

# Cummings Centre: Staying connected, informed and entertained throughout the Pandemic

Montreal seniors continue to show their resiliency and strength throughout this unprecedented pandemic. Particularly challenging for seniors, with many living alone, isolated from family and friends and unable to maintain their daily routines, they are seeking out stimulating ways to cope and remain active during this period of isolation.

The Cummings Centre is staying true to its mission to empower and enhance the quality of life of adults age 50 and over by continuing to provide dynamic and innovative programs on-line throughout the pandemic. With so many seniors equipped with laptops, iPads and more, a few quick clicks allow members and the community at large, to access to over 180 stimulating on-line programs through the Virtual Learning Library funded by the Leonard Albert Family Foundation. Latest offerings include live Zoom Events covering topics as far ranging as Montreal Bagel Making and Israeli Ideas and Innovations, to live webinars with former NDP leader and political commentator Thomas Mulcair and *An Evening of Stories and Cocktails* with Andy Nulman.

The Virtual Learning Library archives a variety of lectures and programs to suit all tastes. Recent additions to the library include lectures on de-cluttering and closet organizing, the *6 Pillars of Well-Being*, *What Keeps You Up at Night* and a full-range of exercise classes for able and less-able participants to cooking classes and more.

Connie Abramovitch was used to starting her days with 8 o'clock exercise classes in the state-of-the-art Wellness Centre at the Cummings Centre main campus.

Accessing exercise videos on-line through the Virtual Learning Library has allowed Connie to continue to participate during the pandemic. "I am so grateful that the Wellness Centre staff has set up a variety of exercise classes as these classes are most enjoyable and the best way to start my day," says Connie. "We all have to keep busy and stay well during this very difficult time."

Victoria McNeil, Cummings Centre music teacher and staff member, stresses that music, be it is singing, playing an instrument or simply enjoying, is key to the overall health and well-being of many of her students. "I knew I needed to provide a service to our program participants once the Centre's program closures hit," says Victoria. "The Virtual Library was the perfect platform to ensure that I could reach as many Cummings members as possible in their homes." Ukulele student Sophia Wolkowicz is so thankful for Victoria's online Ukulele classes during this time of social distancing, "I can now enjoy a 'Happy Ukulele Hour' anytime!"

Long-time Cummings Centre members are hooked on live Zoom webinars from popular Cummings lecturers Donald Cuccioletta and Stan Nachfolger. "What a great way to stay involved and be inspired during these very challenging times," says member Anita Steiner. "With a few clicks on my computer, I can access and look forward to so many opportunities from exercise videos to interesting lectures ranging from politics to entertainment and so much more."

Already somewhat technically savvy keeping in touch with family and friends, especially his children and grandchildren through emails and FaceTime, Cummings



**Ukulele student Sophia Wolkowicz is thankful for online ukulele classes offered at the Cummings Centre**

Centre volunteer Tom Strasser wanted to learn Zoom technology. With the help of the Cummings Centre Communications staff, Tom mastered this new skill remotely from the comfort of home. With his new Zoom skills, a whole other world has opened up for Tom as he is able to participate in so many interesting group experiences. "I am so grateful to the Cummings Communications team for teaching me this latest technology," says Tom. "It's amazing how these technological advancements have helped seniors like me cope throughout this pandemic and the increased isolation it brings," says Tom.

To access Live Events or the Virtual Learning Library, consult [www.cummingscentre.org](http://www.cummingscentre.org) or call 514-734-1753.