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**Tourism Profile**

**Hawk Cliff – Soaring to New Heights in 2016**



A local conservation organization, the Thames Talbot Land Trust (TTLT), has big plans for the future of Port Stanley birding attraction Hawk Cliff.

Located on the north shore of Lake Erie, Hawk Cliff has been the stomping ground of nature lovers and birders for generations. Members of the St. Thomas Field Naturalist’s Club have been participating in Hawk viewing weekends, education, and banding at the location since 1975. It is internationally known as a “Hawkwatch” site and is renowned as

an observation point for over 20 birds of prey. The site is also a great place to view song birds and Monarch butterflies.

The woodland on this property is one of the most unique and significant deep interior forests in the area. This maple-beech forest is home to many Carolinian species, including the Tulip-tree, Pignut Hickory, the Endangered Butternut Chestnut, and the American Chestnut. Rare birds such as the Eastern Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Water

Thrush, and Wood Thrush also make these woods their home.

The TTLT, a not-for-profit organization that is focused on land acquisition, conservation, and restoration, is currently in the process of raising funds to purchase the 230 acre Hawk Cliff Woods property. The Soaring Higher – Hawk Cliff and Beyond Campaign has a fundraising goal of \$1.6 Million and with 93% of this goal realized to-date, the land purchase is scheduled to take place in May of 2016.

The TTLT has a series of restoration projects planned for Hawk Cliff Forest including restoring portions of agricultural and scrub land on the property to increase the amount of forest, creating meadows and grasslands along the

forest's edge, removing invasive plant species, restoring trails, and continuing Hawk education weekends.

The purchase of the land will be followed by some property clean up in conjunction with the Municipality of Central Elgin, environmental assessments to identify and inventory what is on the property, and decisions regarding recreational uses of the property (hiking, birding). All Hawk viewing weekends will continue as usual this fall.

For more information on the Hawk Cliff Woods project or to donate to the Soaring Higher – Hawk Cliff and Beyond Campaign visit: <http://www.thamestalbotlandtrust.ca/>.

## Business Profile

### Wall to Wall Construction - Homes Built with Honesty, Integrity, and Trust



Mike Wall wasn't always in the home building business, in fact, when the idea was suggested to him several times, he laughed it off. It is now 10 years into his career as a home builder and he has never looked back.

It all started when Mike and his wife purchased a plot of land to build a larger home for their growing family. Mike learned how to draft and

blueprint and managed the build himself. The project was such a success that friends and family suggested that he had a true talent and should build homes for a living. He laughed at the suggestion and continued to work in his job at a local factory. As his family grew the long hours at the factory became more taxing and he had less time to spend with them. Around this time he sold his first home and started to build another. Friends and family again made the same comments about starting a home building company. It was when he was on a parental leave after the birth of his third child that he really started to look into becoming Tarion Certified (a certification required by anyone wanting to build and sell homes in Ontario). Shortly after returning to work at the factory he decided to take a leap of faith and start his own home building business. Six years ago Mike's Brother Jim Wall moved home to Elgin County from the Windsor area and joined the business

as a partner and that is when the cleverly named business Wall to Wall Construction was born ([www.walltowallconstruction.ca](http://www.walltowallconstruction.ca)).

Located in the Township of Malahide, Wall to Wall Construction builds additions, does home renovations, and specializes in custom built homes. They use the Insulated Concrete Form (ICF) technique as a greener way to build homes. They are also currently in the process of building LEED certified homes – super energy efficient homes that are the most cost effective to heat and cool in the continuously fluctuating southwestern Ontario climate.

The process of a custom build starts with a call to Wall to Wall Construction. Every custom home is unique from the trim to the faucets and based on a budget that the home owner can work with. Mike Wall creates all the blueprints himself in-house. This way when changes and alterations need to be made during the building process, they can be done immediately in-house, instead of being outsourced to a third party, that would ultimately create more costs for the client.

After the blueprints are created Mike sells them directly to the client, giving them the opportunity to get the build quoted by other businesses, all he asks is that he is given the opportunity to quote on the job.

Once the build has begun, a simple 1500 square



foot home can take approximately 4 months to build and larger home up to 7 months.

The Walls pride themselves on the fact that they are a family-oriented business. They don't require their employees to work excessively long hours to get projects done quickly. They prefer that the job is done right and part of that is having employees with a good work/life balance. Even during peak construction season when other companies require their employees to work late into the evenings, Wall to Wall Construction makes sure they are able to spend time with their families.

"We firmly believe that the families of our workers are important and that having a good relationship with their family will translate into their work," says Mike.

The Walls have built their business on the principles of honesty, integrity, and trust.

"When we say we are going to do something, we do it," said Mike. "Home owners are often shocked when we do exactly what we said we were going to, or when we go above and beyond expectations. Our clients are important to us and we treat them all with the same high quality standards. Anyone can build a house but we are looking to build a home."



# INTERNATIONAL PLOWING MATCH SCHOLARSHIP



**Are you a resident of Elgin County or St. Thomas and studying at a post-secondary institution in Canada in a discipline related to agriculture?**

**You may be eligible for the International Plowing Match Legacy Agricultural Scholarship!**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND HOW TO APPLY**

Call (519) 631-1460 ext. 180

or visit

[www.elgincounty.ca/ipmscholarship](http://www.elgincounty.ca/ipmscholarship)

**Deadline to Apply May 15th**

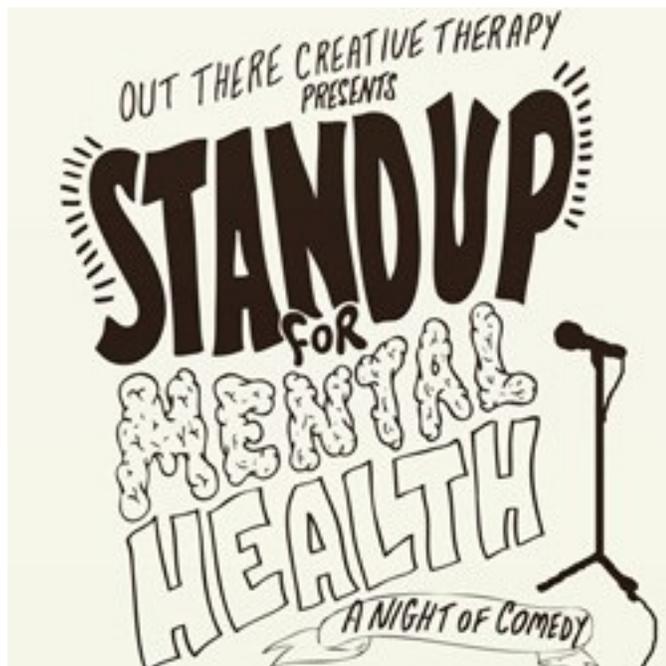




meaningful conversation about psychosis and Schizophrenia. A Halloween Haunt is an event that you attend knowing that what you are seeing and what scares you isn't real. "Real" is a word that is talked about a great deal when discussing Schizophrenia as people diagnosed with this often experience things that are not real.

Screamfield 2016 will take place on October 27, 28 and 29 and Out There Creative Therapy is already looking for volunteers.

"We really want to cultivate a sense of community this year and are inviting businesses in the area to come out and get involved," said Kellen. "We want this to be a celebration! We want people to come out and be brave."



In 2015, Out There Creative Therapy also hosted a fundraiser show called Stand Up for Mental Health at the Port Stanley Festival Theatre. Stand Up For Mental Health is a program started by professional Comedian David Granirer originating in British Columbia. Over the course of twelve weeks a professional comedian teaches people who have been affected by mental illness how to be stand up comedians and after the course is over they do a mini tour. The event was a great way to raise awareness and Kellen is hoping to

bring the twelve week course to Elgin County in the future.

Out There Creative Therapy highly values visual art as therapy and hosts an annual art show at Springfield Family Fun Day each summer. The show features art from those who have been affected by mental illness, local Elgin County artists, and students from East Elgin Secondary School. Out There Creative Therapy hopes to expand this program and host art exhibitions at additional locations in the future.

In addition to running its own events and programs, Out There Creative Therapy also works in conjunction with its partner the Canadian Mental Health Association to raise funds for programming in Elgin County. A program particularly important to Out There Creative Therapy is the Prevention for Early Psychosis Program that helps youth in their teens and twenties who have experienced psychosis or have been diagnosed with Schizophrenia. Kellen is a graduate of this program and now volunteers his time as a peer mentor.

For more information about Out There Creative Therapy, to learn about upcoming events and fundraisers, to sign-up as a volunteer, or to participate in programming visit [www.outtherecreativetherapy.com](http://www.outtherecreativetherapy.com) or find them on [Facebook](#).