

# THE WORD

From Winnipeg



L'Arche  
Winnipeg  
Newsletter #45

## Calling All Walkers

by **Karen Griffin**  
*Communications & Fund  
Development Officer*

The momentum is building and the teams are soon hitting the streets!

The **Casera Credit Union Walk with L'Arche & Party Celebration**, Sunday May 4<sup>th</sup> from 1-5:30 pm is shaping up to be a fun-filled family event. Assumption Hall and Kern Park in Transcona are bound to be filled with music, magic and excitement. Mago the magician will provide lots of excitement, as will the Giant Tiger mascot with tattoos, face painting and balloons for everyone!

With our new **'What is a Friend?'** essay contest being presented to students in Grades 1-6 across the city throughout January and February, some lucky essay writer will be chosen to **win an iPod** by our panel of judges! Do you know a child who'd like a chance to win an iPod? Go to our website listed below or contact us and sign up! Deadline for receiving essays is March 1<sup>st</sup>, so hurry!

Tune in to your favourite television stations during February and March to see our Walk advertisements.

Janet Stewart is back to emcee the festivities, the Dust Rhinos will be entertaining us after the walk and, brand new this year – the steel drum band, the Panhandlers will be opening the walk this year with their popular music performed to tropical beats.

Pledge forms are available at [www.larchewinnipeg.org.walkwithlarche.htm](http://www.larchewinnipeg.org.walkwithlarche.htm)

Registration fee is \$10 or \$5 for children, seniors and those on a fixed income. Raise a minimum of \$25 in pledges and you get a walk T-shirt



(registration and T-shirt requisition needed by April 4<sup>th</sup> to guarantee having your T-shirt on the day of the walk). The more pledges you raise, the more prizes you can win!

You can register online at the [www.therunningroom.com](http://www.therunningroom.com) site or by sending in your registration form to the L'Arche Winnipeg Office. Register early (by April 4<sup>th</sup>) and your name will be entered in the early-bird prize draw for a 2 night stay at Crescent Beach Cottages, West Hawk Lake.

Bring your appetite, walkers, because the Knights of Columbus will be barbecuing hot dogs and there will be all

sorts of other snacks and treats.

Further details on the walk, the essay contest and team kits are available online at [www.larchewinnipeg.org/walkwithlarche.htm](http://www.larchewinnipeg.org/walkwithlarche.htm)

For more information on the Casera Credit Union Walk with L'Arche, please contact Karen Griffin: [karengriffin@larchewinnipeg.org](mailto:karengriffin@larchewinnipeg.org) or 237-0300 ext. 8.

If you'd like to volunteer to help with the Walk, contact our Volunteer Coordinator Theresa Meinders: [tmeinders@larchewinnipeg.org](mailto:tmeinders@larchewinnipeg.org) , or 237-0300 ext. 20.

### 35th Anniversary of L'Arche Winnipeg

This year we are celebrating the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the foundation of L'Arche Winnipeg (December 1973). A committee has recently been established to organize a celebration which will happen this summer:

**Sunday, July 6th 2008**

**Basement hall of St. Boniface Cathedral**

**Starting at 1:00 p.m.**

Luncheon & program to follow

We hope that many people will want to join us in this celebration. Consult our website in the coming months for more details.

*For more information on L'Arche, visit the L'Arche Winnipeg Web site at:*  
**[www.larchewinnipeg.org](http://www.larchewinnipeg.org)**

## Discovering The Beauty, Fragility And Treasure Hidden In Each Person

**By Noel Delaquis**

*Friend of L'Arche, retired bishop, novice in the monastery of Our Lady of the Prairies, Holland, Manitoba.*

I was there when the seed of L'Arche was sown in Manitoba. It was after a Faith and Sharing retreat preached by Jean Vanier in 1973. Jean shared from his heart the love that he experienced with wounded friends in the light of the Gospel and from his close relationship with Jesus centered on the Eucharist. This was a historical event in my own life and a special grace for the Church in Manitoba and for the province as a whole.

The houses of L'Arche continue to be special places for the growth of people with or without a handicap. L'Arche is a home where people learn from each other to live the true love that Jesus brought upon this earth, a love which creates a community of people some having a visible handicap and some who may discover perhaps their own unknown handicap, probably not physical or mental, but perhaps an unknown spiritual or psychological weakness.

In this setting and milieu one discovers that each person, with their own vulnerability and wound, is a gift to the other. In accepting one another as we are, one learns to live with each other to form a family of love; all together, each in one's own way. They discover the beauty, the fragility and the wonderful treasure hidden in each person. In that atmosphere one discovers something of the goodness of God reflected in each person, and, for all, it is a healing experience for the whole person.

This is what I see from the outside; I've never lived in a house of L'Arche even though I visited different ones at different times. What I wrote above is what I see happening. I know that such a wonderful place to live does not come down directly from heaven, it is not prefabricated. It does not come easily; it does re-



*Relationships are at the heart of L'Arche*

quire much work and dedication, faith and hope. It does require much love, patience, endurance and commitment. It is indeed a creation of love.

I see but the beautiful and rich fruits on the tree. The taking care of the tree, creating the conditions that allow the roots to go deep in good soil and nurture the tree, at times perhaps the pruning of the tree, all that means a lot of work, a lot of dedication and much self giving. And the soil is the heart of each person. I would dare to say that it is God's work in generous human hearts and hands.

The existence of L'Arche houses, or

rather homes, in our midst is a treasure to discover. L'Arche will touch the heart of anyone who comes close to it with an open heart; one will become a better person; the one who becomes part of its life will experience a happy transformation leading to authentic joy and genuine peace.

May we consider it a privilege to be able to support by prayer and by financial assistance such an oasis where so many people can drink from the clear spring of life-giving water of love in the truest and most rewarding sense of the word. I hope and pray that many people will seek to **"Discover L'Arche"**.

### Join us as at an upcoming one hour "Discover L'Arche" event

Through the use of video and live testimonial stories, L'Arche Winnipeg has begun offering one-hour informational events to raise awareness of its activities and vision. Light refreshments will be offered before and during the program, which takes about 50 minutes. You won't be asked to make any financial contribution, but we would welcome your advice and feedback after the event.

The "Discover L'Arche" events will

be held at the ACCESS Centre at 845 Regent Ave W. in Transcona. Group size is limited. To reserve a spot, please call 237-0300 Karen (ext.8) or Terry (ext. 1).

The next scheduled dates and times are:

Sunday, March 30 at 2 p.m.  
Tuesday, April 15 at 5 p.m.  
Tuesday, June 3 at 5 p.m.  
Sunday, Sept. 14 at 2 p.m.  
Tuesday, Sept. 30 at 5 p.m.

## Reflections From The Community Leader

by **Dennis Butcher**  
*Community Leader*

On an annual basis I have offered a brief "state of the Community" summary in "The Word" newsletter. I offer the following highlights for 2007. After working for the past 2 ¾ years for adequate and equitable funding from the Department of Family Services and Housing, we have managed to get a modest increase at the year end which should allow for a stipend increase for our assistants. We have been told by the Department that they will not pay for any "faith based" (L'Arche based) costs. Fortunately, an anonymous foundation has funded an additional Communication and Fund Development Officer, Karen Griffin, as well as increased our Communication and Fund Development Director's time (Terry Wiebe), upgrades to our accounting/fundraising hardware and software. An Individual Planned Giving Committee has begun to hold "Discover L'Arche" events and to look at setting up an endowment fund to sustain the unique aspects of our life which make L'Arche L'Arche.

After a three year sponsorship of our Walk With L'Arche by Park Pontiac, Casera Credit Union has agreed to be our naming sponsor for the next three years. Janet Stewart returns for her third year as emcee and the Dust Rhinos for their second with some new attractions, including an elementary school essay contest on "What is a friend". The Winnipeg Foundation has generously agreed to help us with advertising to help "grow" the event.

Our Healthy Aging program under the direction of Barbara Pantel has begun work on its "end of life" mandate with a session on wills, funeral planning, and most recently a session on estate planning/trusts for our families with their member with a developmental disability. Life stories have been completed for most of our members with a disability.

Looking ahead, an ad hoc group is considering the creation of a L'Arche Café / Meeting Place to reach out and involve local citizens from the Transcona community as our members

share their gifts and work in an alternative situation as they age. A volunteer will be working over the next four months to create a new website which we hope will be useful for recruiting assistants and volunteers, sharing information, soliciting financial and other support. We hope it will be up and running by early June. A group of assistants are looking at the feasibility, funding of a "days away" facility for live-in assistants. We are also looking forward to celebrating our 35th anni-

versary this year.

In closing I would like to thank four persons for their major contribution to our Board of Directors as they leave: Liz Beazley after nine years, Dallas Ballance and Larry Kehler, both after six years of service, and Rob Winter, whose untimely death on December 28, after five years, has left all of us in shock and grief. Our sincere sympathy is extended to his wife Sandy, his parents Dave and Anne Winter and their family.

## With New Air Conditioning and Renovations – We can Joyfully Say, "Bring on the Heat"

by **Terry Wiebe**  
*Communications and Fund Development Director*

If it weren't for some very generous supporters, many of us might not be looking forward to another hot summer. It seems the older we get, the less tolerant we are of extreme weather. And as you know our winters can get mighty cold and our summers mighty hot! For the past few years, four of our homes and our office, have been in bad need of air conditioning and other upgrading measures to ensure energy efficiency and the health and safety of our members. This meant we needed new insulation, windows and better ventilation. At an estimated cost of \$65,000 to \$71,000, we knew the only way we could get this work done was with the help of some major donors and community foundations.

New estimates are being gathered with the hope that work will continue this spring. An additional \$13,000 is likely required to finish this project, with many sighing a breath of relief knowing that all the air conditioning work has been completed. We can now stop dreading those extreme hot

summer days sweating in the office and finding it near impossible to sleep in our homes. No more reason to worry about the heat impacting our health, moods and ability to function. Thank goodness we can now joyfully say, "Bring on the Heat!"

Special thanks to those who have contributed to this project so far, including an anonymous donor



*L'Arche Chimo on Kern Drive is one of the homes enjoying the fruits of the renovations.*

(\$18,000), Sir Thomas Cropp Foundation Inc. (\$10,000), The Winnipeg Foundation (\$5,000), The Catholic Foundation of Manitoba (\$2,500), The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba (\$2,500) and approximately \$13,000 expected to come from L'Arche Winnipeg funds through the sale of vehicles and other fundraising.



English language lessons led by Lena, who is using this experience to complete a practicum for her teaching certificate. Just one of the many ways volunteers are working in our community.

## Volunteer Opportunities

### One-time commitments:

#### Walk advertising blitz.

Join us Saturday, April 5 from 2-4 pm as we distribute brochures in the Transcona neighbourhood, introducing them to the walk. A BBQ will follow.

Casera Credit Union's Walk with L'Arche Our fourth annual walk on May 4 needs a number of volunteers to make it a success. This commitment includes an orientation afternoon on Saturday April 26 at 2:00 p.m.

#### Mass Mailing Easter Appeal

We need to stuff 10,000 envelopes for a major mass mailing event in the first week of March. Please come help us.

### Longer term opportunities:

Special friend – start a journey, make a new friend. Our members with disabilities are some of the most welcoming people you will ever meet, and would love the opportunity of getting to know someone new.

House friend – a welcome environment to get to know L'Arche and begin making new friends. Activities can include cooking, gardening, playing games, shoveling snow, drinking coffee or almost anything you might be able to imagine.

Time commitments for both these roles are approximately twice a month for a couple of hours. If you are interested in any of these opportunities please call me at 237-0300 ext. 20, email me at [tmeinders@larchewinnipeg.org](mailto:tmeinders@larchewinnipeg.org) or drop by the office. I would love to meet with you and see what we can work out together.

- Theresa Meinders

## Blessed Memories

*The parish of Blessed Sacrament in Transcona, where L'Arche began 35 years ago, is planning to publish a book of special memories and events that have occurred in the course of the parish's history, and parishioners have been invited to write the articles. The book will be called "Blessed Memories", and the following two stories have been submitted for inclusion in the book.*

- Hubert Pantel

### Official Opening of L'Arche

I believe that at some point in history, he will be declared a saint by the Church. Future generations will study his life, his teachings, and perhaps wonder: what would it have been like to have actually known him, hear him speak personally? His name is **Jean Vanier**, and people of our parish did have the opportunity to hear him speak personally on February 26, 1974. On that day, Blessed Sacrament Church was filled to the brim with people who came to hear Jean speak on the occasion of the official opening of the first L'Arche home in Winnipeg, located at 420 Rosseau Avenue just across from the church. I was editor of a weekly newspaper at the time, and recently reread Jean's words that I recorded in a 2 page article. Jean spoke of hope and aspirations we all have for a world of peace, and the reality of the deep divisions that exist in our world. He spoke of our thirst for authentic relationships, to be freed from our fears, to know that we are loved as we are and capable, with God's help, of building bridges in our divided world. Many people were touched by Jean's words that day, and I recall one other speaker's voice cracking with emotion afterwards.

Some of the other people who spoke at that occasion were: Cardinal George Flahiff, Archbishop Maurice Baudoux, Reverend Bruce Miles ("A Moment of Meditation" on CJOB radio...), and elected officials Robert Bockstael and Russell Pauley.

### The Freedom to Be

L'Arche has been in Winnipeg for 35 years, and 4 of our 6 homes are part of Blessed Sacrament Parish. Over the years, literally hundreds of people ("assistants") have come from over 20 different countries to live in our community – many young people whose hearts have been touched, lives transformed,

through living with people with a developmental disability. We will never know the full extent of how we make our world a better place through the rippling effect of all these people returning to their countries, in turn influencing others...

One of the most important things L'Arche members have taught me is that we are **all** a mixture of light and darkness, strengths and weaknesses – that we have varying gifts but are all equally important as human beings. People who have a great capacity to accept themselves and others as they are, have shown me the prison of "image" we too often live in, with the fear of "what will others think". A little example of this "freedom to be" happened in our church some time ago. L'Arche was the host family at Sunday Mass, and we were the ones taking up the collection. One of our members, realizing that someone had been missed, walked right up to the front, past the altar, over to the chair where the priest was sitting and tended the collection basket to him. With a big smile on his face, Father Ron stuck his hand in his pocket and found a few coins he could add to the collection basket...

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