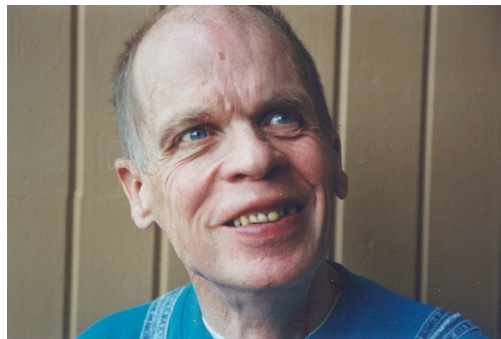




SPRING 2011 NEWSLETTER

We Remember Barrie Thomson

If you came into L'Arche's main building during the last 25 years, you were likely greeted by Barrie. In December 2010 we lost our greeter as he passed away peacefully in his home at Creation House surrounded by his friends and family. Here are some of our memories of him.



Barrie Thomson, July 26 1942 - November 21

From Barrie's Brother, Gordon:

My brother Barrie had almost 26 years at L'Arche. He was born in 1942 at Royal Columbian Hospital with what was later diagnosed as Fragile X Syndrome. Barrie lived in Woodlands and Tranquille; although I'm sure everyone was trying to do the right thing, they were lost years. But in 1984 a miracle happened. Barrie fell under the wings of Jean Vanier's angels, to be respected, make friends and be near his Mom, to live at L'Arche in Burnaby.

Thank you to everyone, past and present at L'Arche who treated Barrie so well ...things like Emmaus having banana splits in honour of his mother's birthday and Barrie's daily camping in the front office.

Jean Vanier's angels have been busy – the life givers for Barrie and all his friends. Barrie has joined his mother and father. May God bless you all.

From his long-time friend, Celine:

If anyone knew how to welcome strangers and make one feel at home it was Barrie. He had a gift of welcome and simplicity. Barrie always called us to let go of our preoccupations and just savour the moment. He was a man of few words but that didn't stop him from establishing deep friendships with so many of us in the community.

Barrie and I were housemates for a number of years. I had the privilege of seeing the charming, humorous and sometimes mischievous Barrie.

I remember my first day at Shiloah. It was Barrie who welcomed me unconditionally the moment we met. I was not very sure of myself and my new surroundings. It was Barrie with his straightforward simplicity who took my hand and pro-

ceeded to give me a tour of the building. I also got to know where all the tea pots were kept at the various houses. Barrie helped me break the ice on that first day.

Barrie had also come a long way. He was able to embrace the love and care of L'Arche. Barrie taught me that it is possible to forgive, forget and get on with life despite past hurts and disappointments.

Barrie was my teacher in many quiet and wonderful ways. He was also like a brother to me. Sometimes we just sat together and Barrie would lean on me, hold me with his soft brotherly hands, somehow reassuring me that God is in control and everything is fine.

I know that one day Barrie will welcome you and me once again and give us the tour of his heavenly home as he did so well here on earth.

In tribute to Barrie we will be setting up "Barrie's Corner" at the entrance of our main building so that his gift of welcome will be remembered.

Tribute Giving

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

Barrie Thomson, Jim Colgan, Don Kitching, Oliver Mosca

And in honor of the following individuals:

John Armstrong, Helen and Joe Berraducci, Melina Boote, Amanda Wong, Chris Haack

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.

In This Issue:

We Remember Barrie Thomson	1
From Denise's Desk	2
The Art of Being Together	2
Geneva's Legacy	3
Top Ten Reasons Why People to Give to L'Arche	3
Why L'Arche?	3
L'Arche Updates	4

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From Denise's Desk:



"Whatever is good and perfect comes from God, who created all the lights in the heavens, and who does not change".

2011 Community Theme Verse based on James 1:17

The truth of our theme verse continues to resonate through the plans and activities of our year. As I mentioned in our last newsletter, we had experienced a number of changes – and more are expected!

Currently there is construction at Creation House where the kitchen is being renovated and a new entrance installed. Over the summer they and the Emmaus Centre will have new decks built. These improvements will give people living in Creation House and those attending the Emmaus Centre better accessibility, a secondary fire exit and an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors without having to fully leave the building. Funding for these projects have come from individual donors, Saint Mary's Health Foundation and the Burnaby Firefighters Charity.

Also in the summer months we will make Shiloah (our main building - pronounced Shiloway) more energy efficient by replacing windows. A generous gift from the Home Depot

Canada Foundation has made this possible. We look forward to welcoming the local Home Depot volunteer team who will help with the project.

It is also our hope to undergo a major upgrade to Shiloah within the next year. For those of you who have been in the building you know that there are stairways here and there that lead to the various homes, day programs, meeting rooms and offices that are all under the same roof. People in the community are aging and many are experiencing mobility challenges. For that reason we will be seeking funding for a new elevator and other accessibility upgrades to the building. Everyone is looking forward to moving freely between the houses and the rest of the building.

It is an exciting time to be part of L'Arche. I invite you to come and experience the blessing of L'Arche for yourself.

With joy,

Denise Haskett
Community Leader/Executive Director

The Art of Being Together

On March 5 2011, The Art of Being Together brought a community together in celebration of friendship and sharing gifts. Over 250 friends, family members, event sponsors, volunteers and musicians attended the afternoon event at the National Nikkei Heritage Centre.

Now in its second year, L'Arche Greater Vancouver's signature event featured three galleries, with an opportunity for guests to vote for the "People's Choice" in the Finalists' Gallery. The Honourable Mention art was available for guests to view and purchase. The third was The Art Together Gallery which displayed paintings created by teams of people in the L'Arche community and was a true reflection of community, friendship and sharing life together.

A special thank you to our 2011 sponsors:



Mark your calendars for March 10, 2012 for the Third Annual Art of Being Together!



Geneva's Legacy

When Geneva King passed away at the age of 103, her friend John said that she died with a smile on her face, knowing her treasures would be going to good places.

One of the "good places" for Geneva was L'Arche Greater Vancouver. Landys Klyne, former Executive Director/Community Leader remembers Geneva coming to L'Arche thanksgiving dinners with her attendant. In later years she wasn't able to attend our events, but faithfully supported L'Arche with an annual Christmas donation.

John knew Geneva for years through his aunt Chrissy Sutherland. Chrissy and Geneva were both single school teachers who decided to pool their resources and buy a house together. John described Geneva as a striking, independent woman who appreciated a direct approach and loved the colour purple. She insisted that their home have a purple door.

Geneva's gift to the L'Arche community will have a lasting effect. Although Geneva did not specify how her gift should be directed once it came to L'Arche, we have set aside the funds so that they can be used in a way that would best honour her. L'Arche is currently looking at various models of accessible housing for its members and is hoping to welcome more people in the future. Geneva's estate will be used towards this new housing program.

Depending on the option chosen for the new housing program, there will likely be a purple door involved to honour the woman whose thoughtfulness made it possible for others to have a stable home with the support they need.



John and Geneva celebrating her 100th birthday

Top 10 Reasons Why People Give to L'Arche Greater Vancouver

1. You believe in the mission of L'Arche.
2. You know someone with a developmental disability and understand the importance of mission for people that might otherwise not have a place of belonging.
3. You see L'Arche as a leader in creating a compassionate community.
4. You understand that because of L'Arche the larger community is better served.
5. You have experienced some transformation of your own through L'Arche – as a visitor, a family member or as an assistant.
6. You appreciate the spirituality of L'Arche.
7. You have found unexpected friendships at L'Arche.
8. You heard Jean Vanier speak or read his books.
9. Someone introduced you to L'Arche as a place that would use your donation wisely and where your gift would make a difference.
10. You know that together we are stronger.

Why L'Arche?

"Because I wanted to meet new people and make new friends."

-Christina, The Crossing

"I wanted to build relationships with people with and without disabilities, I wanted to be a sign of hope for others"

- Celine, Unity House

"I love the fact that people that are so different can live together and watch the invisible link grow between people."

- Annelise, The Crossing

"I serve on this board because I'm inspired by what L'Arche is up to and I can see myself making a difference."

- Rob Fournier, Foundation Board Member

"After forty years in the corporate world, I decided to take early retirement and went back to college and attained a Diploma as a Care Aide and did part of my practicum at L'Arche's Emily House. Being part of a community seemed more like me. I now have started my eleventh year at L'Arche and it is like a home to me."

- Alex, Creation House



Friendships and growth and L'Arche

Continued on page 4...



Why L'Arche?

I have had the joy of watching L'Arche grow in size and spirit since it first came to Burnaby. It is truly a home in which the spirit of Jesus is felt and shared. When Jesus was about to leave many years ago he said "do not be afraid- I am going to leave a Comforter, my Holy Spirit, my peace".



It's so true; his spirit is alive touching the lives of those who walk the halls of L'Arche! It has been said "you are called to be your highest and best self, with the courage and wisdom to be true to yourself and others."

My goal for L'Arche is to serve and share to the best that I can. Thank you for the opportunity.

- Gary Begin, President, Foundation Board

After almost eight years of living and working in various homes and administration roles in four different L'Arche communities across Canada, I truly feel part of the global L'Arche family. I have stayed because L'Arche has been welcoming and revealing of my gifts. I have stayed because of the depth of relationships with people I have shared life with. I have stayed because of the value and the strength a good home and community brings to one's life. I stayed because I have been transformed.

- Jen Kazda, Director of Day Programs

L'Arche Updates

Canada Life Softball Tournament!

L'Arche Greater Vancouver has been named one of the charities of choice in Canada Life's Charity Softball Tournament on Friday, August 12. Come out and cheer for the L'Arche team, *The Ark Angels* at this all day event at Nat Bailey Stadium. Contact Amanda for details (604.435.9544 ext 33).

Corporate and Foundation Grants Received

Mr. and Mrs. P.A. Woodward's Foundation
Home Depot Canada Foundation
Saint Mary's Health Foundation
Georgina Foundation



Day trip to the Vancouver Aquarium during Spring Break at L'Arche!

We invite you to share your copy of this newsletter.

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

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