



FALL 2011 NEWSLETTER

My Sister

My sister Barbara has lived in the L'Arche Community for 34 years. I remember how thrilled my parents were when she moved in, as they desperately wanted a home for her which was community based and value driven. Because there were few or no community options when Barbara was born, the family was forced to place her in Woodlands School, an institution for people with developmental disabilities. Given this background, it was critical Barbara have the opportunity to participate in community life. After Barbara moved in, my parents became very involved and L'Arche became a central part of all our lives. Our father died in 1995, and our mother has been in a care home for many years, so I have become increasingly involved in my sister's life and am grateful for the support L'Arche provides.

What difference has living at L'Arche made for Barbara? Over the years L'Arche has provided a home environment which has enabled Barbara's journey towards her potential. One of her goals was to work in the larger community. We were delighted when Barbara started work first at ICBC then BC Hydro. The folks at L'Arche were convinced she could travel public transit to go to work, although we were fearful, we agreed. Her work was a source of great pride for Barbara, as was taking the transit herself. She is now retired and is part of a daily program where, amongst other things, her artistic side emerged, creating paintings and pottery.

Work is only one aspect of Barbara's life which has been enhanced by living at L'Arche. She has made friends, experienced the loss of some, chose to participate in spiritual life, leisure activities (she loves grocery shopping), but primarily her quality of life has to do with being part of a community which is accepting, supportive, caring, and full of celebration. L'Arche has become her family. Like other families, we have had our challenges and frustrations, but have been able to work through them.



Barbara and her sister Judy

I don't know what I would do if Barbara didn't have her home at L'Arche and the companionship the home brings. As "government" support can be unstable, it is even more important we as family and friends support L'Arche so they can continue to provide much needed support to our vulnerable friends and family members.

I am grateful for everyone who joins me in supporting L'Arche. I know firsthand that L'Arche uses its resources carefully and that every donation makes a difference. I would also encourage others to join me in remembering L'Arche in your estate planning. Leaving a legacy is to leave with a smile knowing that the place that has made such a big difference will continue to thrive.

Tribute Giving

L'Arche Greater Vancouver gratefully acknowledges the gifts made in memory of the following individuals:

Dennis Vaughan

And in honor of the following individuals:

Patrick Byron, Sheila Smith

Our Mission is to:

Make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

Foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, while being faithful to the core values of our founding story.

Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

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From Denise's Desk:



I have just returned from Trosly, France where I had the privilege to attend a session on the Gospel of John with our founder Jean Vanier. Jean has been reflecting for many years on this Gospel. The message in it seems to grow deeper and deeper in him. I believe that what he shared with us is a critical message for L'Arche as we continue to appropriate our mission and live more deeply our call in the world today.

So it is with much joy that I share with you a little of what I gleaned in that precious time...

When I first came to L'Arche 27 years ago, I was a somewhat weary and beleaguered peace activist who had a burning desire to change the world. It was the early eighties and the arms race was at its peak.

I have never lost that deep longing to contribute to peace making in our world. L'Arche has been a place where I have found not only peace for my soul, and a resting place for my heart, I believe it is also part of a much larger movement for peace in our world through striving to faithfully live our mission.

At the beginning of the Gospel of John Jesus asked two of disciples who were following him, "What do you want?" They said "Teacher, where do you live?" Jesus said, "Come and see". Isn't that the same invitation we extend to new assistants, or new board members, or people interested in visiting L'Arche? "Come and see".

Many of us have experienced that same invitation to come and see. I know I did.

Throughout the days Jean spoke about the sacrament of the "meeting," or the sacrament of the encounter.

We need to discover more deeply what the sacrament of the meeting means in relation to our mission at L'Arche. When Jean first said those words it was an 'aha' moment for me. When I think about meeting with another as a sacrament it changes how I look at people.

To participate in sacrament is to be open to transformation. The first line of our mission statement is "to make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities through mutually transforming relationships." When I think of how many sacred meetings or encounters I have had in my life so many faces flood my mind's eye. I think of the many people in this community who gave me the gift of their presence. The idea of being present to one another and really meeting people where they are seems so small but it gives birth to people, to our humanity.

It is a great challenge and call to be willing to encounter someone who is different than me. By choosing to share life with a diversity of people in community, we experience the beauty and the challenge of this call daily. If you translate this idea to a world scale it is radical call to peacemaking.

When we meet the other who is different than 'me' and are present to their humanity, their reality, their pain and their joys, we are invited to see where Jesus lives.

invite you to come and see.

Blessings,

Denise Haskett.

A Pilgrimage First

On the weekend of September 16, L'Arche Greater Vancouver had the privilege of hosting one of three stops of the L'Arche Western Canada Regional Pilgrimage. During the day over 100 people met at Saint Margarets Cedar Cottage Anglican Church and at night, various out of town guests found beds in local L'Arche homes.

Usually a pilgrimage is a journey from home to a sacred place. However, since our Region includes seven communities over four provinces and spans 2500 kilometres, this Pilgrimage was designed differently. Representatives came by plane, car and ferry to Vancouver, Calgary or Winnipeg. Each host city created a sacred space to which the L'Arche Pilgrims walked during one afternoon of their stay in that city. In Vancouver we followed a core member who carried a home-made cross from our meeting place to a beautiful park a few blocks away. People in the neighbourhood who were going about their normal Saturday chores watched us as we walked in silence, helping each other along to our destination.

Hazel Bradley and Richard-Keagen-Bull, both from the L'Arche Lambeth community in the United Kingdom led the Pilgrimage at each stop. Songs, stories and celebration flowed through our time together.



Our silent procession



Enjoying a meal together



Extreme Makeovers—L'Arche Edition



Shingo, Assistant in Creation House loves the new deck

We've had some busy months at L'Arche – particularly in Shiloh, our main building. It started in the spring with major renovations to the Creation House kitchen and hallway. New flooring, widened doors and an improved kitchen layout have benefited the lives of everyone who lives at or visits Creation House. Many thanks go to our friends at Saint Marys Health Foundation for this upgrade.

Project Advance (the Archdiocese of Vancouver), the Burnaby Firefighters Charity and other individual funders made it possible to add a walk out deck and ramps to both the Emmaus Centre and Creation House. Besides giving people easier access to fresh air and sunshine, these new decks and ramps are another necessary exit in case of emergency. These projects commenced during the summer and were completed in early September.

Most recently the Burnaby Rhododendron and Garden Society (BRAGS) provided funding for landscaping outside of Creation Deck. This project will be completed as soon as possible.

We invite everyone to come by and see the upgrades and additions. And, if you have opportunity, please add your appreciation to all the organizations that made these improvements possible.



Emmaus Program participants enjoying their new deck

\$47,000 Raised for L'Arche at Canada Life Tournament

August 12, 2011 was a great day to be at Nat Bailey Stadium for Canada Life's Charity Softball Tournament. Eleven teams, two charities, close competition, off-field activities, face-painting, perfect weather and good fun. Even the angels showed up!

Everything turned out even better than we expected. Our original goal of \$20,000 was surpassed! The new total of funds from sponsors, team pledges, individual donors, corporate gifts and matching funds from Canada Life was over \$47,000!

This money will go towards a new wheelchair adaptable van!



Canada Life's Lloyd Litke taking his best shot at the L'Arche bean bag toss.



Thank you!

- A huge appreciation to Canada Life for inviting us, organizing the day and giving L'Arche the opportunity to meet so many new friends
- To all the volunteers who pitched in wherever was necessary in our info booth, cheerleaders, merchandise sales, donation station, facepainting and bean bag toss games. You made it fun for everyone to participate.

To the L'Arche Ark Angels Team for going to bat for L'Arche.

A special thanks to MLA Harry Bloy for supplying the bottled water that kept everyone cool and hydrated throughout the day.



Our wonderful cheerleaders!





Why L'Arche?

I am a lawyer who serves as an arbitrator or private judge. Most days I work with people who are in conflict with one another. I enjoy coming to L'Arche because I can share in the calm, peace and harmony of your community.

James Dorsey, Board Member

I don't know much about the other houses at L'Arche but my experience with Unity House to me exemplifies what Jean Vanier envisioned when he started L'Arche.

They are truly a family.

My sister-in-law, Linda, came to L'Arche six years ago when her 94 year old Mother passed away. The day Linda moved into Unity House was very emotional for all of us. I looked at Linda with tears in my eyes and wondered "Is this the right thing to do?" Just then a staff member put her arm around me and said "It's ok, Linda has just grown up and moved away from home."

I often reflect on that moment when I see Linda now, she is so happy and busy and has grown as a person. She makes decisions for herself, has friends and caring people around her all the time. Linda's family gave her roots and L'Arche has given her wings.

Audrey Staudacher, Family Member

Upcoming Events

Give with Love this Holiday Season

Shop with a clear conscience this holiday season. Give with love. And support two great causes! Shop at Ten Thousand Villages, Commercial Drive on Friday, November 11 (12:00 pm – 9:00 pm), and Ten Thousand Villages will donate 15% of your purchase to L'Arche Greater Vancouver!

Annual L'Arche Holiday Concert

This year's holiday concert will be held on November 20th at Sherbrook Mennonite Church (7155 Sherbrooke Street, Vancouver) at 3pm. The proceeds from the concert will benefit the Solidarity program. Please contact Caitlin Toews for details (604.435.9544 ex 33).

The Art of Being Together

The 3rd annual Art of Being Together will be held on Saturday, March 10th at the Nikkei Centre in Burnaby. If you know any working or emerging artists who would like to submit a piece for the 2012 Art of Being Together art jury please contact Caitlin Toews for call details (604.435.9544 ex 33).



Order Your Christmas Cards Now!

We are now taking orders for Christmas Cards. There are 3 fantastic designs to choose from. Cards are \$1.50 each. Please contact Caitlin Toews (604435.9544 ex 33) to place your order.

We invite you to share your copy of this newsletter.

Give online: www.larchevancouver.org and click "Donate"

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