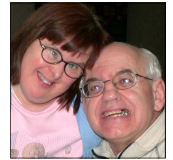




GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #55



L'Arche Café Main Focus of Fundraising Luncheon

by Lara Beth Reimer

*Director of Fund Development
and Communications*

On October 23rd, 2011 L'Arche Winnipeg hosted over 150 friends and supporters for the 3rd Annual Circle of Hope Fundraising Luncheon. Guests were provided with a spaghetti lunch generously sponsored by The Olive Garden and a variety of delicious desserts prepared by the L'Arche Café.

The luncheon provided guests with the opportunity to learn more about the **L'Arche Café**, the social enterprise which L'Arche Winnipeg plans to open this winter. Belinda Squance, Manager of the L'Arche Café, gave guests a first-hand look at the renovations and transformation that have been taking place for the past four months.

Jim Lapp, Community Leader of L'Arche Winnipeg, also shared his vision and hopes for the L'Arche Café. "After a great deal of work by a large number of people, we are very close to opening the Café" explained Lapp. "As one of our funders has said, the L'Arche Café as a social enterprise is a perfect fit for our mission of making known the gifts of people with a developmental disability and our tradition of welcoming guests for supper in our homes. As the public comes to the Café, they will be served by people with a disability and our customers will have the opportunity to discover their gifts of hospitality and welcome."

The event, emceed by CBC Television's Janet Stewart, also included a heart-warming musical performance by the L'Arche Sunshine group and a testimonial from L'Arche community member Dorothy, who shared her excitement surrounding the Café.

The event ended on a very emotional note as the brother of L'Arche community member Nicole, shared how much he appreciated the way L'Arche cared for his sister as she struggles with



Precious Blood Parish hall in St. Boniface was filled to capacity for 3rd Luncheon

health issues.

The generosity and support of all in attendance was greatly appreciated. A special thank you to our event sponsors, CHVN 95.1 FM, IGNITE 107, and The Olive Garden, for their

generous contributions. And a great big thank you to all our volunteers, committee members and donors who made L'Arche Winnipeg's 3rd Circle of Hope Fundraising Luncheon a success.



Major plumbing and ventilation upgrades are completed at the site of the L'Arche Café. Electrical contractors started their upgrades on October 31st, which is the final step before putting up the wall divisions and moving the Café furniture and equipment in. Please consult the Café page on L'Arche Winnipeg's website for opening date announcements.

For more information on L'Arche, visit the L'Arche Winnipeg Web site at:
www.larchewinnipeg.org

Learning from Each Other

Tim Vehling was an assistant at L'Arche Winnipeg from August 2010 to August 2011. He shared the following thoughts after his year at The Ark and Dayspring.

So many things were new to me when I came here - the country, the language, the community - but I was open when I came. I received a very warm welcome and I learned from "the guys." I learned to see the good things, to see the joy in each moment. In my first house I was very close to Yvonne and we were really good together. There is joy in every moment and it can be really fun; for example, the blueberries in her cereal made Yvonne happy every morning.

From Tom I learned to be patient, because he is doing things in his own way and he gets easily distracted. Tom is quiet at church. When he comes in and sits down, he is following the mass. He is calm and listening, and he puts his head on my shoulder. I didn't go to church before but I really enjoyed it here, especially at The Ark when we all went together.

During the day Tom talks about Jesus, and one of his key songs is "Jesus Loves Me." I think he is a really religious person. He always keeps the people who are important to him in his prayers. Tom is exactly the same age as my dad. He could be my dad.

You really need to have a relationship with members to get to know them. I had a hard time at first, since English was my second language.

The first person I could really connect with was Bob. I learned from Bob that he is a very sensitive person and he feels a lot of emotions. He cannot talk, but he gives signals that he wants to spend time with you, and you need to respond when he does that. If bedtime is to be okay (peaceful), you need to spend time with him all day, not just when you help him go to bed. He really wants friends, so it's like a test of friendship. The best thing is doing *with* people, not *for* them. It's hard to help people make choices if they can't talk.

Sometimes the choices were hard for me too - like being asked to move to a different house. I had just arrived from a

different continent and had come to a point where I was just feeling at home. But I accepted the L'Arche policy. And I'm really happy now that it happened. If it hadn't, I wouldn't have gotten to know those other assistants and house members so closely. At first, you just see



Tim and Tom

what's missing and what you want, and not the gifts that are there.

It's really different to get to know someone really well *because* you live with them! This is the opposite of how things usually are in the world - that you get to know someone really well and then you decide to live together. L'Arche is just the opposite of that. You get to know the person really well and then you see their gifts. So you're not doing some-

thing just to attract someone, but sharing who you really are - and they love you for that! L'Arche has affected me in this way, seeing the gifts of everyone I will meet in the future.

I also learned in community that there are those difficult times when you have fights, but this will bring you closer together. It's better if you can talk - even about the hard things. This was new to me. Before, I would just be quiet. But I saw that it's better if you can be honest about your feelings. Only if you ask and talk about things can you see a different way of thinking about it. If you talk directly, you are trying to understand the other person. L'Arche is a really good place to learn this.

It's very interesting to live in a house with so many different languages and cultures. I struggled with that. Sometimes others saw problems where I didn't think there was a problem. I learned about resolving problems and conflicts. Even after resolving small conflicts, you are closer. I wonder how I will practice this in life outside where not everyone is open to that....

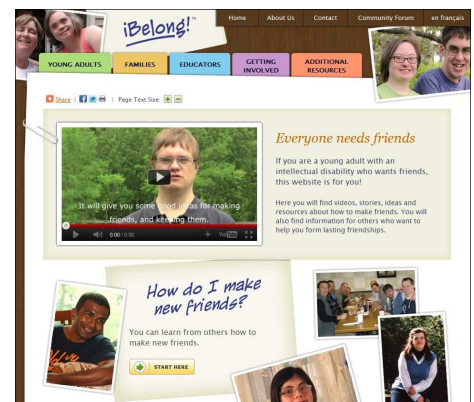
But it's possible to live together in peace and I think this is true in the world. If we are open to the differences of everyone, if we accept our own faults and accept that others have faults, this will make for peace.

Everyone Needs Friends

There are many young people with intellectual disabilities who still live in a situation of isolation and loneliness. In September 2011, L'Arche Canada launched a new website "I Belong" with the goal of reaching out to young adults who want to establish friendships with others. The website also exists in French (see links below).

The website features various resources geared to young adults living with disabilities and those who would like to help them create strong, enduring friendships. They can find various resources on the website including stories, ideas, videos.

There is also a community forum



where you can share experiences and ask questions.

<http://www.ibelong.ca/>
<http://www.jai-des-amis.ca/>

We Are All Called to Serve

by **Jim Lapp**
Community Leader

“Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13 v.12-14)

In the passage above, Jesus has just finished washing his disciples’ feet and then admonishes us to wash one another’s feet. We are to serve one another as He served his disciples, as He serves us now.

On September 23 the members of L’Arche Winnipeg had a pilgrimage which ended in the courtyard of the St. Boniface Basilica (see pilgrimage article). We sat in small groups and washed each other’s feet. It was for me a very moving experience because we were all equal, we all washed someone’s feet and they washed ours. It is also a humbling experience and those of us with sweaty feet are always a bit hesitant to participate!

The passage in John is often used to describe servant leadership and I recently used it for that purpose in a sermon I gave at my church. But what struck me about the washing of the feet in the courtyard of the Basilica was that at L’Arche we were all leaders, even the most disabled person who doesn’t speak, in serving one another. In fact, from my experience, the members with a disability are better teachers and better servants than those of us who want to believe that we have no disabilities.

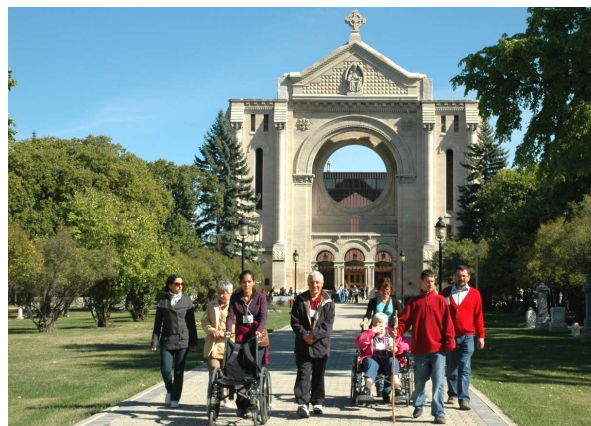
In this issue of our newsletter you can read of the experiences of a young German assistant last year and how our members with a disability taught him important life lessons. People with developmental disabilities have important gifts to share, gifts of the heart, and this is Jean Vanier’s and L’Arche’s most profound insight into what we are living at L’Arche. The first statement in the mission of L’Arche is ...“to make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities.” As we open our Café, more and more members of L’Arche Canada and L’Arche International are contacting us to express their excitement and support for us in creating a new way of living our mission. Supper time is the most

important time in the life of our homes, for we take the time then to be together and enjoy each other’s company. Supper is also the time when we welcome guests. So a Café fits not only with the mission of L’Arche but with our traditions.

Though we won’t be having foot washing in the Café, we hope that members of the public will come to the Café and get to know the gifts of people with a developmental disability, gifts of the heart, of forgiveness, acceptance and warm welcome. And as they order their meals, the members of the public will literally be served by people with a disability. Hopefully they will have such a welcoming experience that they will want to come back and discover the gifts of their servers.



A Unique Regional Pilgrimage



(above) Hazel Bradley & Richard Keagan-Bull from L’Arche Lambeth in the United Kingdom were our retreat leaders.
(left) One of the groups leaving St. Boniface Cathedral for the pilgrimage walk on Friday.

How do you organize a regional pilgrimage for 300 people from 7 L’Arche communities across 4 western provinces, without incurring huge travel costs in sending them all to a particular pilgrimage site? The innovative answer L’Arche came up with was to host the “Pilgrims Together” event in 3 different cities over a period of 2 weeks, so that as many people as possible could come together.

After Calgary and Vancouver, Winnipeg became the 3rd and final pilgrimage site from September 22nd to the 24th. We were 80 pilgrims in Winnipeg - our local L’Arche community, along with 6 pilgrims from the previous stages (from L’Arche in Saskatoon, Comox Valley, and Greater Vancouver) joining us so that we might get to know people in our region better - a desire expressed in our mandate. We were blessed with a beau-

tiful sunny day for our long, leisurely walk Friday afternoon - a path that took us behind St. Boniface Hospital and over Norwood Bridge up to The Forks, returning to the Cathedral via Esplanade Riel. Each group of pilgrims had 3 stops for prayer along the walk. We were also invited to pick up some mud on the way, symbolizing what we don’t like about ourselves, and then to “let it go” by tossing the mud in the river. A fountain on The Forks path allowed a further cleansing, as we prayed to welcome the life & love that Jesus offers. The walk ended with a moving ceremony of the washing of each others’ feet in the ruins of the Cathedral. We also focused on day 6 and 7 of creation, as we created two banners that were added to the banners created in the previous stages, depicting the first 5 days of creation. - *Hubert Pantel*

News and Upcoming Events for Volunteers

by **Brenda Mose**

Events and Volunteer Coordinator

"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among you who will be really happy are those who have sought and found how to serve." - Albert Schweitzer

We would like to welcome our new volunteers at L'Arche Winnipeg:

- Kayla and Melina at *Dayspring*
- Chloe and Benoit at *The Anchor*
- Danielle and Alero at *Elpida*
- Leslie and Manpreet as *office volunteers*.

L'Arche Night

This is a monthly community gathering where we celebrate special events in the community such as birthdays and anniversaries. It's also a time to welcome friends from around our community so they can learn more about L'Arche. In the past quarter we have been privileged to welcome the Katimavik group, the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities "All Abilities Dance Group", and the Micah House-organized pilgrimage group which will be visiting our community later this fall. If you would like to know more about L'Arche Winnipeg or if you are interested in sharing your talent with us, please contact Brenda Mose, Volunteer Coordinator.

Through the outreach program, L'Arche Winnipeg will be having Movement and Dance workshops this fall. All Abilities dance group is dedicated to providing professional and meaningful creative arts experiences for people of all abilities and backgrounds. The dance group, made up of 8 members, performed during our L'Arche Night event. The dance group affirms L'Arche's mission of recognizing and encouraging the unique value of every person.

Speakers Bureau

Liz Gauthier, who is a Speaker's Bureau volunteer, has been in contact with 316 organizations through phone calls and emails. We have been able to make presentations to 11 organizations through the Speaker's Bureau, including high schools, universities, colleges, churches and clubs.

The 15-30 minute presentation includes background information on L'Arche Win-



The "All Abilities Dance Group" performing at our October L'Arche Night

nipeg, a video, and opportunities on how you can get more involved with L'Arche by volunteering, donating or becoming an assistant.

Volunteer Opportunities

Special Friends are volunteers who are matched up to our homes and get to share their gifts and talents with members of that household.

L'Arche Café Volunteers: The Café, which will employ members with a developmental disability, will be located at 119 Regent West in Transcona. This exciting new volunteer opportunity is now accepting volunteer applications. Use the contact information below if you are interested.

L'Arche Winnipeg would like to thank all

the volunteers for being our friends and for your continued support. Sharing your life with others is one way of building caring communities.

If you are interested in learning more about our programs or getting involved please contact Brenda Mose, Events and Volunteer coordinator, bmose@larchewinnipeg.org, or phone (204) 2370300 ext 20.

Life is not about waiting for the storms to pass...it's about learning how to dance in the rain." - Vivian Greene.

GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

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This newsletter is available in French /
Ce bulletin est disponible en français.



Our new website was launched in July. Read about our community activities & upcoming events, apply to become an assistant or a volunteer, make an online donation, read our newsletters as well as testimonials from assistants, members with a developmental disability, and volunteers, or find L'Arche Café hours, menu, opportunities and other pertinent information - all at www.larchewinnipeg.org