only one that has managed to maintain the practice, said Kiaras Gharabaghi, a professor at Ryerson University specializing in child and youth residential care.

“Sarnia-Lambton's agency is by far the most successful. It has the potential to initiate change right across the province,” he said.

In 2015 a decision was made locally to stop using group care, said Dawn Flegel, executive director of the local CAS. It took years to slowly adapt new policies and strategies that favour placement of children with kin families.

“We knew we needed to make a huge shift,” Flegel said. “Eighteen months ago, we knocked it out of the park.”

For decades, group home placements were commonplace at every Children's Aid Society.

But a growing sense that group care was harming children caused a switch in attitude.

*Continued on 4*

# LIST WITH WALT

Moving you in the right direction!  
Commercial/Residential Real Estate



# WALTER PALOMBO

REALTOR®

519.384.4545

wpalombo@royallepage.ca



# Local

## Agency:

*Continued from 1*

Studies show many group homes, largely run by private, for-profit operators, are understaffed with untrained employees.

"We talked to many young people who said their experiences growing up in care were not great on the whole," said Flegel.

"One young person said he'd rather be in jail than a group home. That has stuck with me."

Flegel said not every group home experience is bad, but many have been negative for children in care.

"What came out loud and clear was a complete lack of belonging," she said. "They had no rights."

Even a simple act like going to the fridge to get an apple was off limits."

Statistics show youth growing up in group homes are less

likely to graduate from high school, are overrepresented in the criminal justice system later in life, suffer homelessness, and have mental health and addiction problems.

By 2015, group home placements at the Sarnia-Lambton CAS were less frequent, but nine children remained in group care. Another 73 were in foster homes and 92 lived in kinship homes.

This year, none are in



Kiaras Gharabaghi

group homes and the trend is leaning heavily toward kinship placements. Forty children are in foster homes and another 141 with kin families.

Many other Ontario CAS's in recent years have focused on finding placements with extended "kin" family, or other families known to the children. Some have successfully trended away from group homes but only Sarnia-Lambton has completely stopped using them for an extended period.

Gharabaghi, a professor in the School of Child

and Youth Care, approached the local CAS to study its strategies.

While his research is ongoing, Gharabaghi said he can already confirm certain things.

"In Sarnia there is an ingrained understanding that group home care will not happen," he said. "To make that happen has taken extremely innovative leadership and a concerted effort on the part of the staff."

"I believe Sarnia is pav-



Dawn Flegel

ing the way for the province to think differently."

The Sarnia-Lambton CAS also found cost savings by not using group homes, Flegel said.

Ten years ago, the local agency spent \$17.2 million a year. Last year, it spent \$15.2 million.

Some of the savings have been invested in more staff, including three new "family finders" hired to seek out extended family members and work with them on potential placements.

"We've also doubled the number of support staff going into homes to help families," Flegel said.

**ONE CALL HANDYMAN SERVICES**

- Home Repairs/Odd Jobs
- Home Improvements
- Painting
- Cleanups & Junk Removal

**519.312.6709**  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
[www.hireonecall.com](http://www.hireonecall.com)

**SC**

**STEPHANIE CORTEZ**  
sales representative  
**519.312.6392**  
[stephcortez@royallepage.ca](mailto:stephcortez@royallepage.ca)  
[WWW.STEPHCORTEZ.ROYALLEPAGE.CA](http://WWW.STEPHCORTEZ.ROYALLEPAGE.CA)

**SC #LISTwithSteph**  
LOYALTY-INTEGRITY-SUCCESS-TRUST

**HELPING YOU BUY, SELL & DESIGN**

- RESIDENTIAL REAL STATE SALES
- INTERIOR DESIGN AND RENOVATIONS
- MORTGAGE & FINANCIAL ADVICE

**ROYAL LE PAGE KEY REALTY**

**The spruce has landed**

A CRANE OPERATOR lowers this year's Sarnia Christmas Tree into its place at the City Hall fountain on Nov. 17. Resident Wanda Giampietri donated the 40-foot Norway spruce, and Atko Cranes and Brandon Contracting volunteered to move and prepare the tree, which was being decorated with 800 lights.

TROY SHANTZ The Journal



**12 Days of CHRISTMAS**

for Sarnia-Lambton Rebound  
December 1<sup>st</sup>- 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**12 RAFFLE DRAWS**  
**\$18,000 PRIZE BOARD**

Incredible experiences, gift cards, cash prizes & much more!

visit [reboundonline.com](http://reboundonline.com) to see the complete prize board & get your tickets today!



PRESENTED BY **CARPENTERS LOCAL 1256 SARNIA**

**REBOUND**  
Sarnia-Lambton  
license # M841425

Henry Plater Smart Financial Choices Start Here

**PLATER FINANCIAL INC.**

519-383-5138  
[www.platerfinancial.com](http://www.platerfinancial.com)

Director of Greetings (D.O.G.)

**Goldie's Family Restaurant**

**BREAKFAST & LUNCH**  
8am - 2pm

**SENIOR DISCOUNTS**  
Bottomless Cup of Coffee or Tea \$1.00 (with food purchase)

1716 London Line • 519-491-8777

**TITAN ROOFING**

INSURANCE CLAIM SPECIALISTS

ROOFS FOR AS LOW AS \$100 PER MONTH OR NO PAYMENTS FOR 6 MONTHS

• Factory certified • Fully insured with WSIB •

840 PHILLIP ST, SARNIA ON  
**519-491-5647**

**SHOP LOCAL IT MATTERS**

**AP Vail Jewellers**  
Lay-a-way Available

149 Davis St. Sarnia • 519-332-1066