

THE WORD

From Winnipeg



L'Arche
Winnipeg
Newsletter #41

Health Needs of Our Members With a Disability on the Rise

by Genaro Guevarra
Health Care Coordinator

It is a growing trend for service providers and agencies in Winnipeg and across Canada to come up with programs to meet the increasing health needs of people with disabilities. Our Community is not exempted from this, and so we have to be creative and imaginative to best meet the needs of the people we serve, our members with a developmental disability who are the central focus of our Community, and the assistants who play a crucial role in delivering those supports to our members.

Seasons of Life

When our Community first welcomed members with a developmental disability, they were in their early season of life, early adults: spring time; then mature adults: summer time; and now the reality of entering into their late adulthood: fall and winter season. As they enter into this stage, a logical approach is to start the discussion and prepare our members with a developmental disability about end-of-life issues.

With more and more people in our community aging, many health issues arise, including mobility and cognition issues (onset of Alzheimer disease and dementia). Our members with a developmental disability are not exempted from these

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(Above) Ross & Nicole, long-time residents of our first L'Arche home on Rosseau Avenue, **L'Aîné**, stand by recent renovations done: the old porch in the back was torn down, and the new construction features an elevator to the second floor, a sun room, and 2 accessible washrooms. Several 2nd floor bedrooms were also renovated.

(Below) Ross, Richard, Kathi & Michelle stand at rear entrance of our home on Kern Drive, **Chimo**, made wheelchair accessible by the addition of the ramp. Two main floor bedrooms and large bathroom with special walk-in tub were also added.



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

Health Needs of Our Members on the Rise ...

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health conditions which affect the general population and are often affected earlier.

“Coming of Age”

In April 2004, I had the opportunity to attend, with three other Long-Term Assistants, the “Coming of Age” conference held in Winnipeg. Participants of the conference were self-advocates with developmental disabilities, family members, service providers and government officials. Participants came from across Canada and the US. This conference was a starting point for me to come up with materials to meet the increasing health needs of the members with a disability in our Community.

L'Arche Aging Program Manual

Thus in July 2005 I created the L'Arche Aging Program Manual. This manual is intended to be used as a blueprint for resources and for information for the Community. There are nine recommendations, among them:

- Availability of a Coordinator responsible for health
- Documentation tool in the form of questionnaires (Alzheimer Disease and other dementias)
- Environmental modifications: renovations to existing homes (L'Aîné and Chimo) to universal/wheelchair access (see photos on page 1)
- Video taping (documentation tool)
- Housing options for members
- Training and education of staff and Assistants (In-service sessions)
- Availability of educational materials
- Communication among L'Arche communities and other service providers to share best practices.
- Discussion of End-of-life Issues

The Fulfillment of Life

I would like to end by quoting Henri Nouwen and Walter Gaffney's thoughts on aging, “We believe that aging is the most common human experience which overarches the human community as a rainbow of promises. It is an experience so profoundly human that it

breaks through the artificial boundaries between childhood and adulthood, and between adulthood and old age. It is so filled with promises that it can lead us to discover more and more of life's treasures. We believe that aging is not a reason for despair but a basis for hope, not a slow decaying but a gradual maturing, not a fate to be undergone but a chance to be embraced.” - Henri Nouwen and Walter Gaffney, Aging- The Fulfillment of Life



Fashion Show

Genaro films Linda during the *Fashion Show* segment of our L'Arche International Family Day on October 21st. Linda was also in the spotlight in September as we celebrated her 60th birthday. She is the 3rd member of our Community to have reached or surpassed that milestone (following Marge and Dorothy).

Alzheimer Society of Manitoba

Annual Meeting

March 5 & 6, 2007
Canad Inn Polo Park
1405 St. Matthews Ave.

More information:
Norma Kirkby at
943-6622 ext. 210

Joins Us in Our Advent Retreat

L'Arche Winnipeg is having its' Annual Advent Retreat on Saturday November 25th in the basement hall of St. Boniface Cathedral (190, ave. de la Cathédrale). The retreat will be led by Fr. Gerry Ward, Director of Spiritual Care at St. Boniface Hospital, on “Prayer”. The retreat day begins at 9:30 a.m. and concludes with supper at 5:00 p.m.

As we did last year, we are opening up the retreat to family members, friends, volunteers, or anyone else who would be interested in getting to know our Community better and living a time of retreat with us. Anyone interested should contact our Office at 237-0300, ext. 0. Suggested donation: \$15.00 (to cover refreshments & supper; please bring a bag lunch).

Wish List

If you have any of the following items, in good condition, to donate to L'Arche, please contact our Office. Thank you for helping us out in our needs.

- Two fax machines for two of our homes
- Two computers (with Windows XP operating system)

Reflections From The Community Leader

by **Dennis Butcher**
Community Leader

My how things have changed! In the initial year of L'Arche Winnipeg I understand that two assistants and eight members with a developmental disability lived together in L'Ainé, our first home on Rosseau Avenue. I also hear that it was not uncommon for up to five members to be accompanied on outings by a single assistant. Thirty-three years later (and older) the needs of the members with a developmental disability have grown significantly and it is a challenge to meet them personally and financially. During holiday times some members with a disability are choosing to stay at home or be away for only a night or two, some are finding it difficult to attend weekly Community activities and assistants are having to stay home with them and the Community has sought to modify its rhythm of life to the aging reality.

Ratios between assistants and our members with a developmental disability have changed drastically as the members age, requiring greater support for morning and evening routines, assistance with mobility, more one on one assistance, supervision, and encouragement to continue to do things for themselves and the household where they live. Since each of our homes have more members with a disability (four or five) than the provincial average (two or three) we have determined that it would take a minimum of two assistants (and, in the case of two of our homes, three assistants) to get sleeping members out to safety in the case of an emergency (fire, carbon monoxide, etc).

Recognizing the inevitable reduction in mobility with aging, L'Arche Winnipeg has been pro-

active in its last two mandates to be more prepared for people using canes, walkers, and wheelchairs by building a wheel-chair accessible home, Dayspring, with the Community gathering space, Salle Vanier, as well as renovating two other homes to be mobility friendly (L'Ainé with an elevator and Chimo with wheelchair accessibility on the first floor). Our Park Pontiac Walk With L'Arche has been successful in raising funds for our first wheelchair accessible van.

As the health of members seemingly deteriorates monthly, five years ago it seemed necessary to have a Health Care Coordinator available to monitor the individual health of aging members, accompany them to doctors, dentists, hospitals, instruct assistants in the proper care of deteriorating health conditions and provide ongoing training and education for assistants in areas such as nutrition,

medications, diabetes, dementia, lifts and transfers, etc. More recently we have been fortunate enough to get private funding for a quarter-time position of Healthy Aging Coordinator to work on helping people age as gracefully as possible by remaining active and by preparing them for retirement and the end of life with the decisions that we need to make.

We have no illusions that the effects of aging on Community life have ended but only promise to increase with the need of more human support (staff and volunteers), specialized training, awake-at-night personnel, pastoral care of assistants and members with a developmental disability as health deteriorates, demands increase and lives end. Please keep the Community in your thoughts, prayers and support as we attempt to maintain and enhance the quality of life of those entrusted to our care.

Regional Assembly Held in Calgary

by **Hubert Pantel**

Last month delegates from all the L'Arche communities in Western Canada gathered for a weekend in Calgary for our annual Regional Assembly. One of the items on the agenda was the approval of a new Vice Regional Coordinator, ending a search which began in the spring of 2005. The 27 delegates present unanimously approved Landys Klyne as our new Vice Regional Coordinator. Landys is currently Community Leader of L'Arche Vancouver and will finish her mandate there before taking on her new role in September of 2007.

During the Assembly we spent time reflecting and working on several points of our Regional Mandate. The one retaining the most attention was the well being of long-term assistants. Peggy Keaney, Zone Human Resources Coordinator, made the point clearly in her pres-



Landys Klyne

entation: "At the heart of our homes are members with a disability and assistants. We are very good at caring for people with a disability, we are probably the best at it. We have to learn to do it as well for assistants."

Some concerns expressed include finances (retirement/pensions), marginalization, healthier workloads, value, respect and place of belonging in the Community.

A letter from Jean Vanier

*Excerpts from a recent letter by
Jean Vanier sent to the
L'Arche communities.*

From June 2nd to June 4th, an important Conference on **Initiatives for Peace** was held in Paris, organized by Christian Renoux, former President of MIR (International Movement for Reconciliation). It brought together some 150 organizations involving thousands of men and women who are working for peace, men and women who are determined to move from the ways of violence and to the paths of listening, unity, dialogue and non violence. I had the joy of participating in a round table discussion with Adolfo Perez Esquivel (a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize) and Hildegard Goss-Mayr, who for the last fifty years has been struggling for non-violent solutions to conflict in various parts of the world. I shared about L'Arche and Faith and Light and how we want to be communities of peace. I was inspired by all the people who believe that they can do something for peace in different situations and who are also committed to humanitarian projects in areas of poverty.

We are living in the decade of the U.N. proclamation of peace, a decade where schools are encouraged to teach young people the ways of non violence. Violence breaks out in cultures of competition, where there is economic and political rivalry and the rivalry caused by civil war and international conflicts. Our education systems advocate success.

To be successful in life is of course important. However, if it only means a frantic search to climb up the ladder at any cost and to show that we are better and superior to others, it is destructive; and if it means rejecting those who are weak and who do not succeed, it is also dangerous. Either we exploit other peo-

ples' weakness and crush them as we try to reach the top; or, faced with the world of rivalry in and around us, we shrug our shoulders and give up, feeling incapable of doing anything useful to change the situation; or, we are discouraged and just seek compensation in things like alcohol.

A culture of peace, rather, implies an acceptance of each person with their gifts and their weakness, helping each one to rediscover his/her dignity and place in the human community. In a culture of peace, people who are stronger are encouraged to recognize and accept their own weaknesses, and to serve and give support to those who are more vulnerable and to help them discover their own capacities. In a culture of peace each person is seen as unique, important and sacred.

One of the big questions for each one of us today is how to turn our backs on the culture of rivalry, individualism, conflict or depression that surrounds us, and move instead into a culture of solidarity and cooperation, peace and hope. How can this transformation come about in us?

L'Arche and Faith and Light want to be communities of peace through our way of living, the way we welcome and share with people who are weak and vulnerable. Our communities can become places of transformation through the way we welcome each other, listen to one other and resolve conflict. Welcoming the weak, recognizing their gifts and helping them discover the meaning of their life is our way of building peace.

The danger for many today is to think that history is made without us, not with us. We often shrug our shoulders and say that we can't do anything about it. We for-

get that if we are together and give each other mutual support, we can witness to the strength of love and to the fact that life is stronger than death.

A good institution is defined both by competence and by the capacity of people within it to work together. There are many good institutions. Community life adds something else: the desire to live faithful relationships where each person is seen as a gift, where each one gives and receives life. Community is made up of relationships. Community life is formed and revealed through the quality of personal sharing; the quality of meetings (where each person assumes his/her responsibility); the quality of celebrations (where life and unity are celebrated); and the quality of prayer life, where we affirm together our desire to live in conformity with God's ways and to let God's love and wisdom form and mould our lives so that we can radiate hope and peace.

In May, in Chicago, I received the "Blessed are the Peacemakers" Award from the Catholic Theological University. I was happy to receive it in the name of L'Arche and Faith and Light and to realize that other people recognize that our communities are places of peace. To act for peace requires a whole new attitude, a new way of living and of encountering others, especially those who are different from us;

It means trying to create a society not in the form of a pyramid but as a circle, where the weak as well as the strong have their place and find dignity and meaning to their lives, and where there is mutuality rather than rivalry.

Planning Ahead For a Successful Spring Walk

by Brian Campbell

It's November, and while most of Winnipeg still is putting Thanksgiving turkey and Halloween candy behind them and thinking about an upcoming Christmas and New Year, L'Arche is already thinking spring and planning their third annual walk. The second Park Pontiac's Walk with L'Arche was a huge success and raised the necessary funds needed to purchase a wheelchair accessible van. We at L'Arche send our thanks to the many walkers, volunteers and sponsors who helped to raise over \$30,000. However, the need for support is not ended. Next year's walk will be raising funds to help in the upgrading and maintenance of L'Arche homes and vehicles.

The third annual Park Pontiac's Walk with L'Arche and Party Celebration will be on Sunday, May 6, 2007, and we hope that all of the people who came this year will be able to make it back next year. Come join our party and bring a friend. Better yet, how about becoming part of a team? An important part of planning the third annual Park Pontiac's Walk with L'Arche is the search for volunteers, and it's never too early to get on board. For those of you who have volunteered before, thank you and welcome back, for those who are new, welcome to the L'Arche family.

Whether familiar faces or new ones, we look forward to seeing all of you. You are the backbone supporting this event and we couldn't do it without you.

We have a variety of areas to get involved in, a chance for everyone to use their talents and gifts. Teams of volunteers are needed for: food, registration and administration,

grounds, walk marshaling, program and entertainment, sponsorship and prizes, media, marketing, and French language committees. If you want to join a committee or even find out more about what is involved in a particular committee, call Brian Campbell at 237-0300 ext 8. We are certain that we can find an area where your help will be most appreciated.

We have deepest gratitude for our naming sponsor Park Pontiac, as well as other major event sponsors, including Doug MacDonald of Dundee Wealth Management, Olympic Builders Supply, Presto Pizza, Vickar Community Chevrolet, Wyatt Insurance and Financial Services, and the Knights of Columbus for their support of our annual walk. Appreciation also

goes to the many prize sponsors who are too numerous to mention in this article. We haven't forgotten the support you've given us and it is our sincere hope that you will be able to continue to support us. Thank you for showing us the true heart of Winnipeg. For anyone who wants to know more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Terry Wiebe at 237-0300 ext 1. Our February 2007 newsletter will contain other pertinent information regarding next year's walk. Watch for it.

So, as L'Arche Winnipeg moves forward into another year, we once again extend our thanks to the many people who have helped us along the way. You have shown the spirit of caring, acceptance and love that is at the heart of L'Arche. God bless all of you.

Successful Operation for Sebastien

by Pascale Dalecq

In our last Newsletter (June) we appealed to your generosity in order to help David and Jasmina Forest and their young son Sebastien who was in urgent need of a bowel and liver transplant in order to survive. So many wonderful things have happened since that June appeal. The fundraising evening was a great success and we were overwhelmed by the response and the generosity of so many people, raising \$15,000 in one evening.

And then came the life-saving phone call from Toronto at the beginning of August: David and Jasmina were informed that suitable donated organs had just become available for Sebastien and within a few hours the Forest family was in Toronto. August 11th was a long day spent in the operating room. The transplant was a success and Sebastien is pres-



ently recuperating at the hospital. There have been ups and downs since the operation as Sebastien's body has a lot of recuperating to do. He is showing an incredible courage and a great desire to live. He loves playing with his parents, likes all the attention and visits he is getting, and has some favorite television programs he likes to watch.

Jasmina and David want to thank, from the bottom of their hearts, all the people who helped and supported them, and ask for your continued prayers so that Sebastien's healing might be complete.

L'Arche Recognized as "Best Practice"

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) conducted a two-year survey (December 2004 to February 2006) examining housing issues for adults with an intellectual disability. The results of this research were published in a CMHC report last March. The report looked at "best practices" across Canada and, under the "Favoured Housing Models" title, recognized the work done by L'Arche:

"L'Arche model: L'Arche was the only group home that was identified as a best practice. L'Arche homes exist in a number of provinces. All are faith-based, geared to aging-in-place, and feature employees who function more like family members than staff."



Remember Loved Ones This Christmas With a Celebration Gift to L'Arche

For most of us, Christmas is a time we get together with family and friends and often share gifts with loved ones. What better way to show our love this Christmas than to give a celebration gift to L'Arche Winnipeg in honour of that special someone.

We invite you to support the L'Arche Winnipeg community and honour your friends and loved ones by making a celebration gift this Christmas and on other important occasions such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and graduations. Please use the cut-out form below to make your Celebration Gift.

Manitoba Government Employees Support L'Arche

Terry Wiebe, Communications and Fund Development Officer for L'Arche Winnipeg, receives a cheque of \$1,366 from Gord Thomas, Chair of the 2006 Management Board, reflecting Manitoba Government Employee donations designated to L'Arche Winnipeg during the 2005 All Charities Campaign.

Yes, I would like to make a Celebration Gift to L'Arche Winnipeg

Name of Donor: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Amount of Gift: _____ This Gift is being given in celebration of:

Christmas Birthday Anniversary Wedding Other _____

Name of person you want to receive notice of this gift:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: _____

Please make cheques payable to: L'Arche Winnipeg

L'Arche Winnipeg, Inc.
118 Regent Avenue East
Winnipeg, MB R2C 0C1

*Tax receipt provided for all gifts of \$15 or more.
Charitable tax registration # 107597692 RR0001*

Christmas 2006

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