

Depth *of* Feel

A COLLECTION
OF CURATED
TALES



BANKO CREATIVE STUDIO

We create brands you can *feel*.

At Banko Creative Studio, we spin a great yarn. It's kind of our thing. Regardless of the medium, we find the right angle for all of our clients. Whether you're in Hamilton, Toronto, Atlanta, Chicago, or any place in between, we'll start your narrative and nail your ending.

We've been doing this for a long while—since 1996 to be exact.

A few decades later, we've shared a lot of beers and a lot of cheers with small businesses, large corporations, and non-profit organizations.

We solve unique business problems with unique creative solutions, using a combination of our diverse in-house skill sets.

banko
CREATIVE STUDIO



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The Authentic Issue

There's a lot of talk about authenticity.

We see it everywhere. In branding, in travel, in the way people describe what they're looking for. Something honest. Something real. But authenticity isn't something you can apply at the very end. And it's not something you can borrow.

It shows up over time.

In relationships. In familiarity. In the quiet understanding that develops when you've worked with someone long enough to know what matters to them, and their audience.

After 30 years in business, we've learned that's where the work starts.

Not with aesthetics or deliverables, but with people. With stories and conversations. With the tiny details that stick with you. The ones that aren't always spelled out in a brief, yet shape everything about a project.

So, instead of sticking to the surface, this issue looks deeper.

In the articles within, you won't find objectives and detailed summaries. Instead, we're focusing on the things underneath. The parts that are easy to overlook, but reflect who our clients are or what inspires us.

For Today's Family, it's not the organization, but the children at the centre of the care.

For The Archipelago, it's not just the destination, but the landscape you're part of.

Every one of our clients has that grain of authenticity.

Because when something is built this way, it doesn't need to try too hard. It connects. It feels real, and it resonates with people.

That's the real work. And that's what we mean when we say we create brands you can feel.

We hope you enjoy the read, and also enjoy the thoughts behind it.

Tara

Tara Bryk, CEO
Banko Creative Studio



Client
Mosaic

Services
Strategy
Branding
Design
Social Media
Website Design
Photography

NON-ALCOHOLIC

NONE OF THE ALCOHOL. ALL OF THE FUN

ANGOSTURA SPRITZ \$6
Bright citrus, warm spice, and a little fizz.

SHIRLEY TWIST \$8
A grown-up take on a classic—ginger beer, orange juice, and grenadine.

MARTINI VIBRANTE SPRITZ \$8
Bitter orange, light bubbles, and a crisp tonic finish.

MARTINI FLOREALE SPRITZ \$8
Floral, herbal, and just the right amount of zest.

Ask us about our non-alcoholic beer selection or try a crafted mocktail.

All prices plus HST.

SNACKS

CHARCUTERIE BOARD \$25 / \$46
A selection of imported and local meats and cheeses, with crackers and savoury bites. Small (serves 2-3) or large (serves 4+). Gluten-free available.

PRETZEL & BEER CHEESE DIP \$13
Two soft pretzels with house-made beer cheddar dip.

CHEESE PLATE \$8
An assortment of cheeses, pickles, and crackers. Gluten-free available.

RAMEN EGGS \$7
Marinated in rich Japanese flavours.

BEER NUTS \$3.50
Bavarian-style roasted nuts.

KETTLE CHIPS \$3 / \$7
Various flavours. Small or large bags.

COOKIES & CARAMEL DIP \$7.50
Locally made, artisanal sugar cookies served with Ghirardelli salted caramel for dipping.

All prices plus HST.

CRAVING SOMETHING SWEET?

COFFEE

COFFEE WITH A KICK \$12

IRISH COFFEE
Whiskey, Baileys, and coffee. Simple and solid.

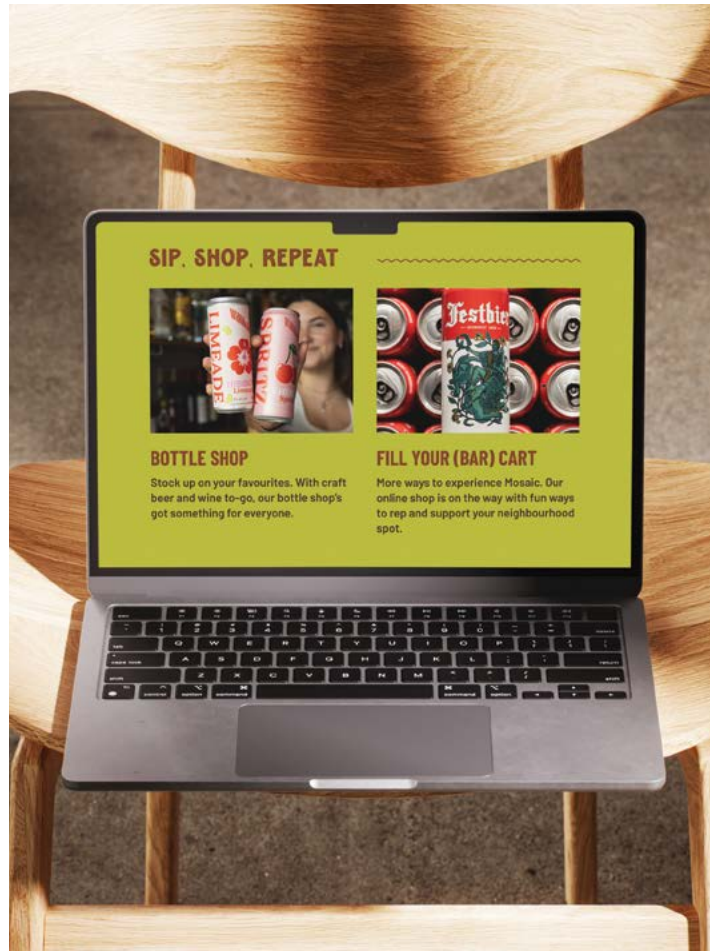
SPANISH COFFEE
Rum, orange, and coffee. A little sweet, a little strong.

ITALIAN COFFEE
Hazelnut, coffee, and a touch of Kahlua. Like dessert in a mug.

ESPRESSO \$3.50 | COFFEE \$

All prices plus HST.





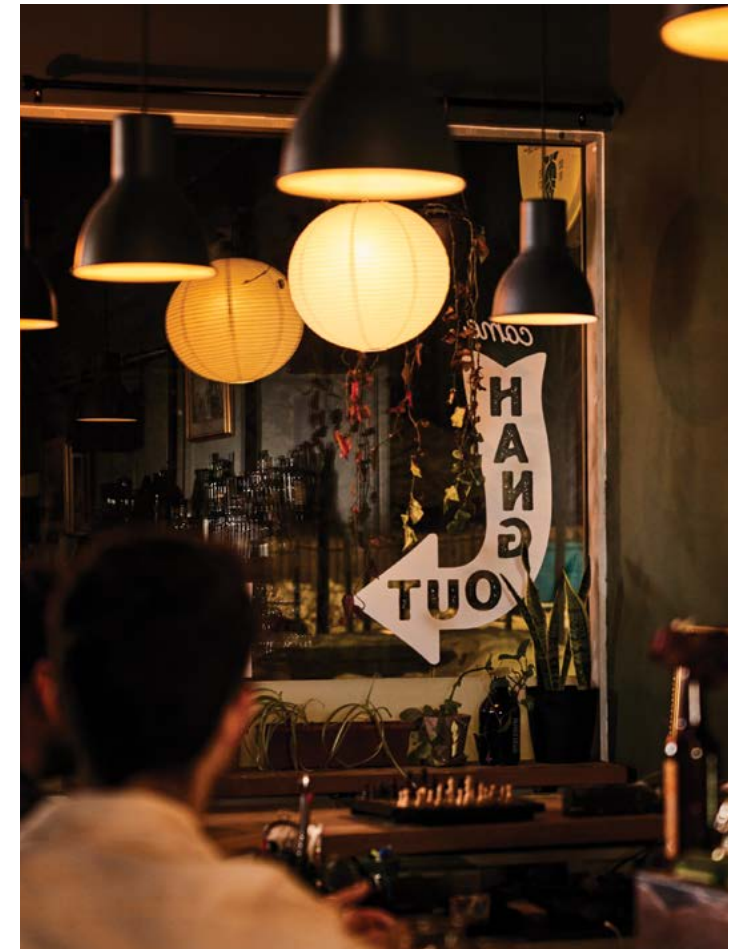
In his work *The Great Good Place*, Ray Oldenburg coined the term 'Third Place' to describe a community space whose primary function is socialization. The Third Place is distinct from the first two places: home, and work. The purpose of your home is to be a shelter; the purpose of your work is to be productive. The Third Place is social, casual, and open. There are no obligations, no attendance-taking, and no hierarchy. The focus is on conversation, connection, and de-stressing.

To create a Third Place is to create an environment where people can truly be themselves. Free from other social obligations, deadlines, or lower rungs on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Third Places allow people to explore who they are and who they want to be. The casualness of the Third Place lends itself to authenticity: if you're there, it's because you want to be. There's no need to pretend to be anything other than yourself. The lack of a strict hierarchy leads to connections being made across various social strata.

There is an ancient Latin phrase: *in vino veritas*. Translated, it means "in wine, truth." It's typically taken to mean that those who have had a few too many drinks have a (sometimes unfortunate) propensity to speak their unfiltered minds.

But here's a different truth: Third Places don't need to be alcohol-related, but many are. A good drink after a long day builds on the work of a Third Place: they relax, lower barriers, and make socialization easier. But drinking isn't — and shouldn't be — the focus of the Third Place.

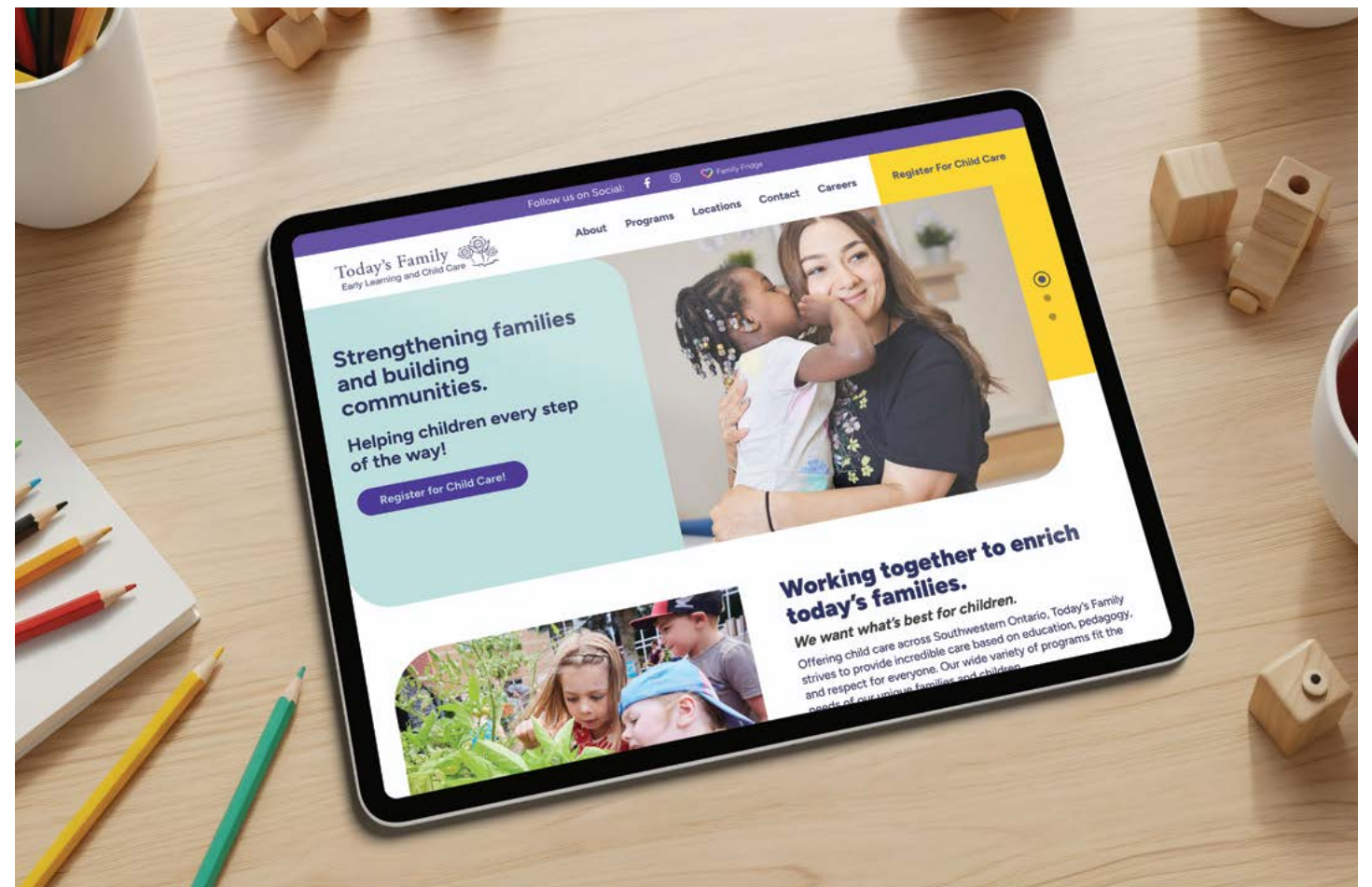
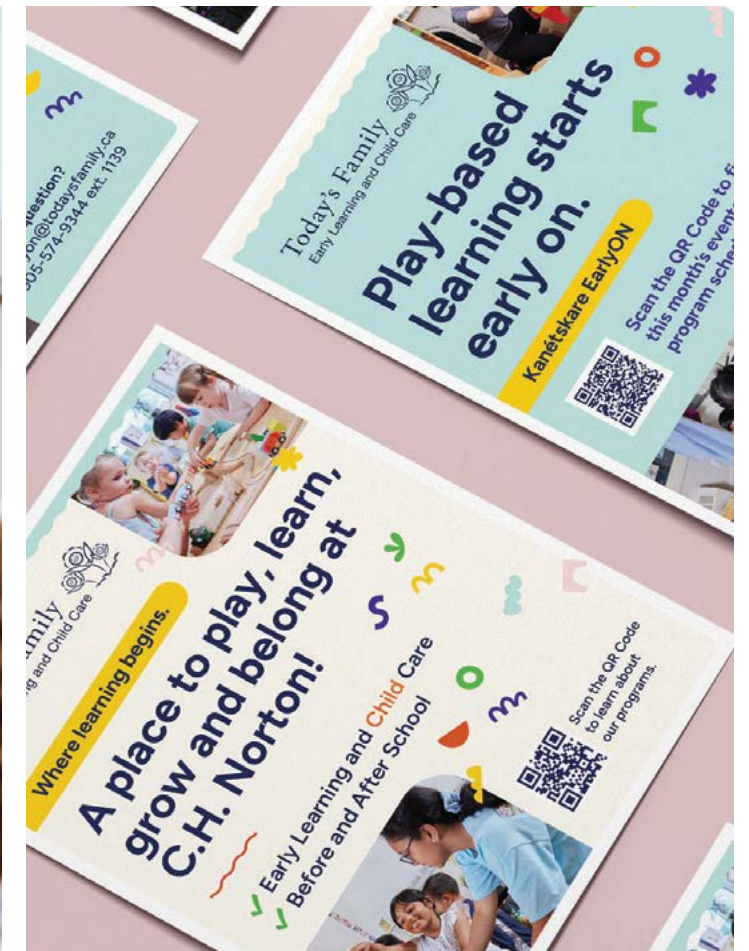
Instead, the Third Place is found in heads huddled together discussing answers to a trivia question, in laughing groups of friends, and in new connections being made. If a local watering hole creates connection and community, it isn't because of the beers on tap or the cocktail menu; it's because the social environment makes those moments of connection, understanding, and truth happen.





Client
Today's Family

Services
Strategy
Design
Copywriting
Photography
Website Design





Every Thursday, a group of two-to-three-year-olds leave their child care centre, winds their way through the neighbourhood, makes a mad dash through City Hall, and strolls into the Art Gallery of Hamilton. In their hands they hold little sketchbooks and crayons, and they move through the gallery under the nervous eyes of AGH staff, making notes and drawings inspired by the art they see.

The first exhibition they visited was on works relating to Ovid's *Metamorphosis*. Typical toddler fare.

Their most revelatory, unprompted observations: important art — or, art made by important people — tended to be hung on the wall in giant golden frames. These tottering art appreciators soon started to surround their best sketches in yellow crayon, denoting their importance. And shortly after that, gold frames (though perhaps slightly less garish) appeared in their classroom at the centre, hanging on walls to display their art for their parents to admire.





Client
Coppley

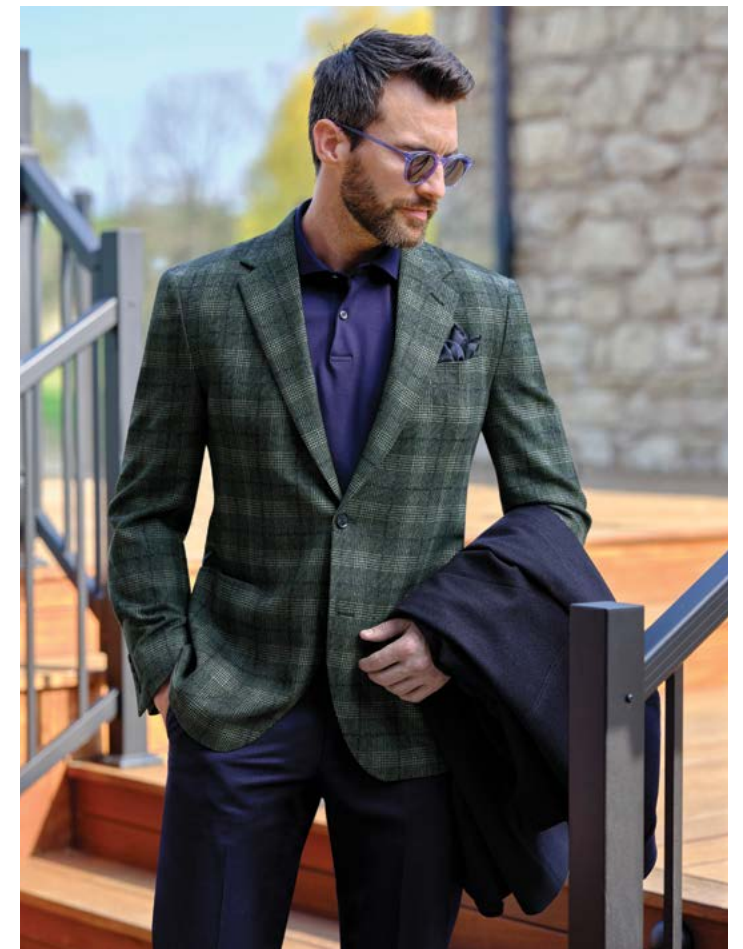
Services
Photography
Videography

It may seem odd to have a conversation about authenticity by talking about *The Importance of Being Earnest*, the story of two men, neither named Ernest, who are desperate to court two women each of whom are overly-attached to the name. After all, Oscar Wilde's theatrical triumph is more steeped in artificiality, deception, and duplicity than the tea Cecily and Gwendolen share in Act Two. But beneath the layers of double-speak and double-crossing lies the truth of the play: it means what it says.

“Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?”

While the play itself is a farce, typically viewed as a lower form of comedy, Oscar Wilde is not a playwright you would associate with simple or low-brow humour. In *The Importance of...* Wilde displays his usual quick wit, banter, and hilariousness, yes, but also a cutting observance of society. The play is also a satire, after all: a holding of the gilded mirror in front of the Victorian's face. And with such cutting commentary, the farce was necessary for the audience to look beyond the criticism. "If you want to tell people the truth, make them laugh," Wilde wrote in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. "Otherwise, they'll kill you."

So, the authenticity in *The Importance of...* is in the depiction of the characters, their trivialities, their insipidness, and their silliness. While obviously exaggerated for humour, the observation is true: Wilde's rapid and witty dialogue is crafted to pierce the veil of society and reveal its true nature. A gathering of well-fashioned high society can show one side of authenticity, even if at first it seems to do the opposite.



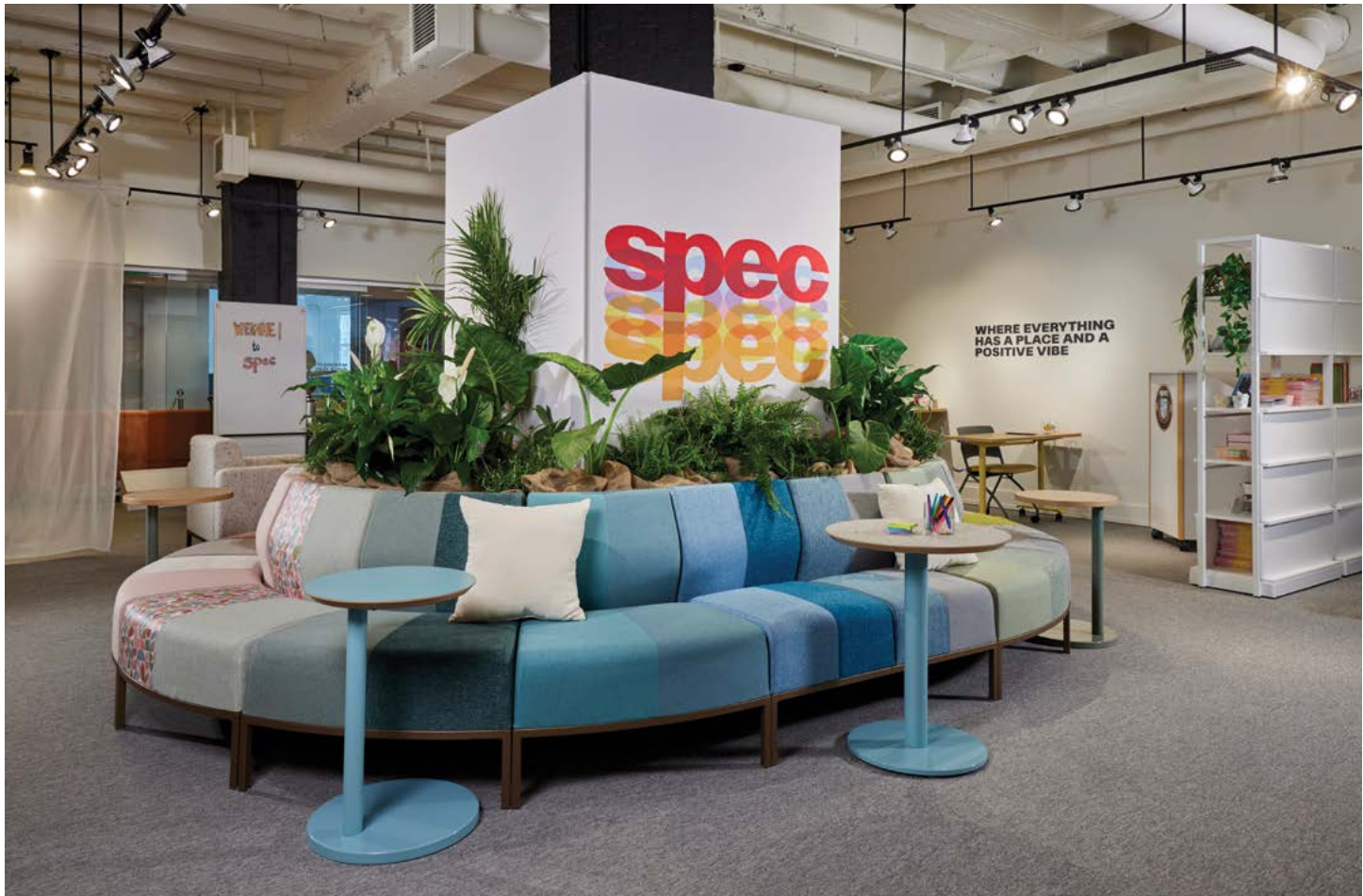


Client
Spec Furniture

Services
Photography

Bauhaus was a movement created by German architect/designer Walter Gropius in 1919. Rejecting the individualism of the Arts & Crafts movement, Bauhaus leaned into mass manufacturing and mass consumption. While the Bauhaus school was formally closed in 1933 by the Nazis, the influence of the school carries on to the modern day in sleek, unornamented, and functional goods for everyday life.







Client
Township of
The Archipelago

Services
Strategy
Branding
Graphic Design
Social Media

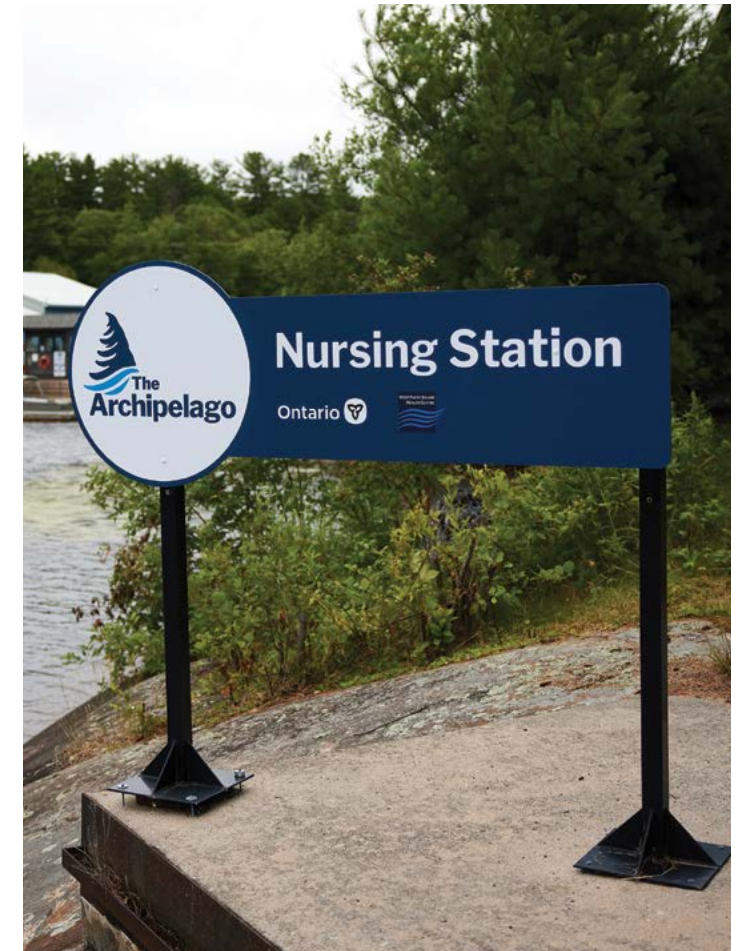




Usually the red squirrel (*Sciurus Hudsonius*) waked me in the dawn, coursing over the roof and up and down the sides of the house, as if sent out of the woods for this purpose. In the course of the winter I threw out half a bushel of ears of sweet-corn, which had not got ripe, on to the snow crust by my door, and was amused by watching the motions of the various animals which were baited by it. In the twilight and the night the rabbits came regularly and made a hearty meal. All day long the red squirrels came and went, and afforded me much entertainment by their manœuvres. One would approach at first warily through the shrub-oaks, running over the snow crust by fits and starts like a leaf blown by the wind, now a few paces this way, with wonderful speed and waste of energy, making inconceivable haste with his "trotters," as if it were for a wager, and now as many

paces that way, but never getting on more than half a rod at a time; and then suddenly pausing with a ludicrous expression and a gratuitous somerset, as if all the eyes in the universe were fixed on him,—for all the motions of a squirrel, even in the most solitary recesses of the forest, imply spectators as much as those of a dancing girl,—wasting more time in delay and circumspection than would have sufficed to walk the whole distance,—I never saw one walk,—and then suddenly, before you could say Jack Robinson, he would be in the top of a young pitch-pine, winding up his clock and chiding all imaginary spectators, soliloquizing and talking to all the universe at the same time,—for no reason that I could ever detect, or he himself was aware of, I suspect.

Selection from Walden, by Henry David Thoreau.





Client
Cardinal Meats

Services
Photography

4lbs "English-style" short rib
 2 tbsp olive oil
 3 garlic cloves, crushed
 1 large onion, chopped
 2 celery ribs, chopped
 2 carrots, chopped
 2 tbsp tomato paste
 2 cups dry red wine
 2 cups beef stock
 2 bay leaves

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Prepare ribs: sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Heat oil in large ovenproof pot over high heat. Brown ribs aggressively on all sides, in batches, 5-7 min. each batch.

Keep cooking on page 30.







Client
Pearle Hospitality

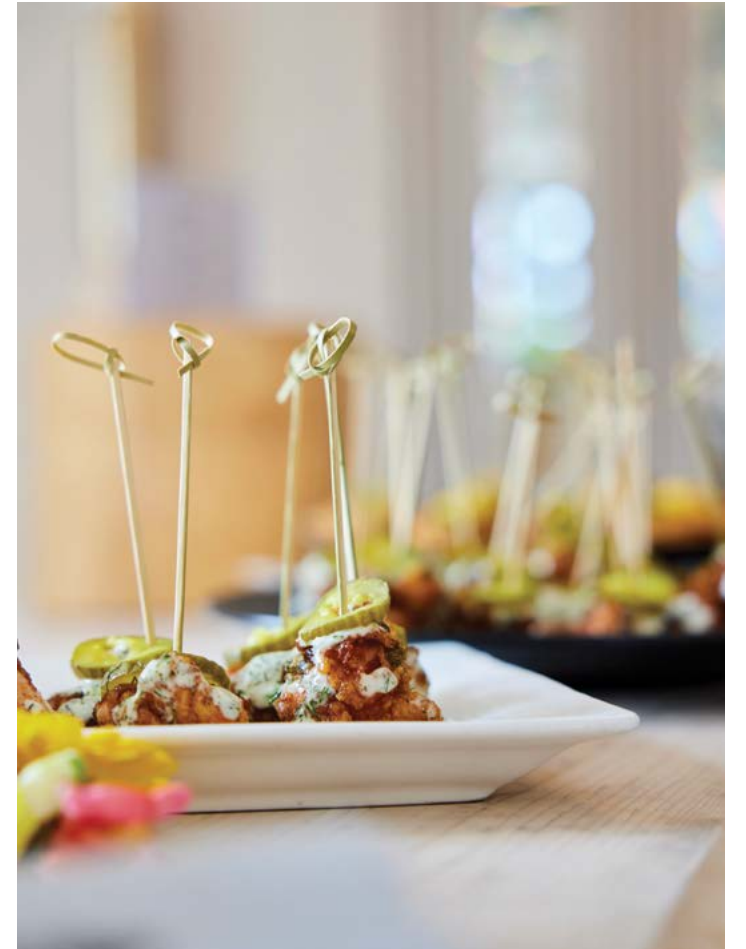
Services
Photography



3. Turn heat to med. Remove ribs and cook onion and garlic in the same pot, 2 min.
4. Add carrot & celery, cook for 5 min.
5. Add tomato paste, cook 1 min. Add wine, broth, & bay leaves. Stir until paste is dissolved.
6. Return ribs to pot.

7. Cover and cook in oven for 3 hours. After, remove beef and keep on the bone.
8. Strain liquid, then return sauce to pot. Simmer and stir to reduce.
9. Serve beef, spoon over sauce.

Recipe: Nagi Maehashi, RecipeTinEats



The United Church
of Canada Foundation

Strategy
Graphic Design
Copywriting
Photography
Website Design
Videography



For most, a legacy ask is not about convincing the prospective donor that the recipient or cause is important — with gifts like these, the cause is either already written on their heart (and has been, most likely, for most if not all of their life) or, it isn't. Instead, a legacy ask is about ensuring a donor knows that their gift is needed. That their gift will be impactful, appreciated, and will do good work for the thing that they care most about.

To procure a legacy gift is to ask without asking, to be welcoming to the donor's own vision for your own future more than anything else. They are transformative.

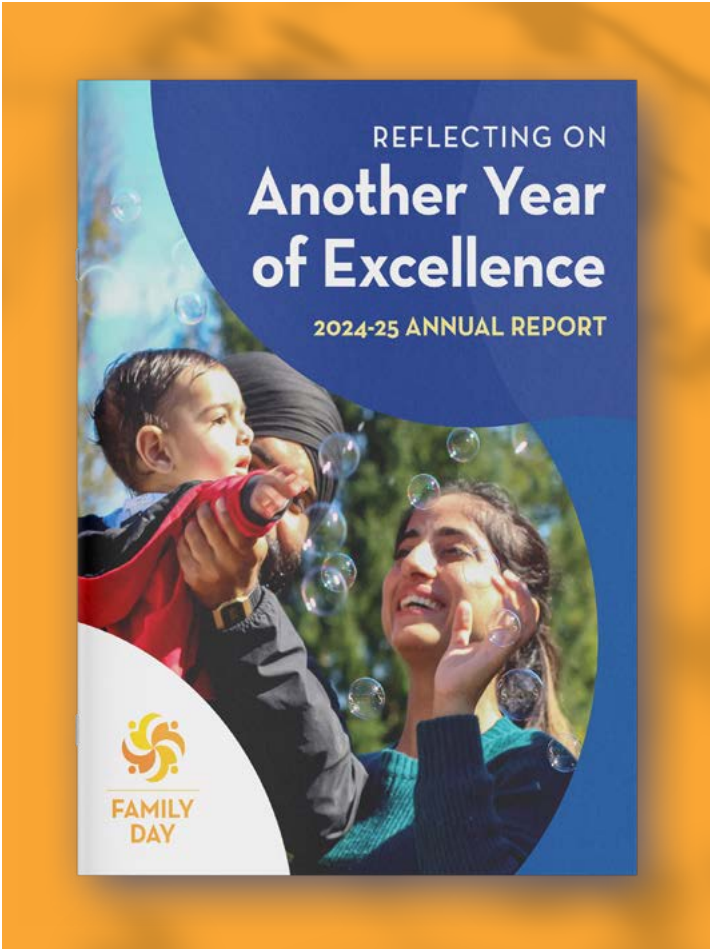
To receive a legacy gift is to receive a piece of the donor's soul: treat it carefully.



Client
Family Day

Services
Strategy
Graphic Design
Photography

Children are the very model of authenticity. When a child gives you their opinion, you can be rest assured that what they say is meant earnestly and truthfully. Listening to the children around you is an exercise in keeping a straight face (or, simply giving in and embracing the joys of life).





Please enjoy these snippets of conversations with our Banko office children:

My niece was in her No Phase, when every answer is no, whether it needs to be or not. Except she didn't simply say no, she said: **"It's my life, and my business."**

At an Easter Egg Hunt, my son gave me one of his hard-fought chocolate eggs. I told him how happy and impressed I was; **"You are so nice and generous,"** I told him. He replied: **"Well, I'm also mean sometimes, you know."**

When she was small, my daughter had a tendency to steal my wife's lipstick. One day, at her wits' end, my wife asked, **"Okay, where's my lipstick?"** To which my daughter replied: **"It's not in my boot."** Guess where she had stashed them?

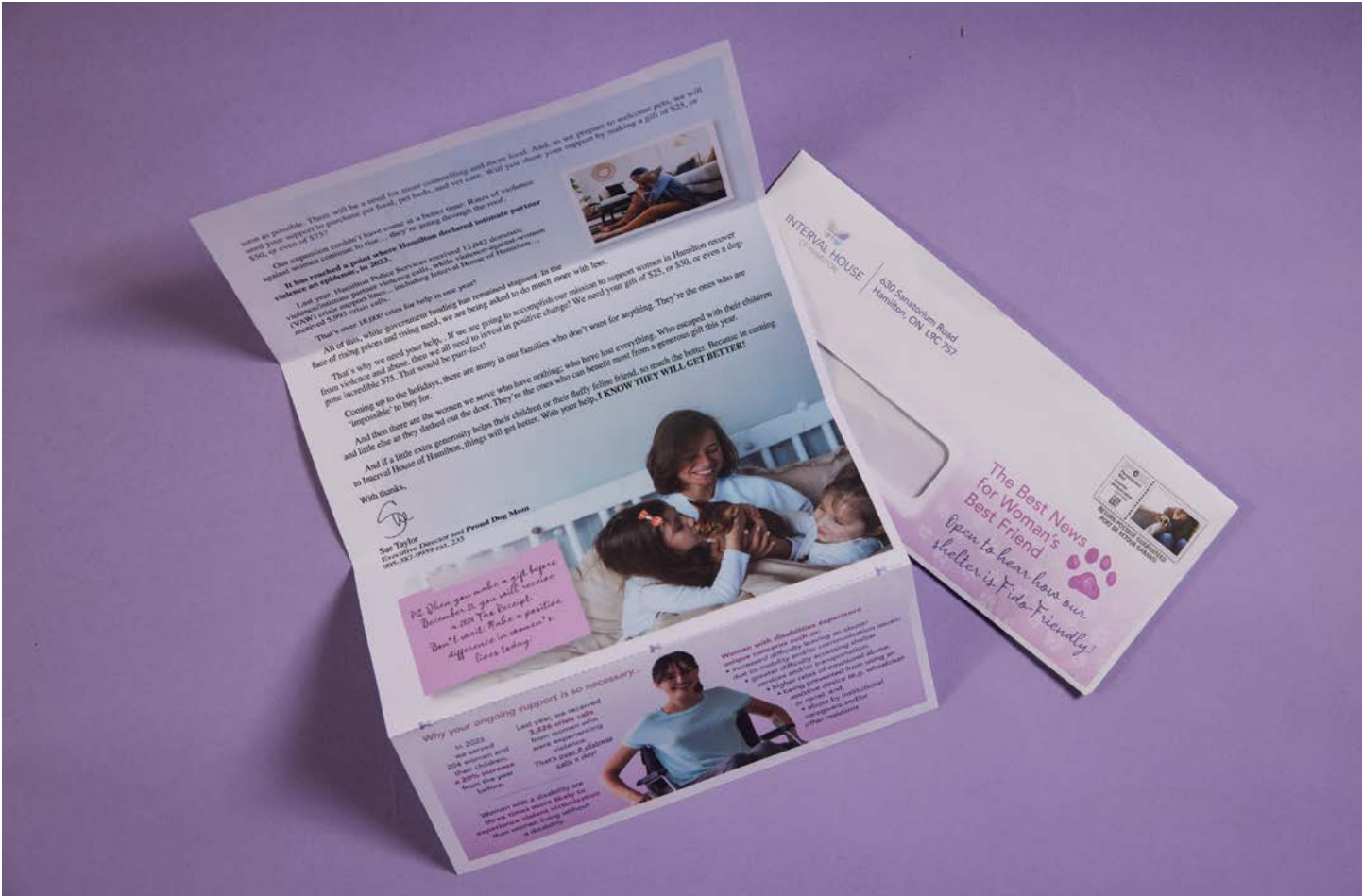
I was at the park one day when a toddler, maybe four years old, spotted a freight train. **"TRAIN!"** He screamed, as loud as he could, in a voice that could either be full of rage or full of excitement, but definitely one of the two. **"STOP! THE! TRAIN!"**

"It's hard to wait for grown-ups to stop talking so that I can have a turn," my daughter noted. When I pointed out that **"patient girls wait for their turn to talk,"** my daughter bluntly pointed out: **"Well, I'm not one of those."**

Client
Interval House of Hamilton

Services
Strategy
Graphic Design
Photography
Copywriting





When Margaret Atwood wrote *The Handmaid's Tale* in the mid-1980's, she did so as a reaction to a rising trend of religious conservatism that was sweeping across the western world. The dystopian world of Gilead — centred on its repression and subjugation of women — is a reversal of feminist victories regarding sexual freedom: access to contraceptives and abortion. Remove these protections, and the ability to use a woman's sex and sexuality as a tool of oppression returns.

Although we may hope otherwise, the world of 2026 is perhaps closer to Gilead than it is to Utopia. Forty years on, *The Handmaid's Tale's* salient observations continue to ring true. Women continue to be victimized — both by legal structures (in the removal of longstanding protections), and by partners. In Canada, while all other measures of violent crime are declining year-over-year, gender-based violence is on the rise.

The unfortunate truth of *The Handmaid's Tale* is that Gilead is possible, and preventing Atwood's speculated future requires the constant work of fighting millions of personal battles, wherever we find them.





Client
Mohawk Group

Services
Graphic Design
Photography
Videography



Sheila Colla is the last person known to have identified a native Rusty-patched Bumblebee in the Canadian wild. It was 2009 and Colla, then a biologist with York University, was surveying known locations of the bumblebee when she spotted a specimen buzzing beside her passenger window.

Once one of Ontario’s most-common bumblebee species, the Rusty-patched Bumblebee was the first native bee in Canada to be officially designated as “endangered.” Now, it has all but vanished from the wilds.

The decline of the Rusty-patched Bumblebee — identified most clearly by its orangey-brown stripe across its back — is tragic, but it is not an outlier. Around the world, native populations of bumblebees are in decline, replaced by invasive species (did you know: North America has zero native honey bee species) or industrially-managed populations that are at greater risk of disease.

Bumblebees are important native pollinators, having grown and evolved alongside native species of plants for tens of thousands of years before human introduction. Supporting healthy ecosystems is more involved than simply planting a garden: an emphasis on native plants will naturally attract and shelter a wider variety of insects

and fauna than plants that originated overseas. In doing so, we are protecting the incredible biodiversity of our planet and saving other species from the fate of the Rusty-patched Bumblebee.

We can all do our part to foster native pollinators by creating native gardens, and by treating green spaces in ways that encourage insect life and behaviours. Here are some easy tips:

Carefully select your plants. Research plants native to your area. Plant a variety of colours and shapes that bloom in different times of the year.

Cut it with the cleaning. Mother Nature is messy. Pollinators flock to the wild and overgrown, rather than the sparse and pruned.

Winter properly. Dead flower stalks provide shelter for wintering bugs. Leave dead leaves on the ground for insulation and habitat.

For more information and inspiration, find a copy of A Garden for the Rusty-Patched Bumblebee: Creating Habitat for Native Pollinators by Lorraine Johnson and Sheila Colla.



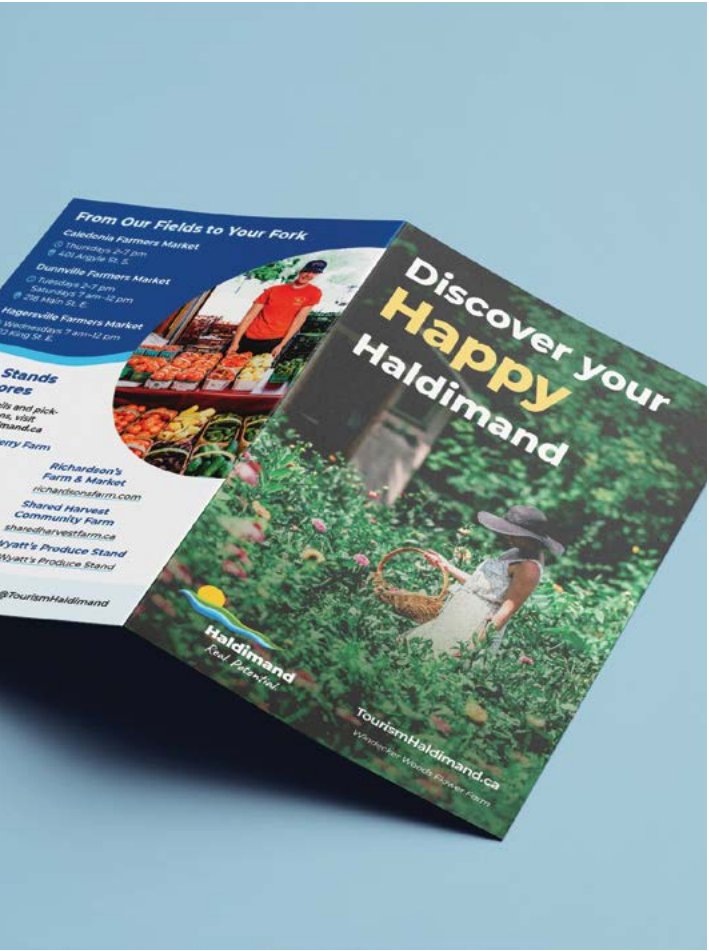


Client
Haldimand County

Services
Strategy
Graphic Design
Photography



Ruthven Park
National Historic Site





Spend an hour planning a vacation, and you'll find people asking about authentic experiences. You want to uncover hidden gems. Avoid tourist traps. Dine at local diners and eat what locals eat.

But *authentic* is boring; that doesn't mean it's bad, it's just mundane and every-day. *Authentic* is driving the same route to work each morning, knowing to turn right at the old tree that fell down years ago. Authentic is the same coffee order served by the same tired-eyed barista with the same smile (it turns out proximity to caffeine doesn't necessarily help waking up). Authentic is working hard, and then collapsing on the couch at the end of the day.

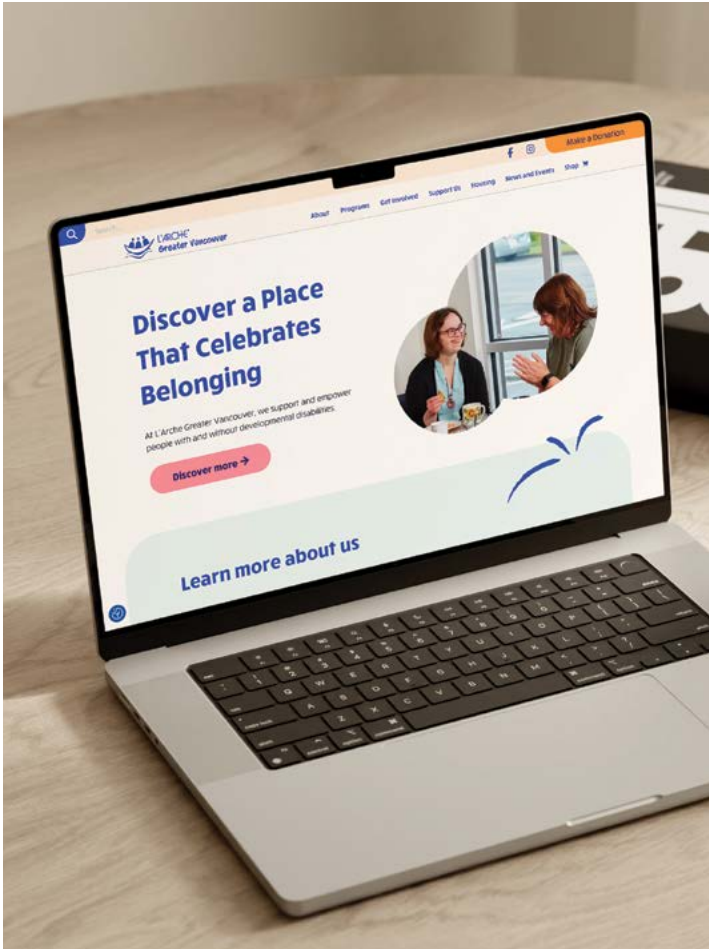
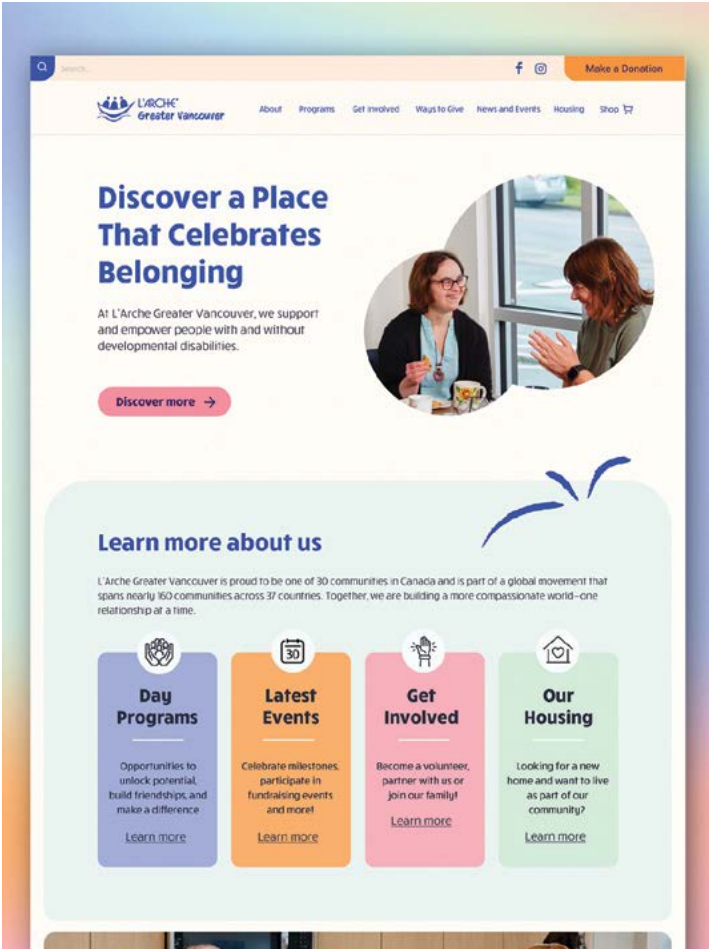
Don't search for *authentic*; experience the special things. Just because locals don't make the hotspots into their daily routines doesn't mean they aren't as real.



Client
L'Arche Greater Vancouver

Services
Website Design
Photography





Builder, in building the little house,
In every way you may please yourself;
But please please me in the kitchen chimney:
Don't build me a chimney upon a shelf.
However far you must go for bricks,
Whatever they cost a-piece or a pound,
Buy me enough for a full-length chimney,
And build the chimney clear from the ground.
It's not that I'm greatly afraid of fire,
But I never heard of a house that throve
(And I know of one that didn't thrive)
Where the chimney started above the stove.
And I dread the ominous stain of tar
That there always is on the papered walls,
And the smell of fire drowned in rain
That there always is when the chimney's false.
A shelf's for a clock or vase or picture,
But I don't see why it should have to bear
A chimney that only would serve to remind me
Of castles I used to build in air.

The Kitchen Chimney, by Robert Frost

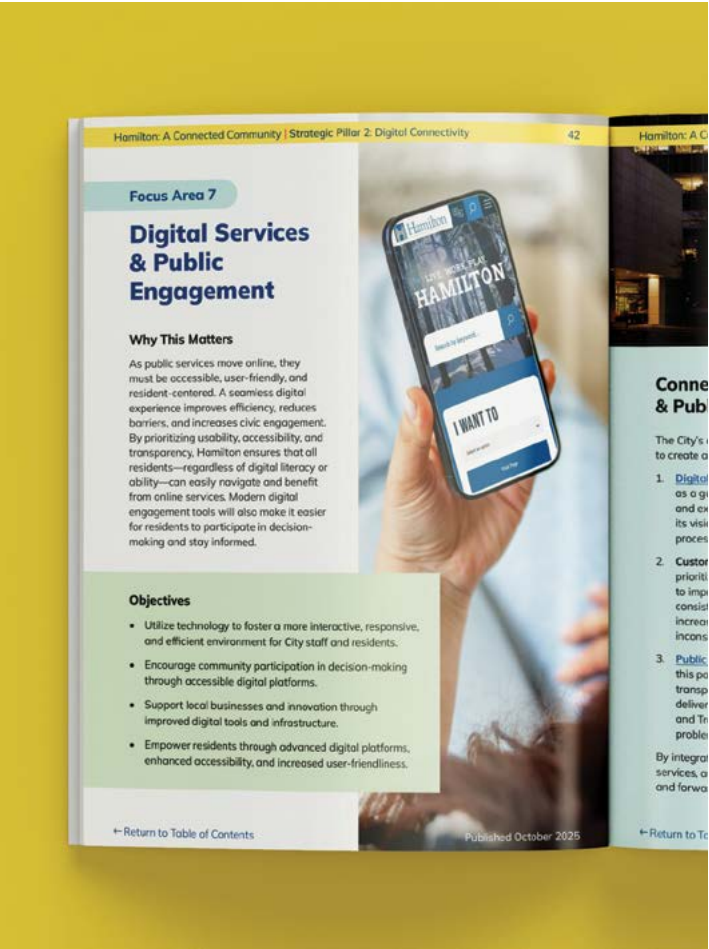
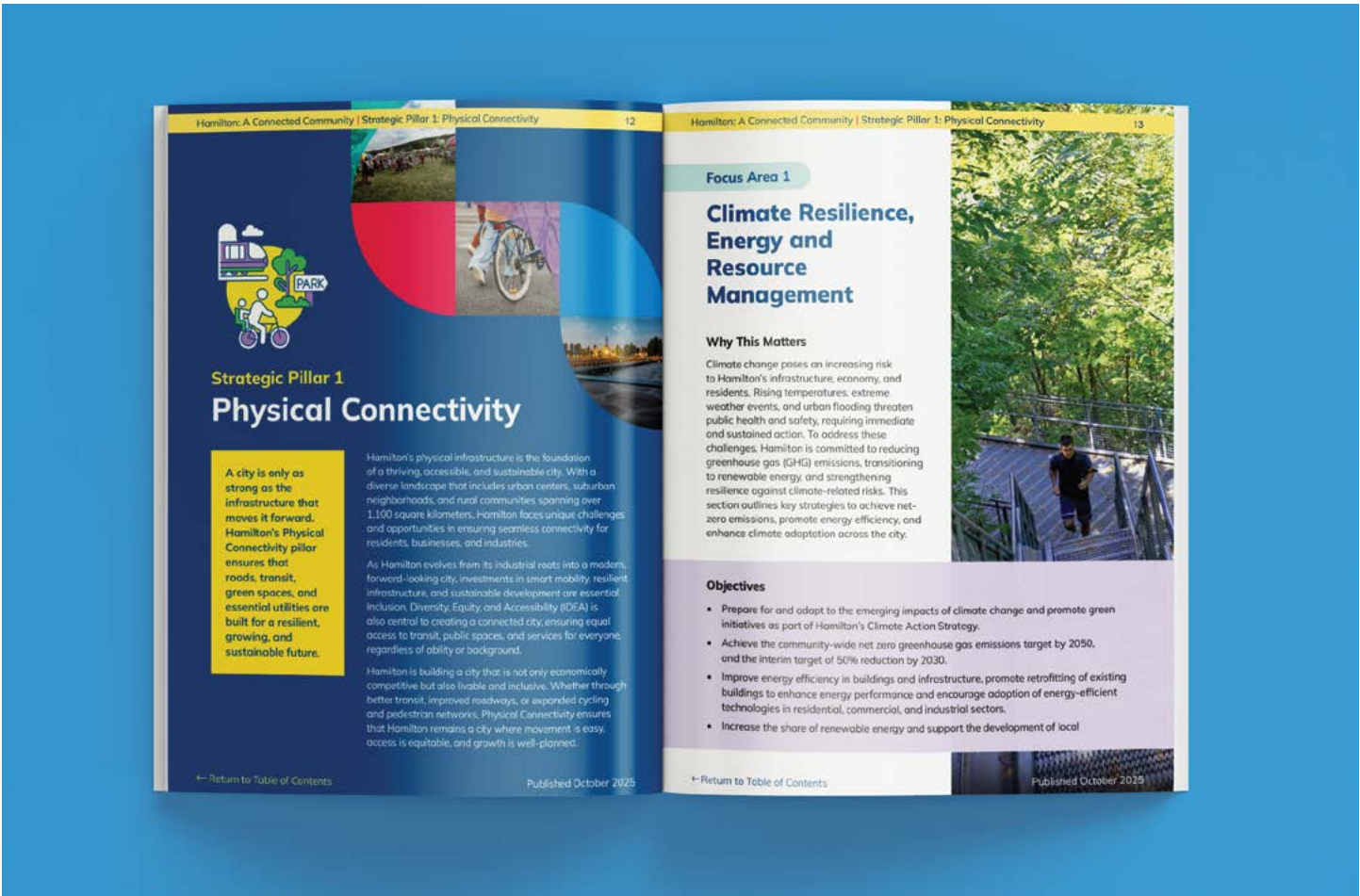


Client
City of Hamilton

Services
Graphic Design



We say, "Work with people your mom would love." It turns out, moms love people that make their kids (that's you) look good. Looking good means looking sleek, looking pretty, and cutting through the fluff to get that authentic feeling out in the open to be admired. Your mom is proud of you, and we are, too. That's why we make you look good.





Client
Can-Dan

Services
Strategy
Graphic Design
Photography

Glasses: 75% of people require vision correction of some capacity.
Braces: 67% of American teens report orthodontic use.
Insoles: 88% of seniors ages 85-95 wear insoles to help with foot, ankle, and back pain.
Hearing Aids: 11% of the adult population could benefit from hearing aids.
Assistive Technology: 30% of the global population requires some sort of assistive technology (wheelchairs, prosthetics, etc).

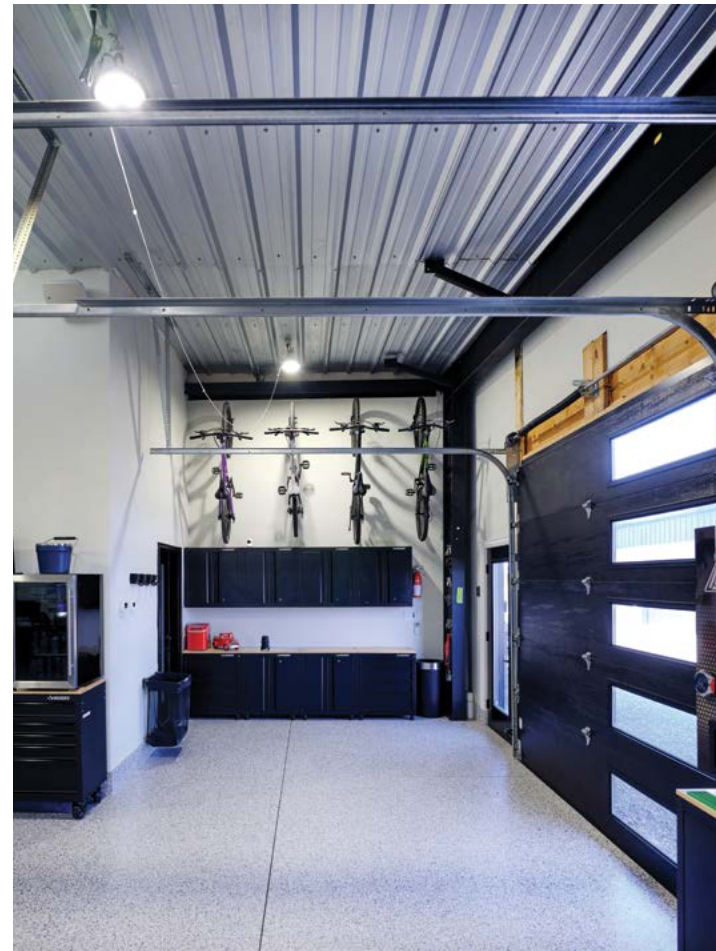
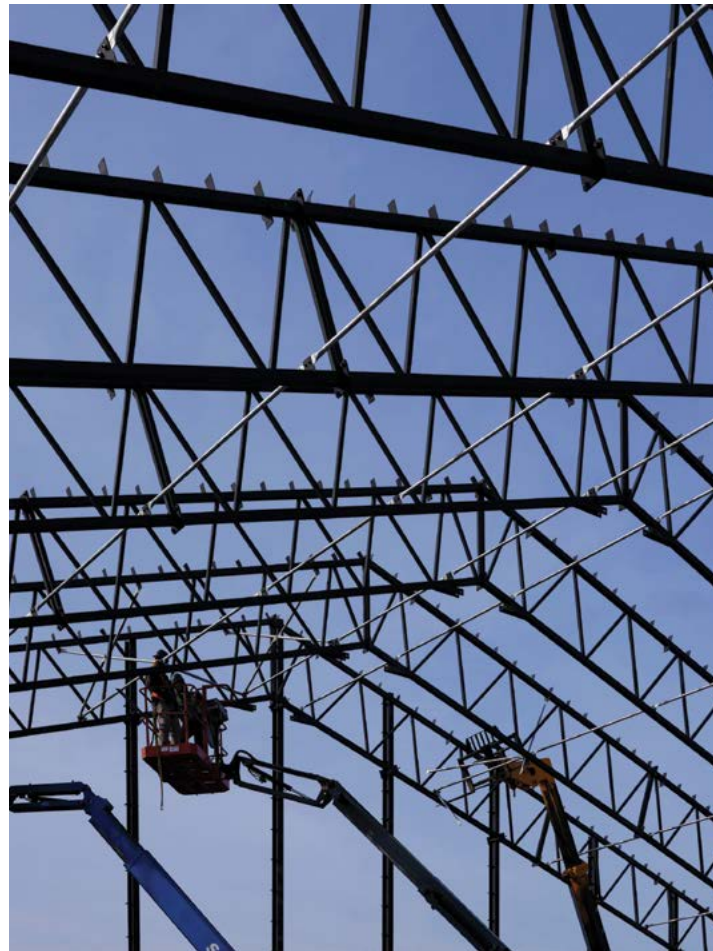


Client
Steel Design

Services
Strategy
Copywriting
Photography
Videography



1. The Eiffel Tower was constructed as the centrepiece of Paris' 1889 World's Fair. Standing at 330 m tall, it was at the time the tallest erected structure in history by more than 100 m.
2. The Eiffel Tower is constructed of 7,300 tonnes of puddle iron — a precursor to modern steel. What's most impressive about its weight, though, is how *light* it is: the emphasis of latticework on the structural design makes the Eiffel Tower remarkably economically-designed. If all of the metal in the Tower was melted down and spread across its base dimensions, the iron would only stand 6 cm tall.
3. Initial reactions to the Eiffel Tower were mixed, with Paris' artistic elite banding together to decry the initial plans. They created a manifesto attempting to stall building, writing: "Will the city of Paris continue to associate itself with the baroque and mercantile fancies of a builder of machines?"
4. More engineer than architect, Gustave Eiffel, for whom the tower is named, initially became famous for designing railway bridges across France. His team were able to apply the same standards and approaches to the design of the Tower, which fortified the design with real-world experience.
5. French writer Guy de Maupassant famously took to dining on the Eiffel Tower as often as he could, not because he enjoyed the Tower or the food, but because it was the only place he could eat in Paris where he could not see the Eiffel Tower.
6. Less than a generation after it was completed, though, the Eiffel Tower came to inspire the Lost Generation of artists, poets, and novelists that flocked to Paris. French artists became drawn to the Tower as well, and it wasn't long before, as scholar William Thompson describes, the Tower became "the acknowledged foremost universal symbol of Paris and France."



Work with people your mom would love.

Fancy wordsmiths would call our team “multi-disciplinary”; we just call us “really darn good at a bunch of really valuable things.” This ultimately means no cookie-cutter solutions (unless you’re a cookie-cutter business). We solve unique business problems with unique creative solutions, using a combination of our diverse in-house skill sets. Plus, we’re charming and really smart.



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