



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #82



Faces of Celebration

Though with less people present, we continued to celebrate our members' special events throughout 2020



Shelton's 50th, LeeAnn's 51st



Linda's 74th in September; and Ricky celebrated 36 years of living in L'Arche



Finding New Ways

Normally in this November newsletter, you would be reading a report about a successful fund-raising Pancake Breakfast, or a sold-out Music Night at the L'Arche Tova Café. We would normally be announcing a Songs of Christmas concert and a public Christmas Nativity presentation. But these are not "normal" times, and so many of our important and life-giving events have been cancelled. We are very much missing these opportunities of being connected with our friends through these events, missing the sharing of life, laughter, and hugs.

The Nativity Presentation, a highlight of the Christmas season, will only be an "in-house" event this year. We sincerely hope to be able to have a public presentation again next year.

Wanting to be united with you in a new way this Christmas season, we are creating a 5-minute music video of "Silent Night" being sung in different languages, by our assistants who come from many different coun-



A highlight of each Nativity Presentation was the singing of Silent Night in various languages. (picture: Ukrainian singers)

tries. Currently, there are 22 countries represented in L'Arche Winnipeg. The video will also incorporate scenes from past Nativity Presentations, and will be posted on YouTube in December. Please check our website for eventual posting date: www.larchewinnipeg.org

Wishes Granted

As any house owner knows, upkeep of one's property can be quite expensive – especially when it comes to roof replacements. With ownership of six homes, L'Arche Winnipeg's property expenditures are substantial. Securing some grants to help with maintenance costs is essential.

We are very grateful for the **Essential Needs Fund** (a **Richardson Foundation** and **United Way** Partnership) grant of \$15,000.00 which helped us replace the roofs of *Dayspring* in Transcona and *The Anchor* in Norwood. A grant from **MREA Foundation** also helped us to replace the roof at *Elpida* in Windsor Park.

We are equally grateful for grants that help our social enterprise, **L'Arche Tova Café**, continue to thrive and to live out its mission. A **Richardson Foundation** grant of \$9,950.00 helped the Café replace two fridges this year. We received a federal grant administered by **The United Way of Winnipeg** (\$20,000.00) for wage support of staff at the Café, and this was especially helpful given the closure, and subsequent limitations imposed on the Café due to the spread of the corona virus.



Dayspring (above) was one of the L'Arche homes re-shingled this year. L'Arche Tova Café was able to purchase new fridges (below)





Roger being handed props to wear at our Lenten Retreat in February



A late Spring storm inspired Jotham to create a snow ark during the pandemic



Funding Innovation cheque in March



Dorothy's participation in the Walk - with a thank-you to all our supporters



Juliette and Tom in a back-yard celebration of Canada Day

Highlights of the Year 2020

January

◆ **Sister Sue Mosteller** C.S.J. from Toronto is named an **Officer of the Order of Canada** "for her dedication to improving the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and for her decades of work as a leader of L'Arche". ◆ We mourn the death of **Michele Roy**, member of L'Arche Winnipeg since 1984. ◆ **L'Arche Tova Café** upgrades it's Point of Sale (POS) system.

February

◆ A sold-out **Music Night** at L'Arche Tova Café ◆ Day-long workshop **Building Respectful Workplaces** for all L'Arche office personnel ◆ Launch of our annual **May Walk with L'Arche** ◆ Our community **Lenten Retreat** at the end of February ends up being the last time we can gather as a whole community in 2020.

March

◆ L'Arche Winnipeg is one of several presenters at the diocesan **Social Justice Conference** held at St. Boniface Cathedral ◆ **Funding Innovation** \$1,116.04 cheque presented to L'Arche for sale of artwork through the *Easel program* ◆ **COVID-19** shutdown in mid-March puts an end to our large community gatherings and visits to our homes. ◆ The Coordinating Team develops a **Pandemic Preparedness Plan** ◆ L'Arche Tova Café closes indefinitely due to the pandemic.

April

◆ A decision is made to proceed with a **virtual Walk for L'Arche**, extending the pledge drive by one month ◆ Purchasing **Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)** - masks, gloves, sanitizer - proves to be challenging, with suppliers selling out quickly ◆ **Zoom** quickly becomes the platform of choice for connecting with each other, for meetings, L'Arche Nights, Prayer Nights, and to help alleviate the isolation of our members ◆ **Wi-Fi** service is upgraded in the homes, and **tablets** are bought for each house, to help keep people connected.

May

◆ **United Way of Winnipeg** grant from the **Richardson Foundation Inc.** in the amount of \$9,950.00 allows **L'Arche Tova Café** to purchase two new fridges ◆ **Walk with L'Arche** is a virtual event ◆ Many core members participate in a socially distanced (in their own homes) week-long "**Retreat in a Box**" offered by Hope Centre Ministries.

June

◆ **L'Arche Tova Café** re-opens with restrictions ◆ Roof replacements at 3 of our houses made possible with grants from **MREA** and **Essential Needs Fund** ◆ The annual assistants' retreat, becomes an Agape Meal picnic & visit, as we met in several small groups in parks throughout the city.

July/August

◆ Canada Day, birthdays, and other events are "bubble-celebrated" with social distancing ◆ Walk with L'Arche prizes are drawn, and earned gift cards mailed out ◆ Because of a limited number of participants, L'Arche Tova Café only has 2 Thursday dates for selling baked goods at the **Transcona Biz Market Garden**.

September

◆ L'Arche Winnipeg **Annual General Meeting** on ZOOM ◆ A **Social Media Coordinator** is designated for L'Arche Winnipeg.

October / November

◆ New **Code Red** restrictions in Winnipeg are strictly adhered to by L'Arche Winnipeg as we strive to remain virus-free and protect our vulnerable and aging members ◆ L'Arche Nights, Prayer Nights, Formation Sessions and other meetings continue to happen on **Zoom** ◆ More public events are cancelled ◆ Annual Christmas Appeal letter & Gratitude Newsletter are mailed out in November.

December

◆ Our annual Christmas Nativity is an in-house event only ◆ A short video "**Silent Night**", sung in different languages by L'Arche assistants, to be posted on YouTube and the L'Arche Winnipeg website.

From Fear to Trust

by Jim Lapp
Community Leader

“But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you: my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

- John 14 26-27

When the Covid lockdown arrived in March I, like everyone else, was afraid. What would Covid do to the members of L’Arche Winnipeg, my family and friends? Would some of them get sick and possibly even die? Would our hospitals be able to give them the care they needed? At times it seemed this fear was testing and even shattering my faith.

As an essential service, L’Arche

Winnipeg kept going. Some of our staff in the office were able to work from home but I found that it was important to be in the office to support everyone. Core members were asked to stay home from their day programs and we stopped having visitors to our homes. Assistants stayed home with them and only went out for essential shopping. Suddenly, there were no customers at the L’Arche Tova Café and we decided we would have to shut it down.

As time passed the government started sending us memos outlining that staff in our homes must wear masks and eye protection, and no visitors were allowed. They started supplying us with PPE. Eventually, as case numbers dropped in Manitoba, our core members were allowed to meet family and friends outside in the back yard of their home, with physical distancing. Later they were allowed to go to their families’ homes.

The café reopened in June with 50% capacity, physical distancing, and enhanced cleaning. We were really encouraged by the number of customers who showed up again. In July, I estimated that we had about 2/3 of our usual customer count!

As time went on I was reminded that for much of my life, I had been delusional. I thought I had much more control over my life than I actually do have. Covid had forced me to realize once again that I needed to rely on the guidance of the Spirit of God. I spent more time in prayer and contemplation. I know from experience that the love of God is present throughout Creation. And I found evidence of that love all around me. In May, we were amazed when our Virtual Walk with L’Arche made as much money as last year. Our many friends and supporters continued to believe in the members of L’Arche Winnipeg and in our mission. On Zoom and in brief outdoor visits, I was often touched by the love and support our assistants were giving to our core members. On my daily walks, people stopped looking so afraid and would often smile and say hello. I am also very thankful that,

throughout nine months of this pandemic, no members of L’Arche Winnipeg have contracted this virus.

In July, my first grandchild, Hannah, was born and brought out the love of God through her mother and father and grandparents. For some reason, I started singing to her a blessing song. “Go now in peace.” Even as a newborn, I was convinced that she was listening intently to the song and somehow knew that I was blessing her. Since then I have been using that song as a blessing for the many people that I pray for.

As Christmas approaches, I would like to bless all our members, friends and supporters through these words. “Go now in peace. Go now in peace. May the love of God surround you. Everywhere, everywhere, you may go.”



Service with a Mask

L’Arche Tova Café continued to serve its customers while strictly adhering to code orange restrictions in October. New code red restrictions imposed in November means the Café is currently closed for dining-in service.

Please call the Café to inquire about take-out service (Tuesday to Saturday, 8 AM to 2 PM.) at 204-421-9388, and check the website for a dining room reopening date.



Knitted with Love

Our thanks goes out to the 92-year old (anonymous) lady who knitted these lap blankets, especially made for people in wheelchairs. She knitted and donated seven of these blankets to L’Arche Winnipeg.

Two of the blankets went to our L’Ainé house and have been gratefully received by Trish and Ross (above photo), and the other five blankets went to our Dayspring house.

It is especially touching and comforting, in these times of isolation, to realize that there are people whom we don’t even know who are thinking about us and care for our well-being.



Follow Us!

Eliane Vieira is L'Arche Winnipeg's part-time *Events Coordinator* since December 2019 and, since September, has added *Social Media Coordinator* to her list of responsibilities.

Eliane's involvement with L'Arche began in L'Arche Dublin, Ireland (2006 - 2009). She was also part of L'Arche Winnipeg (2011–2013) first as an assistant living at *The Anchor*, then as *Events Coordinator*.

Over the years, she has accumulated extensive experience in communications, marketing, photography, and video-editing through her studies and by working for various companies and news outlets.

Stay up-to-date on what's happening at L'Arche Winnipeg, and L'Arche Tova Café, by following us on **Facebook** and **Instagram**! Eliane can be reached at eventscoord@larchewinnipeg.org



Milestone Birthdays

L'Arche Winnipeg supports two women living independently in their own apartment, and both celebrated very special birthdays this year.

Maressa (left) turned 60 in April. She has spent the last 44 of those years living in L'Arche.

Hazel (right), who has been living in L'Arche for 46 years, celebrated her 65th birthday in September. Both are pillars of our community and part of our founding story which began 47 years ago. They are a testament to faithful relationships and how true friendships are the cement that binds us together in community and over time. Happy birthday indeed!

Follow [L'Arche Winnipeg on Facebook](#)



Follow [L'Arche Tova Café on Instagram](#)



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Identity and Mission of the International Federation of L'Arche Communities



Identity Statement:

- We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation.
- Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.
- We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to...

- Make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- Foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.
- Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

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