



## SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

### SEPTEMBER Highlights

1. Monthly Message from BIA General Manger, Jamie Pritchard
2. Family Fair in the Square Sidewalk Sale
3. New Business - Fresh & Free Studios, Good Vibrations Rock Shop, Grayson Mills
4. Car Free Friday - September 8th @ Bus Transit Station
5. Business Loyalty Programs - Tell us about Yours
6. Volunteer with Stratford Sports Tourism Committee
7. Your Opinion on Movies Under the Stars in 2024
8. Get Together with Fellow Female Creatives & Entrepreneurs

### MONTHLY MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER



Well the kids are going back to school and the days are getting cooler and shorter. I hate to say the 4 letter word that starts with F! The seasons change as the days go by but there is still a bustle and an energy that I feel when I speak to all of the members. The membership is my inspiration to push to achieve more for you. I love to hear from you.

The feedback from the Sidewalk Sale was positive and constructive with some great ideas and enhancements when we do it next time. Yes I did say next time as 96% of you responded that you would like another one organized in the future. That will be in the works for 2024 so keep an eye out as to new ways you can participate.

The BIA 50th anniversary party was a huge success with a Family Fair in the Square Day. We had approximately 1600 people come downtown during the day. Our children's wheel of prizes gave away over 500 prizes, and we distributed 400 delicious cupcakes.

I will be coming to you in the next few weeks to get your thoughts on safety and security in the downtown. I hope you will join in this survey as I want to work to see what improvements are needed and what we can do together to make them happen. I have had initial meetings with the Chief of Police as a segway to this project. Your feedback will be paramount in this project's success.

Lastly I am looking for feedback and ideas to improve communications with you, our membership. We have our members only [facebook](#) page so please hop on and ask to be a member, as it is a great way to share information with you quickly. We also send out emails and try our best to minimize those by sticking to the most relevant information - when they come in please have a look. If you have any further thoughts on improving communications please send me an email at the address below.

Your BIA is here for you and is always interested in your feedback. If you see me rollin' along downtown on the silver ghost scooter please catch my attention, I would love to hear from you!

[jpritchard@downtownstratford.ca](mailto:jpritchard@downtownstratford.ca)

See you Downtown!



**NEW BUSINESS**

FRESH AND FREE STUDIOS



Fresh and Free Studios is the brainchild of Karim Rushdy, who has been a teacher at Nancy Campbell School for the last 12 years. He quips that the studio is a “classroom by day and a super hero by night!” Located on the top floor of the school, the studio is open to public clientele for blocks of time every day of the week. Karim is passionate about music and his goal is to help build the music scene in Stratford.

Recording, vocal production, mixing & mastering, producing, collaborating with music engineers can all happen right here in our own backyard. No need to take the talent you want to professionally record elsewhere!

Karim is a co-teacher of the CommTech program at Nancy Campbell. For his part he teaches music production and 3D design video production. He also offers a Studio Vibes session for students that he hopes to soon offer to the public on a monthly basis. In a two-hour period, students write and record a song!

Karim learned his work at Metalworks Institute, Canada's premier entertainment arts school, located in Mississauga. He also shares a business with his wife Julie and colleague JC called Fresh & Free Records.

***[CLICK TO DIRECTORY for CONTACT DETAILS, HOURS, PHOTOS](#)***

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**GOOD VIBRATIONS ROCK SHOP**



A very warm welcome to Nia Murray and Michael Strung, the owners of new business Good Vibrations Rock Shop on Market Place. This is the “enchanted world” where “crystals, community, wellness and good vibes collide!”

This long standing passion of Nia’s, where she “learned by doing” working as a crystal consultant in Ottawa a time ago, has evolved into a *gem* of a small business! When she was considering her next move, as if by magic or rather ‘positive affirmations’ by both parties, the stars were aligned when Desiree (former owner) and Nia connected.

The cozy, bright shop offers crystals and gems of every colour, incense, candles, crystal jewelry and very soon practitioners in energy healing as well. Watching the children come into her space and how excited they get, Nia is also formulating plans for a children’s workshop to teach them about geology and the energy that these precious rocks emanate.

Nia grew up in Stratford and after some time away has returned with her partner, Torontonion Michael, who will be looking after the back end of the business while returning to school to pursue his own passion.

Nia is very excited to share with others her rocks, an additional resource she

says that “helps you be your best self.” The rocks are ethically sourced and the majority are hand chosen in person by Nia and Michael.

Nia considers herself a “rainbow hunter,” someone who is always on the lookout to find a hidden rainbow that just might be in that next precious rock! Visit to see if you can find your own personal rainbow!

***[CLICK TO DIRECTORY for CONTACT DETAILS, HOURS, PHOTOS](#)***

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## GRAYSON MILLS



Wendy and Shawn Bennewies are the owners of Grayson Mills, a gorgeous wedding/party space located at the corner of Erie and St Patrick. Emma Macneil has joined them in recent months as a business partner. Purchased just prior to covid settling in, to say the Bennewies have been hard at work to see their dream come alive is an understatement! From top to bottom, the three floors of the former Kalbfleisch building have been beautifully restored and renovated. Exposed beams, warm earthy tones, original floors and brick walls all lend themselves to creating the most exquisite space for a gathering of importance.

The name of this new business is a tribute to the original two owners. Built in 1884, the first owner of this heritage building was J Grayson Smith, a local lawyer. In 1887, ownership was transferred to George A Mills who operated a horse and buggy cab company for more than 20 years until it was purchased by the Kalbfleisch brothers, Henry and Georgia, in 1907. First bikes then cars were sold and repaired here until its closure in 2006. All this to say, many a memory has been made under this roof and so the perfect venue for a couple to begin their lives together!

For Wendy and Shawn this is a natural extension of the full service wedding business they have run for 20 years called Devine Wedding Design. While Wendy is the expert in styling a wedding, Shawn is the talented carpenter and all things building related expert. Emma has joined the team for her front of house experience. She has managed many a restaurant, event and wedding in her career and Wendy is so happy to have her on board! She also brings her amazing skills in digital marketing. Chef Bob Friessen - rated six stars by those who have had the pleasure of his services - of Gourmet Chef at Your Table, is the in-house catering for events.

An entire wedding from start to finish can take place at Grayson Mills. Upstairs is gorgeous for the ceremony with a terrace for cocktails and nibbles. Then the party moves to the main floor for dinner and dancing. Alternatively, two events can be taking place at the same time, one on each level. The main floor can accommodate 180 people seated or 256 standing. The upper floor can accommodate 140 seated or 180 standing. Large garage doors can be opened for fresh air and ambiance.

Grayson Mills though is more than just wedding so keep them in mind next time you need to book a venue for a special event. On the day the BIA celebrated its 50th anniversary in Market Square, the team here opened their doors to the public for tours. Two weeks ago GM hosted a Barbie Dance Party that was a massive hit for folks looking for some fun and a place to wear their prized pink! Coming up is a Halloween party taking place on Friday, October 27th. Dress up and enjoy a spooky dinner upstairs then afterwards partake in a mixology lesson on the main floor. Look for tickets on [socials](#) soon!

***CLICK TO DIRECTORY for CONTACT DETAILS, HOURS, PHOTOS***

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**CAR FREE FRIDAY - FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 8TH @ 8:00AM**



## **CITY of STRATFORD - 2 BIA - 1**

**Will it be a draw to end the summer  
or will the City take the Cup??**

### **CAR FREE FRIDAY**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th**

**8AM-10AM**

**COOPER TRANSIT (BUS) STATION**

***Last one for the year!***

Small businesses of downtown... the BIA needs your help to win the Commuter's Cup back from City employees this month! Folks who WALK, BIKE or TAKE THE FREE BUS to work on Friday and visit us at the Cooper Transit Station (bus terminus) will be counted in our Friday Friendly Commuter's Challenge. Last month, the City of Stratford employees won the "commuter's cup" for the second month in a row. Congratulations City Staff!

**Drop by the BIA tent at the Bus Terminus on Downie St this Friday morning between 8:00am-10:00am**, grab yourself a cup of BRCH & Wyn coffee or a cold juice and drop your name onto the Downtown Business clipboard... or... the City clipboard.

This month we are all about the bus! The City is running a pilot in conjunction with Car Free Friday and offering **FREE BUS RIDES** on Friday, September 8th. If you've never taken it before, this is your opportunity to try it!

Once again we'll be holding a draw to giveaway a 30-day bus pass and \$25 in Downtown Dollars. Thank you to the City for providing the bus pass!

On deck to chat Friday morning will be Michael Mousley, head of Transit for Stratford; Sadaf Ghalib, Climate Change Programs Manager; Darren Fischer, Community Officer; Cycle Stratford, and your friendly BIA team!

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## LOYALTY PROGRAMS - TELL US ABOUT YOURS!



According to Invesp, it costs five times as much to attract a new customer than to keep an existing one. This is why it's so important for small businesses to turn one-time buyers into loyal, repeat customers.

The BIA would like to promote the Loyalty Programs on offer in our downtown businesses to our public audience. As such, we are collecting information and it would be helpful if you could share with us the pertinent details of your program (if you have one). Thank you for your time!

[TAKE SURVEY](#)

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**VOLUNTEER  
WITH NEW SPORT TOURISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE**





Exciting Volunteer Opportunity with Stratford Sport Tourism Advisory Committee (SSTAC)! Are you a passionate advocate for your community with a keen interest in sports and tourism? Look no further! Destination Stratford (DS), in collaboration with the City of Stratford Community Services Department and investStratford, has created the SSTAC to advise and support Destination Stratford and the City of Stratford in the creation of a Sport Tourism Office and associated activities and responsibilities.

SSTAC is currently inviting a committed, connected, and dynamic individual to join them in the community-at-large position on the committee. They are looking for an individual that is passionate about their community and sports/tourism and wants to be part of ensuring its growth as a destination for sport tourism, while honouring its current position as a leading cultural destination.

[Learn more about this opportunity!](#)

Interested Candidates can email questions to [zac@visitstratford.ca](mailto:zac@visitstratford.ca).

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**YOUR FEEDBACK WANTED!**



Let us know your thoughts on a  
Movies Under the Stars Program for Summer 2024!

[CLICK HERE](#)

## IDEA LOUNGE FOR FEMALE CREATIVES & ENTREPRENEURS

FRESH IDEA COLLECTIVE PRESENTS

### Idea Lounge for Female Creatives + Entrepreneurs

Wednesday, October 18th

6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

at Retro Rollers Inc. (Stratford)



Hosted by Kerry Ramsay, Founder  
Fresh Idea Collective

Event Series sponsored by



Featuring Guest Speaker Elaine Beck,  
Co-owner, Retro Rollers Inc.

Join other local female creatives + entrepreneurs for an evening of conversation, connection + freshly squeezed, business-building ideas!

Join Kerry Ramsay, event organizer and founder of the *Fresh Idea Collective* for a fun evening of connection and conversation with other local, women-identifying business owners.

Event host is Elaine Beck, Co-owner of *Retro Rollers Inc.* in downtown Stratford who will share her fresh idea for Trusting Your Business Vision and treat the group to a roller skating lesson under the magical lights of the studio disco ball.

Whether you choose to lace up a pair of skates or watch from the comfort of a studio armchair while sipping on a vintage soda and chatting with other women entrepreneurs, you'll be in good company!

RESERVE YOUR SPOT HERE!

## SOCIAL MEDIA - GET IN TOUCH!

If you haven't already we'd love for you to join our BIA MEMBERS ONLY Facebook Group. A great discussion and sharing forum for all things business & downtown!

JOIN NOW!

Reach out to us through our Downtown Stratford BIA Social Media platforms and remember to tag us so we can share in our stories!

**Facebook:** [@downtownstratfordbia](#)

**Instagram:** [@downtownstratford](#)

**Twitter:** [@dtStratfordBIA](#)

519-508-1415 | [kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca](mailto:kgriffiths@downtownstratford.ca) | [downtownstratford.ca](http://downtownstratford.ca)

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