



October 2026

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Neighbours of Forest Hill

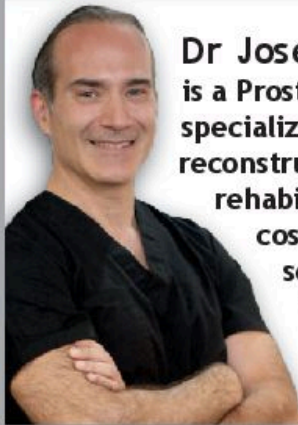
Meet **Natasha Koifman:**
*A Leader, Storyteller and
Community Supporter*

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Photos by Renata Kaveh

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HALLOWEEN

By Clarissa Woods

A History

The night we now associate with masked fun and spooky décor dates back roughly 2000 years ago to a Celtic festival in the area that is now Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France. The Celtic people celebrated their new year on November 1, a day marking the end of summer and the beginning of a harsh winter. Because the day marked the end of a cheerful summer and the beginning of a long, dark period of cold weather, it became associated with human death.

It was Celtic tradition to believe that on the night of October 31, any boundary separating life and death dissolved and ghosts of the dead returned to earth. Sound scary? Well, not really. The Celts actually welcomed the spirits because they believed it made it easier for the Druids (Celtic priests) to predict the future of humanity. Also, the idea that ghosts returned to earth was a source of comfort for the Celts before the long winter. The occasion was celebrated with bonfires and people even wore masks in hopes of being recognized as ghosts, not humans.

In 43 A.D., the Roman Empire conquered Celtic territory and the Romans combined two of their festivals with the Celtic new year festival. The first of these festivals was called Feralia and took place late in October as a day to honor the dead. They also incorporated a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees, hence the practice of “bobbing” for apples!

In 609 A.D., Pope Boniface IV established the feast of All Martyrs Day in the Western church. This day began on May 13, but Pope Gregory III moved it to November 1. November 2 eventually became All Souls’ Day to honor the dead and essentially replace the Celtic tradition that had originally taken place on November 1. All Souls’ Day was even celebrated similarly to the Celtic new year with bonfires, masks, angels and devils.

Another name for All Martyrs’ or All Saints’ Day was All-hallows. The night before this occasion became known as All-hallows Eve and eventually Halloween.

Halloween came to North America in 1846 with Irish immigrants. By 1920 and 30, it had spread throughout the United States and Canada. Halloween was actually originally a more trick-fueled holiday with hardly any treats. Neighbourhoods would celebrate the occasion by sharing food and goodwill, but vandalism became rampant. To offset crime, people would bribe young children with savoury treats, hence the term “trick-or-treat.”



PUBLICATION TEAM

Content Coordinator:

Punam Sinha

Designer:

Bill Goodbrand

Contributing Writers:

Dr. Joanne Foster, Michelle Levy,
Kent Ford, Susan Pereira

Contributing Photographers:

Tom Sandler, Sonja DiMarco, Chris Cabral

Advertising:

Vanessa Mueller

Email: vmueller@bestversionmedia.com

Phone: 226-347-0761

Feedback/Ideas/Submissions:

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Dear Neighbours!

Welcome to the October edition of **Neighbours of Forest Hill**, what are your plans this month? A walk through the fall colours, a cosy dinner with family, or a little Halloween fun around the neighbourhood?

Fall brings a welcome change of pace to our neighbourhood. The leaves turn golden, the evenings become cooler, and there is something comforting about settling into the rhythm of fall.

It is also a wonderful time to come together. Thanksgiving invites us to pause and appreciate the people and moments that matter, while Halloween brings energy, creativity and excitement to the neighbourhood.

In this month's edition of *Neighbours of Forest Hill*, we are celebrating the people, stories and happenings that make our community special. From local stories and community events to ways to enjoy the season, there is plenty to discover in the pages ahead.

Thank you to everyone who supports local businesses, participates in community life and helps make Forest Hill such a welcoming place to call home.

Wishing you a wonderful October!

Warm regards,

Punam Sinha,
*Content Coordinator,
Neighbours of Forest Hill*

EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

To learn more about becoming an expert contributor, contact Vanessa Mueller at vmueller@bestversionmedia.com or phone 226-347-0761.



**Toronto European Auto
Repair Expert
Central Import**
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Toronto, ON. M5A 1L7
(416) 864-9092
centralimport.ca



**Prosthodontics Expert
Dr. Joseph Fava
Forest Hill Prosthodontics**
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October



Meet Natasha Koifman:

A Leader, Storyteller and Community Supporter

By Punam Sinha | Photos by Renata Kaveh

“Find a cause you care about and contribute in whatever way you can,” shares Natasha Koifman, a proud Forest Hill resident of almost 20 years, Founder and President of the organization NKPR, and a passionate supporter of people, causes and communities that make a difference.

Giving back has always been an important part of Natasha’s life. She currently serves as Chair of the Board of Artists for Peace and Justice, an organization dedicated to providing education and opportunity for youth in Haiti. Since the organization launched 18 years

ago, it has raised more than \$36 million and funded Haiti’s first free high school. She also sits on the Board of the Women’s College Hospital Foundation and supports organizations including the St. Felix Centre.

“I feel incredibly fortunate to be involved

with organizations and causes that make a meaningful difference.”

Her commitment to community is closely connected to the values that guide

continued on page 6





Meet Natasha Koifman: A Leader, Storyteller and Community Supporter *cont'd*

her life: integrity, kindness, gratitude, resilience and generosity. She believes success is not simply about professional accomplishments, but about using those achievements to support others and create opportunities.

“Success is about much more than professional accomplishments.”

That same sense of purpose is at the heart of NKPR, the North American public relations and marketing agency Natasha founded in 2002. Her career is rooted in a passion for communications, storytelling and relationship-building, along with a deep curiosity about media, business, culture and people.

“Behind every successful person, company or cause is a compelling story waiting to be told,” she says.

That belief became the foundation of her company. Over the years, the agency has worked with recognized brands, entrepreneurs, artists and changemakers, helping them share their stories and connect with their audiences. Natasha approaches each client conversation with a simple question: “What does success look like?” From there, she works backward to develop strategies designed to achieve that goal.

Another achievement Natasha is proud of is the close-knit culture she has built at NKPR, where many of the 30 team members have been part of the company for years.

“We truly feel like an extended family,” she says, reflecting the strong relationships and sense of connection within the team.

Her professional journey has also taught her the importance of staying curious and open to change. Communications continues to evolve, and Natasha believes that learning never stops.

“I don’t believe in mistakes... I believe in key learnings.”

Outside of work and community involvement, family and experiences that bring her joy remain a big part of her life. She spends time with her grandson, Carter, walks her two black Labradors, Poe and Indy, and enjoys binge-watching television shows. She and her husband recently purchased a home in Los Angeles, which has also sparked a new interest in searching 1stDibs for vintage furniture.

Travel is another source of inspiration. Natasha travels to New York City almost every month for work and visits California several times a year. Paris is her favourite city in the world, while Cabo is her husband’s favourite destination. They also traditionally spend the Christmas break in Barbados with close friends.



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“Traveling is such a source of inspiration for me - it is an important part of my life.”

Yet, despite the busy schedule, international travel and professional commitments, Natasha’s strongest sense of place remains close to home. Just a 10-minute walk from home, Forest Hill Village is where Natasha enjoys picking up her favourite coffee and croissant from Le Petit Pain, often running into friends and colleagues along the way. Her two Labradors, Poe and Indy, are also regular companions on her neighbourhood walks, perfectly complementing her signature #nkallblackeverything style.

Natasha has called South Hill home for almost 20 years, living on a private street that gives her a sense of privacy while keeping her close to the energy of Forest Hill.

“I love that it’s central but feels completely private - like my own little mecca.”

Living in the neighbourhood has given Natasha more than a convenient place to

call home. It has given her opportunities to connect with the people, businesses and places around her. Her message to fellow residents reflects that belief.

“In a world that often moves very quickly, I think it's important to take time to connect with our neighbours, support local businesses, and appreciate the people and places that make our neighbourhood special.”

Her life brings together many different worlds, including business, philanthropy, family, travel and community, but the thread connecting them is simple: people matter. Whether she is helping a client tell a better story, supporting a charitable cause, spending time with her family or walking Poe and Indy through Forest Hill, Natasha continues to find meaning in connection.

“Be willing to learn, remain adaptable, and always treat people with respect,” shares Natasha with a warm smile that lights up the room, reflecting the genuine warmth she brings to the people around her.



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Collaboration

Dr. Joanne Foster – www.joannefoster.ca

“Collaboration begins within the family, and through different interactions as children grow, share, play, and learn how to get along with others. These early lessons cement the foundation for more sophisticated collaborations as kids mature.”

~ **ABCs of Raising Smarter Kids: Hundreds of Ways to Inspire Your Child, p. 23**

Collaboration is about joining forces, doing things together, and sharing ideas and opportunities. It’s a means of extending knowledge, capacities, and experiences. Collaboration can be exciting, reassuring, fun, and motivating. Moreover, it can help people achieve goals.

Children can be encouraged to collaborate with family members, classmates, friends, neighbours, and others. There are many places where collaborative activities can take place, such as at school, at home, in playgrounds, in recreational centers, and in other contexts as well. Meaningful connections can strengthen learning, broaden perspectives, and facilitate creative expression.

Anyone who has followed my work or read my books knows I’ve written a great deal about child development and creativity over the years. Learning curves and creative endeavors are especially ripe for collaborative efforts, which can fuel enthusiasm and accomplishments.

Collaboration: Pathways and Pointers

“When I was a kid, there was no collaboration; it’s you with a camera bossing your friends around. But as an adult, filmmaking is all about appreciating the talents of the people you surround yourself with and knowing you could never have made any of these films by yourself.”

~ **Steven Spielberg**



Award-winning film-maker Spielberg focuses on the benefits of appreciating and tapping the strengths of those around us. This realization may not have been apparent to him when he was young. However, parents can share the truths about collaboration with children, whether the kids are interested in film, art, writing, acting, dancing, mathematics, science, game-playing, technology, gymnastics, or other endeavors.

Teamwork can be gratifying and fruitful. It enables people to trade and build upon skill sets and thoughts as they engage in tasks or activities, and as they set and aspire toward goals. This is as true for children as it is for adults!

Here are additional considerations about collaboration to share with kids:

- Be open-minded to the talents and ideas of others. Let them challenge you, and inspire you, and spark innovative thinking.
- Think about the benefits of collaboration. For example, teachers, parents, medical professionals, first responders, athletes, government officials, construction crews, and so on, reap benefits from teamwork. Chat with kids about how collaborative efforts make a difference, including within families, in communities, and at school.
- Collaboration provides valuable lessons for children. It involves give and take, negotiation, listening, and relationship-building. All of these are important!
- Life is a balance. People can be stronger together, yet sometimes, strength lies in figuring things out independently. The key is learning when to do what, and with whom, and parents may have to help children discern that, and provide space, time, and encouragement.

Last Words

The collaboration that occurs between parent and child over the span of years is the most crucial collaboration of all. It sets the stage for others. When children see and experience collaboration, they learn to emulate it, and value it, too. Show them the way!

Author’s Note

Grumblesome is my first children’s picture book (recipient of a coveted *Kirkus Starred Review*)! The story is vividly illustrated by Brandon Dorman. I also appreciate the multifaceted talents of my artistic director (Sasha Illingworth), my editor (Harold Underdown), and my publisher (Gifted Unlimited). Collaboration lies at the core of this publication, and I’m fortunate to have this wonderful team.

Publication Fall 2026; *Grumblesome* is available for purchase across retail outlets. Find out more at www.joannefoster.ca

About the Author:

Dr. Joanne Foster is a multiple award-winning author of several books. For information, and for resources on learning, creativity, productivity, and children’s well-being—and to subscribe to her newsletter—go to <https://joannefoster.ca>



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MON, OCT 5TH
**WATERCOLOUR
PENCIL ART**

@Forest Hill Library
This is a creative afternoon workshop where participants can experiment with watercolour pencils to create a design or their own artwork, with all materials provided.
Time: 2pm-3:30pm
tpl.bibliocommons.com

TUE-TUE, OCT 6TH-OCT 13TH
**AFTER SCHOOL STEM
WORKSHOP**

@Forest Hill Library
This is a fun, hands-on program for children featuring STEM activities such as robotics, Snap Circuits and other interactive challenges.
Time: 4pm-5pm
Info: tpl.bibliocommons.com

WED-SUN, OCT 7TH-NOV 1ST
**SUNDAY BEST: THE
POWER & THE GLORY
OF BLACK STYLE**

@Art Gallery of Ontario
If you are into fashion and art, explore this major exhibition celebrating Black style and self-expression through historic garments, contemporary fashion, photography, visual art and cultural storytelling.
Time: Various gallery hours
Info: ago.ca

FRI-SUN, OCT 9TH-OCT 11TH
**PRESEASON
FACEOFF 2026**

@Forest Hill & Avenue Road
This youth tournament brings A-level teams from U10 to U18 together for a weekend of competitive games, with each team guaranteed four games and a championship opportunity.
Time: Various game times
Info: ccthockey.com

SAT, OCT 10TH
**CREATIVE WRITING
FOR ADULTS**

@Forest Hill Library
Discover new ways to develop your writing through guided prompts, creative exercises and lively discussion in a relaxed setting. No previous creative-writing experience is required.
Time: 2pm-3:30pm
Info: tpl.bibliocommons.com

MON-WED, OCT 5TH-OCT 7TH
ICSC@CANADA 2026

@Metro Toronto Convention Centre
If you are interested in business, retail and commercial real estate, this three-day event brings together industry leaders, retailers and dealmakers for networking, panels and business opportunities.
Time: Various times
Info: icsc.com



Submitted by Miranda Dow

As the autumn air turns crisp, there is no better way to celebrate the season than by heading out to a local orchard. Going apple picking is a classic, family-friendly tradition that offers fresh air, beautiful views, and delicious rewards!

If you are planning your first trip, this simple guide will ensure a smooth and memorable experience for the whole family.

Before You Go: Do a Quick Check

A little planning goes a long way before you leave the house:

Check the Ripening Schedule: Different apple varieties mature at various times throughout the fall. What is ready in September might be completely different from what is available in October.

Review Orchard Policies: Check the orchard's website for specific guidelines, entry fees, pet policies, and hours of operation.

What to Wear: Comfort is Key

Orchards require a lot of walking on natural terrain, so dress for an outdoor adventure:

Footwear: Opt for sturdy, closed-toe shoes, like sneakers or hiking boots. You will be walking across uneven ground, tall grass,

and potentially muddy pathways.

Clothing: Dress in layers. This allows you to stay warm during chilly autumn mornings and cool down as the afternoon sun heats up the orchard.

Master the "Roll and Twist" Technique

Once you are in the trees, it helps to understand the correct way to harvest the fruit so you do not damage the branches:

Avoid Tugging: Yanking hard on an apple can shake other fruit loose or damage the tree.

The Proper Motion: Gently cup the apple in your hand, lift it upward toward the sky, and give it a slight twist. If the apple is ripe, it will easily separate from the branch with the stem still intact.

Fun and Accessible for Everyone

Orchards are incredibly welcoming spaces designed for families and individuals with diverse needs:

Accessible Options: Many locations offer paved or flat pathways close to the entrance. Many orchards also plant dwarf fruit trees, which have low-hanging branches that are perfect for young children or individuals using mobility devices.

Kid-Friendly Games: Keep little ones engaged by turning

the trip into a fun matching game—ask them to spot the reddest or largest apples on the lower branches.

Storing Your Harvest

After bringing your bounty home, proper storage will keep your apples crisp and flavourful for weeks:

Keep it Cool: Keep your apples in a cool, dark place—ideally the crisper drawer of your refrigerator.

Store Separately: Keep them away from other produce, as

apples naturally release a gas that can cause nearby fruits and vegetables to spoil faster.

Whether you enjoy baking homemade pies, cooking fresh applesauce, or simply snacking on a juicy fruit straight from the fridge, a day at the orchard is the perfect way to welcome the fall season!

Sources:

University of Illinois Extension: extension.illinois.edu
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA): usda.gov
Pick Your Own: pickyourown.org

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On the Charity Circuit

with Society Gal Michelle Levy



By Michelle Levy

Michelle Levy is recognized as a leader and innovator in media relations, strategic philanthropy and event marketing. She is a notable philanthropist and continuously active volunteer. She has served on a multitude of boards, and is a regular contributor to various local and national publications.



Daniel Fiorio



Suzanne Rogers



Tania Tonello



Herman Korol, Aisha Seligman



Alysha Fiorio



Winnie Go, Michael Mountford

The 3rd Annual Couture for a Cause Yorkville Fashion Show took place on Cumberland Street, marking the event's most ambitious production to date and elevating it to an international level. Seven Canadian designers and boutiques were featured on the Bloor-Yorkville Runway, styled by seven iconic hair salons, with 70 models walking in a non-stop, immersive outdoor runway experience. This year's show was a tribute to the late 1960s, the era that made Yorkville the cultural heartbeat of Canada. The VIP experience began on Bloor Street with

complimentary valet sponsored by Fiorio Real Estate. Guests were welcomed on the red carpet by celebrity photographer George Pimentel, before enjoying champagne and caviar courtesy of Powder Room. A Yorkville dinner experience followed, featuring Sassafraz, Sotto Sotto, and COCO Espresso Bar, with live entertainment by Jake Koffman and Stella Leonetti. DJ M-Kutz presented by PAROS and DJ Joey Karaj presented by Powder Room kept the celebration going into the night. Organized by the Hairdressers for Love & Peace Foundation, all proceeds benefit CAMH.



Susan Langdon, Shelli Oh



Glenn and David Dixon



Karin Coulter



Madison Ford, Nicole Buda



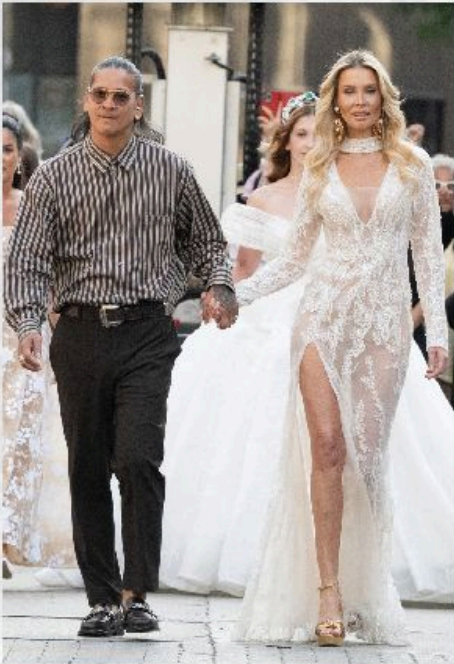
Michela and Marco Guglietti



Ada Liko



Joseph Santiago , Paulina Miel



Joseph Santiago , Paulina Miel



Samantha Grant



Mia Lemke , Leyla Kashani



Stella Sternberg, Naomi Shapiro, Michael Crispel, Kwansa Shelley



Michelle Levy

All event coverage produced by Michelle Levy Productions. Photo credit: George Pimentel

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On the Charity Circuit

with Society Gal Michelle Levy



By Michelle Levy

Michelle Levy is recognized as a leader and innovator in media relations, strategic philanthropy and event marketing. She is a notable philanthropist and continuously active volunteer. She has served on a multitude of boards, and is a regular contributor to various local and national publications.



Simmie Frieberg Antflick, Budgie Frieberg, Estelle Kates



Kai, David Granovsky, Miray Granovsky, Niv, Hila



David M. Frieberg, Avigail, Hila, Kevin Green (ITEC Canada President)



Heather and David Kosoy, Carol Anne Warrington

Over 300 guests gathered at York Racquets Club in June for a special tennis exhibition celebrating the Israel Tennis & Education Centers’ (ITEC) 50th anniversary and its lasting impact on children and communities across Israel.

Guests welcomed a young delegation from Israel, who shared their inspiring stories and took to the court for an exciting exhibition. They offered a firsthand look at how tennis is a vehicle for children to build confidence, learn discipline, cultivate purpose, and feel a true sense of belonging.

The event celebrated ITEC’s longstanding connection with the Toronto community and 50 years of creating opportunities for Israel’s children. Funds raised will support the new Green Frieberg ITEC Center in Sderot, providing a safe, supportive space for children in a community still navigating the effects of prolonged conflict.

Fifty years after ITEC’s first center opened, its mission continues—helping Israel’s children build brighter futures and strengthening the communities they call home.



Alex Bongard, Maya Antflick, Elijah Antflick
(Event Chair)



David A. Frieberg, Russell Tanz, Aubrey Kauffman



George and Sean Fischer



Hila and Coach Niv (ITEC Ambassador's from Israel)



Daniel , Kathryn and Jonathan Ages



Amy Harrington (ITEC Canada
Executive Director

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