



## Jubilee Celebration: "This is God's Work"

by Hubert Pantel

What a year for 50th anniversary celebrations! They have been numerous, world-wide, and as varied as the cultures of the 35 countries where L'Arche communities are present.

The 37 communities in France gathered at Paray-le-Monial May 1-3, with 2,000 people kicking off the Jubilee year celebrations. In Winnipeg, we hosted an art show in August and held a Jubilee social in October. Two members of our community attended a Jubilee celebration in Trois-Rivières, Québec in September, and two others attended a national celebration in Ottawa in November (see page 3).

The largest celebration of all took place recently in France, where L'Arche started in 1964. Delegates from all 35 countries were invited, they visited other L'Arche communities in France, and then met for a huge celebration in Paris on September 27th. There were 7,000 people who walked the streets of Paris to Place de la République for a party as only L'Arche can organize.

Many people offered their thanks to Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche. In an interview with KTO Catholic Television in the midst of the Paris celebrations, Jean was quick to deflect the praise: "It's not me - this is God's work", says Jean. "It is this mystery of fragile people who attract others with their simplicity, their affectivity. We live an experience of being transformed by them. ... It is a healing relationship where I discover my vulnerability, my weaknesses. Instead of being someone who has to be strong, I discover I have the right to simply be who I am."

After 50 years, in the midst of the Jubilee celebrations, one word came to mind for Jean: abundance. "When God desires something, it is accomplished with abundance. When God gives life, it is given in abundance" he said, referring to the abundance of celebration happening on the streets of Paris. As for the future of L'Arche, "There is a danger of wanting too many assurances. We have the conviction that we are loved - we must let ourselves be drawn to this mystery, with much trust. We must become men and women of compassion. But this path is never easy ... there are no assurances, but there is hope, and faith."

"The story of L'Arche is a progressive story, of living with people who are weak and who lead us to God ... There have been difficult times, lack of help, tensions - but that's life! We are able to go through the difficult times because, somewhere, we know that this is the work of God."

Vanier quotes taken from French TKO Catholic TV interview found at: <http://www.ktotv.com/videos-chretiennes/emissions/hors-les-murs.html>



7,000 people gathered in Paris to celebrate the 50th of L'Arche on Saturday September 27 with a walk from City Hall to Place de la République for a very festive and colourful celebration.



L'Arche Tova Café hosted an art show on August 28th, as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations. Proceeds from the sale were sent to L'Arche International for their Solidarity program.



About 130 L'Arche members and friends of our community gathered on October 3rd for our own Jubilee celebration - an evening of music, dancing, and refreshments, with a slide show depicting our rich and varied history.

## Remembering a Founding Member & Friend



Marge (left) with Sister Marie, at L'Arche Winnipeg's 35th anniversary celebration in 2008.

by Hubert Pantel

One of the founding members of the L'Arche Winnipeg community and our eldest member, Marjorie London, passed away on October 1st, 2014. Marge was 82 years old.

Marge was one of the first people welcomed to L'Arche, arriving in December 1973. She loved living with Sister Marie Paradis, the founding director and her good friend.

Marge dreamed of living on her own and was able to do so for many years. "Some of Marge's happiest years were the ones spent in her apartment on Roanoke street" recalls her good friend and advocate Barbara Pantel, who was a constant presence at her bedside in her final days. In her eulogy at the memorial service, Barbara recalled how Marge was happy in retirement - playing her music (especially Anne Murray), reading the paper, and watching sports on TV. She liked to come to L'Arche events, and to help out at the office. Marge had birds for company in her apartment. Her first bird was Duffy. Then she was given two finches, whom she named Jack and Jill.

Marge spent her last years at Park Manor Personal Care Home, a place familiar to her as her parents had both lived there at one time as well.

*"I thought no one could take the place of her birds when they were*



Marge, with Patrick

*gone,"* remembers Barbara, *"but to my surprise she found a little stuffed dog on a shopping trip who became her constant companion. She named it Patrick. It was important for Marge to have something to love and nurture, and she found that in Patrick."*

*"Family meant a lot to Marge, and she had close friends who often visited her. She enjoyed music therapy with Faith, who kept up her friendship with Marge. She looked forward to her Tuesday night visits from Dorothy and Sister Pauline to play cards - and how she loved to win and beat Sr. Pauline!"*

Marge was the same age as her friend Sister Marie, whom she last saw at the 35th anniversary (above photo). They both passed away this year - Sr. Marie four months earlier, in May. Sr. Marie was there in 1973 to welcome Marge into her L'Arche home. I trust that she was there again to help welcome Marge into her new, eternal home with God.



Linda Filjak

### Vice Regional Leader From Winnipeg

Delegates at the L'Arche Western Canada's Regional Assembly in Edmonton, October 24 to 26, affirmed **Linda Filjak** as our new Vice Regional Leader for the next four years. Linda has been a member of L'Arche for 20 years, having started her L'Arche journey in the U.K. and then with L'Arche Winnipeg for the last 19 years, where she has been Assistants Coordinator for the last 8 years.

**Marni Davis** from L'Arche Greater Vancouver was also affirmed as our new Regional Leader. Marni has been involved in various roles with L'Arche since 1973 and was mostly recently Vice Regional Leader.

The Mandate and Selection Team consulted the 7 communities of the Western Canada Region in order to write the new 4-year mandate and make the two leadership recommendations. The Regional Mandate, and terms for Linda and Marni, are effective from January, 2015 to January 2019. Mandate and Selection Team members were: Gabrielle Beaulieu (L'Arche Canada, chair), Pat Desnoyers (Community Leader, L'Arche Edmonton) Myron Rogal (Board member, L'Arche Saskatoon) and Hubert Pantel (long-term member, L'Arche Winnipeg).

#### Café Monthly Email

The L'Arche Tova Café sends out a monthly email with Café news and monthly specials, as well as other information about L'Arche Winnipeg events. To receive it, please send your email address & request to: [larchetovafe@larchewinnipeg.org](mailto:larchetovafe@larchewinnipeg.org)

## Undeserved Grace

by Jim Lapp  
Community Leader

*"As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of*

*the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Colossians 3 12-15, 17.

The above passage from Paul's letter to the Colossians is a good description of L'Arche. As I reflect on the fifty years of L'Arche's existence and my own involvement of forty years, Richard Rohr's term "undeserved grace" immediately comes to mind. I believe that all the members of L'Arche have been chosen by God to live in community and to love one another. And what a gift it has been!! Through L'Arche I have discovered the Spirit of God's presence in the world, with community members, indeed with all of humanity and all of creation. I have been healed and nurtured.

It will forever remain a mystery to me why I have been chosen to be a part of L'Arche and so experience God's grace. I am all too human and no more worthy of this grace than anyone else. But I am very grateful for the call to be

in relationships with people with a developmental disability.

As Thomas Merton says Christ is found with all those people for whom there is no room in the inn, all those who are rejected by the powerful. Our members with a disability, despite all the rejection they have received, love and accept us we are. They do not care about all those things that divide humanity, politics, religion, race, theology, sexual orientation, and all other ideologies. Like God's spirit, they love us as we are and readily forgive us when we mess things up. I have learned a lot from them about matters of the heart, forgiveness, and of God's love for each one of us.

In the passage from Paul's letter he makes three references to being thankful. As we reflect on our own experience of L'Arche and prepare for Advent let us be thankful for Emmanuel - God is with us.

## Award for Café, Trip to Rideau Hall to Meet Princess Anne

### Yes I Can Award

Earlier this year, the Manitoba Council for Exceptional Children presented its' **Yes I Can** award to **L'Arche Tova Café** in recognition of the Café offering training and employment possibilities for people with intellectual disabilities who are in the school system. Leonard, L'Arche Winnipeg's newest and youngest member who was a student at Murdoch MacKay Collegiate, was there to receive the award on behalf of the Café. He works Thursdays and Fridays at the Café.

### 50th Anniversary Celebration in Ottawa, Gatineau

L'Arche Canada recently held a 50th anniversary celebration from November 9th to 11th in Ottawa and Gatineau. Twenty-five delegates representing the four regions of L'Arche in Canada were invited to participate in the festivities which included the premier of the Dick Nielsen film "Love and Belonging: Jean Vanier at L'Arche", a special event on Parliament Hill, a "five to seven" at Pavillon du Parc in Gatineau, and participation in the November 11 Remembrance Day Ceremony at the National War Memorial.

The highlight of this event was the November 11 afternoon meeting with Her Royal Highness Princess Anne at Rideau Hall in Ottawa. The aim of this meeting with Princess Anne was to give her an interesting "tour" of L'Arche in Canada. To that end, delegates from the four regions of L'Arche had been chosen to represent something unique about L'Arche in their region. Jim and Leonard (photo) were two of the seven delegates from the Western Canada Region, and they represented L'Arche Tova Café, presenting a poster from the Café with a short explanation of the Café's unique mission.



Leonard with Jim Lapp, at the Manitoba CEC awards presentation ceremony.

## Volunteers Painters Work at L'Arche Homes

by **Liz Gauthier**  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

L'Arche Winnipeg has been the fortunate recipient of the **United Way Day of Caring** who arranged for projects at two of our homes.

On Wednesday, July 9th Elpida house was visited by a gracious and energetic team from **Boeing Canada** who took on the painting of two bedrooms and two bathrooms, including all of the prep and clean up work! It was a big task and their graciousness to our community is deeply appreciated.

On Tuesday, October 28th The Anchor house had the added benefit of a team from **Great West Life** to complete another painting project when they prepared a bedroom to become a welcoming space. We are so grateful to them for taking on this project.

THANK YOU so much to Melissa Campbell Burgess, the Community Involvement Manager of **United Way of Winnipeg** who took the time to talk with us, arranged for amazing volunteer-work teams, and who met with us to prepare for and see these projects to completion.



Above: Boeing Canada volunteers, in front of Elpida house where they did painting.  
Right: the Great West Life team who did similar work at The Anchor house.



## Federal Grant for Ramps

*Jim Lapp, Community Leader of L'Arche, and Lawrence Toet, member of Parliament, stand on the new ramp at our Kildare Ave home with two of its' residents, Roger and Mary.  
L. to r.: Jim, Roger, Lawrence, and Mary.*

by **Diane Truderung**

*Director of Fund Development  
and Communications*

L'Arche Winnipeg is very thankful for having received more than \$34,000 from the Federal Government's **Enabling Accessibility Fund** which is designed to improve accessibility for Canadians with disabilities.

With the money received from this grant, L'Arche Winnipeg has constructed exterior ramps for three of the L'Arche homes, which will now enable those individuals with disabilities to have easier access to their homes as they age.

*"People with disabilities have a tremendous amount to contribute to our community. Thanks to organizations like L'Arche Winnipeg who care about accessibility, we are eliminating barriers and creating more opportunities for people with disabilities to*



*lead healthy, independent and productive lives", says Lawrence Toet, member of Parliament for Elmwood-Transcona. L'Arche Winnipeg is very grateful for this generous grant that will make a difference in the lives of our members who are experiencing mobility issues.*

## GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

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