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Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg: One year after the march

By Terese Taylor

In a year that had been so devastating across the world, Winnipeggers created one of its most memorable and hopeful moments one year ago – the massive Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg rally on June 5, 2020 held to demand an end to police brutality and anti-Black racism.

"It was unity that day. Everybody from every nation – it made people of colour feel appreciated and feel heard and seen. And brought this awareness that they are social

activists in their own lives," remembered Kameshia Hope, Jayda Hope and Ella Taylor, three of nine founding members of Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg (J4BLW).

George Floyd was killed May 25, 2020 by a police officer in Minneapolis, as other police officers looked on. As the video of his killing spread across the internet, protest marches broke out across the world. The Justice 4 Black Lives Winnipeg organizing group found each

other on social media; and within several days announced a rally starting at the legislature.

For most people at the march, it was the largest gathering they had ever attended. People held thousands of signs with "Say Their Names," something that became a rallying cry, and a way to honour the lives lost. Adding to the many names of Americans, Winnipeggers began to learn the names of Canadians and Manitobans who died in police interactions or while in custody; Machuar Madut from West Broadway, many young Indigenous men, and Eishia Hudson, a 15 year old Indigenous girl.

"We were prepared for the worst case scenario," said Jayda Hope. "It included decisions for any eventuality: Who is willing to be arrested, how to get women and children to exit points if we get gassed." J4BLW engaged

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Heed the call: a parenting guide for survival through a 3rd lockdown

by Mira Oberman

We were on our way to our favourite hike in Whiteshell Provincial Park when the news broke: schools were closing again. My seven-year-old twins knew the pandemic was getting worse: earlier that week, we smashed a homemade coronavirus piñata at their parents-only birthday party.

But after a brief moment of abject misery over how much

they were going to miss their friends, they were soon distracted by a dog chasing a squirrel near the Hunt Lake trailhead.

Nature saved my sanity during the past 14 months of this seemingly endless pandemic. Nature will get our family through what will hopefully be the final major lockdown. Nature can help your family too.

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Red flags tied onto Sherbrook bridge to remember MMIWG.

SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Amanda Le Rougetel celebrated the way that Wolseley has been such a welcoming community for people from the LGBT2SQ community and that got Mike Maunder thinking about how neighbourhoods like Wolseley and West Broadway develop their unique sense of community? The answer, it seems, is people, and Amanda and Mike tell several of their stories in our feature articles this month.

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HEED THE CALL

A hike counts as home learning & other lessons from nature....

Here are some pandemic parenting survival tips from a twin mom:

Get Outside.

Every Day.

No Matter What. Seriously.

There is a lot of pressure on parents to suddenly transform into teachers during remote learning. When you're also trying to get your own work done, it's easy to get sucked into screens all day.

ParticipACTION's 2020 report card found less than 5% of Canada's children and teens were meeting physical movement guidelines during the early months of the pandemic, down drastically from 15% in 2019. Remind yourself: kids have recess three times a day at school for a reason. They need movement breaks. And they need fresh air and exercise. If

you have a yard or a balcony, turn it into a study zone.

If you have the privilege of flexible work hours (or the burden of job loss) take them for a walk, or a bike ride or a trip to the playground at least once and ideally two to three times a day. Getting outside will improve their mood (and yours) and help children and teens stay focused when they get back to their remote learning assignments.

Nature heals

Most people don't need a meta-analysis of scientific research to tell them they feel good when they're out in the woods or listening to waves lapping on the shore of the lake.

I breathe differently when I'm in true wilderness. So do you! There's some pretty remarkable science on the benefits of natural sounds — especially when they are free of human-related noise

like traffic. Natural soundscapes can reduce stress, lower your heart rate, improve your mood and even decrease pain.

There are plenty of great parks within a 20- to 45-minute drive of Winnipeg that you can get out to on an extended lunch break or after work and school wrap-up for the day. Beaudry, Birds Hill, Oak Hammock and La Barrière are my favourites.

If you've got a full day to explore, put on a good audiobook (free from the library!) and head to the Whiteshell, Spruce Woods/Spirit Sands, Grand Beach or the Pinawa suspension bridge.

It took my twins nearly three hours to hike about five kilometres of trails at Oak Hammock Marsh on the first Saturday after home learning began. They stopped to chat with a caterpillar (the first of the season) and to dip their hands in the murky marsh water. We counted goslings and used a (free!) Audubon app to identify birds. We tore open wrinkled rose hips to see the seeds and used a (free!) iNaturalist app to identify plants. There are lots of ways to turn time outside into learning opportunities. I would lose my mom creds if I



didn't mention snacks and hats. I try to pack light, so typically we do a picnic either along the way or at the trailhead. I also pack water and snacks for the drive.

It has been a really long pandemic. Especially for parents. We are going into this latest round of school closures much more depleted than the first round. Too many of us have lost loved ones. Too many of us have lost their jobs or seen their wages plummet painfully. We are all missing our friends and our families.

Put your own oxygen mask on first

Something I learned very early into being a twin mom was that I cannot take care of my kids if I don't take care of myself. As they say in those boring airline safety videos

(don't you miss those boring airline safety videos?), you need to put your own oxygen mask on first. Getting outside will help you manage your own stress and anxiety. So will managing your own expectations of yourself. Life isn't always Instagram or Pinterest worthy. You will have bad days. You will make mistakes. Your kids will drive you crazy.

Be kind to yourself. Find help if you need it. There is a light at the end of this pandemic tunnel.

Mira Oberman works for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). The full version of her article, with more tips, can be found on the CPAWS Manitoba Chapter website.

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