



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #73



3rd Edition of L'Arche's Christmas Pageant this December



You are invited to L'Arche Winnipeg's 3rd annual Christmas Pageant which will be held on Monday, December 11th, 2017, at **Covenant Christian Reformed Church**, located at 653 Knowles Avenue.

We hope many of you will join us for this

event, which begins at 7:00 pm.

The narration of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem and the events leading to the birth of Jesus will be acted out in tableaux by L'Arche members, accompanied by our own musicians and the singing of traditional Christmas songs - and everyone is invited to sing along!

The last song - *Silent Night* - will be sung in various languages, reflecting the cultural diversity of our assistants in L'Arche who come from many different countries.

There is no admission cost for the pageant evening. A free-will offering will be collected, with the money given to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre which provides a drop-in, support, training, resources, and opportunities to women in the area.

There will be refreshments and food (prepared by L'Arche Tova Café) served in the adjoining hall after the Pageant. Hope to see you there!



A Successful Fundraising Pancake Breakfast

L'Arche Winnipeg's **Solidarity Committee** held a fundraising pancake breakfast on Sunday October 15th at Applebee's restaurant in Transcona. We are grateful to the prize donors, volunteers and the many guests who joined us for breakfast on Sunday morning, helping to make this breakfast such a success.

We are happy to announce that we raised \$1,303.00 at this event. This amount will be sent to the L'Arche Canada Solidarity Program which supports L'Arche communities in Latin America and the Caribbean, as those communities receive little or no government funding and rely mostly on private donations. We are one step closer to reaching our an-

nual goal of raising \$7,500.00 for Solidarity. A previous event (an evening of bowling at Academy Lanes) had raised the amount of \$1,148.00.

Money is also raised through one-time or monthly donations by L'Arche Winnipeg members and by other friends/donors.

Our next Solidarity event will be an evening of bowling in February, 2018. Details will be on our website.



Albert & Michael enjoying pancakes at Applebee's

For more information on L'Arche, go to
L'Arche Winnipeg website: www.larchewinnipeg.org
L'Arche Tova Café website: www.larchetovacafe.com

Long-time L'Arche Friends Participate in Fashion Show

The 8th annual **Peace Days** Festival took place from September 15th to the 24th. Peace Days exists for all persons who believe in a culture of peace and compassion, and grew out of a desire to celebrate the United Nations International Day of Peace (September 21).

The final event of the festival was the **Diversity Runway** fashion show on September 24th at the Fort Garry Hotel. Historical and current clothing, along with accessories from different cultures were modeled by local adults and children. The show highlights diversity, strength, inclusion, respect and equality among all citizens. Kathy and Hazel from L'Arche were very happy to participate in this event and had a wonderful time.



Kathy & Hazel, waiting for their turn on the Diversity Runway

Hazel and Kathy have been friends for over 43 years. Kathy arrived in the L'Arche community as a summer assistant in 1974 and again in 1975, before continuing on with a 34 year career in teaching. Hazel and Kathy have remained life-long friends and often shop together, share meals at each other's homes and even travel together.

Every Wednesday, Hazel and Kathy can be seen volunteering together at the L'Arche Tova Café in Transcona, a social enterprise whose aim is to make known the gifts of individuals with developmental disabilities.

Highlights of the Year 2017

January

- ◆ Launch of a new program - **Seniors Circle** - for retired core members who have no day program
- ◆ A new L'Arche Winnipeg **Endowment Fund** is created at **Francofonds**

February

- ◆ Academy Lanes bowling event to raise money for **Solidarity**

March

- ◆ Private members bill on L'Arche Tova Café read at the **Manitoba Legislative Assembly**
- ◆ Community Lenten Retreat

April

- ◆ We mourn the passing of long-time community member **Kevin Hanson** at age 51
- ◆ Celebration of the 5th anniversary of **L'Arche Tova Café**
- ◆ A sold-out "Songs & Sweets" **Music Night** at the Café
- ◆ Café volunteers receive two awards at the 34th annual **Manitoba Volunteers Awards** dinner.

May

- ◆ Our 13th annual **Walk with L'Arche** sets a record attendance and raises over \$69,000.00
- ◆ A Healthy Living grant from the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA) helps us hold our first ever **Paint Night** at the Café, also attended by students from the River East-Transcona School Division.

June

- ◆ Jim Lapp and Linda Filjak attend the **L'Arche International Federation** meeting in Belfast, Ireland
- ◆ Friends of L'Arche are recognized at our annual **Volunteer Appreciation** evening

July

- ◆ A new member - **Margaret** - is welcomed at our Chimo house
- ◆ L'Arche Tova Café sells fresh baking every Thursday at the **Transcona Biz Market Garden**
- ◆ We mourn the loss of **Dale Swirsky**, a past assistant and recent volunteer & accompanier at L'Arche

August

- ◆ A generous grant allows L'Arche to purchase a **new van** for one of our houses

September

- ◆ A new part-time role is created in our community - **Spiritual Life Coordinator**

October

- ◆ A grant from the Manitoba Real Estate Association Shelter Foundation helps us put **new flooring** in two of our houses
- ◆ Launch of our **Mandate and Selection** process, to write our new mandate for the next four years and select a Community Leader to lead us in that mandate
- ◆ Delegates attend the **L'Arche Western Regional Assembly** in Saskatoon
- ◆ Great West Life volunteers paint rooms in our office, through the **United Way Day of Caring** program

November

- ◆ The Grace sisters sing "**Songs of Christmas**" at Blessed Sacrament Church on November 16, raising funds for **Solidarity**

December

- ◆ L'Arche Winnipeg presents it's annual **Christmas Pageant** evening on December 11th.

More details on these events can be found in past issues of our newsletter archived on our website: https://www.larchewinnipeg.org/?page_id=45

Belfast 2017: L'Arche International Federation Meeting

by **Jim Lapp**
Community Leader

I was selected as L'Arche Winnipeg's delegate to the L'Arche International Federation Meeting in Belfast Northern Ireland from June 20 to June 27. I had a wonderful time and often wished that everyone at L'Arche Winnipeg could have been there to experience the joy, welcome and celebrations of the event with me.

I started my journey by going to L'Arche Kilkenny to visit their community and their Café L'Arche, the first café in the Federation. It just celebrated its tenth anniversary. The café is very similar to our café, with similar gifts and problems. They had a celebration to send off their delegation, Chris and Patrick, four Spanish delegates and me to Belfast. Everyone in Ireland is expected to sing, so they had the Spanish delegates up singing and then insisted that I lead them in the song "If you are happy and you know it". I turned beet red but did it. Over the course of the week in Belfast I became good friends with Chris and Patrick and we hope to twin L'Arche Kilkenny with L'Arche Winnipeg and visit one another.

The theme of the Meetings in Belfast was *Re-mem-bering our Future*. We looked at our past but also dreamed together about what the future might look like for L'Arche. Underlying that theme was the concept of unity, one L'Arche around the world.

I was most impressed with how the members with a disability were included in everything. Typically at L'Arche events in the past, we have had concurrent sessions where the members with a disability do something different (and often more enjoyable) than the rest of us. Every day started with music, prayer and drama, the story of St. Patrick. The characters of St. Patrick and God were both well performed by members with a disability. We heard reports from the outgoing International Leaders, Patrick and Eileen, and thanked them for their service to the mission.

For me, one of the advantages in having the members with a disability present at all times is that often lengthy and tiring reports were kept short and to the point. For instance the Treasurer's Report of L'Arche International only took twenty minutes, and included graphics. After the report the music started up and many people were soon up dancing!



(from left) Linda and Jim from Winnipeg, and other Federation participants, at the foot washing ceremony on Sunday at the Federation meeting.

We voted on and passed a new 5 year mandate called "Taking Responsibility Together". The first line is "L'Arche is a gift that has been entrusted to us, and together, we are responsible for it". It calls us to "Go Deeper: Claim and integrate our fundamental principles and values, Go Out; Get involved on local, national, and international levels, Go Within: Consolidate and strengthen the Federation." At the same time we elected two new International Leaders, Stephan Posner from France and Stacy Cates-Carney from the USA.

Besides the large plenary sessions, we typically had two workshops per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. I missed the best morning workshop on Zumba dancing but

learned a lot about circles of support for aging members at a workshop by L'Arche Ontario. In the afternoon we met in small groups to discuss the future of L'Arche.

On Sunday we split up and attended both Protestant and Catholic services in DownPatrick the place where St. Patrick is believed to have died. After that we went to various holy places to have a traditional L'Arche foot washing service, a very touching moment for me as it symbolized our unity and equality.

I made a number of new friends at Belfast, especially in Ireland. The Irish are a very friendly, and helpful group of people. I look forward to returning there one day.



Leonard was very happy to show off the new van for his house.

Thank you!

Thank you to the **Manitoba Community Services Council Inc.** for the grant of \$25,000. This grant allowed L'Arche Winnipeg to purchase a new van.

Thank you also to **The Winnipeg Foundation** for the grant of \$1,500 in support of Jim Lapp, Community Leader/Executive Director of L'Arche Winnipeg, to attend the Assembly of the International Federation of the L'Arche Communities held in Belfast, Ireland in June.

New 'Seniors Circle' Program

A very important item in our mandate is to "meet the changing needs of our aging members". Our community is now 44 years old, and we have seven members who are retired and do not have a day program to attend.

Two grants were obtained this year for the purpose of launching a new program - the **Seniors Circle**. Our retired members, along with support workers, meet every Friday at our Salle Vanier hall for various activities. These include exercises, games, music, and various crafts which can be theme-related (e.i. St. Patrick's day, Valentine's Day, etc).

Having lunch together is a highlight, and people seem quite happy to get together on Fridays!



Remembering Dale

We were saddened this summer by the sudden passing of Dale Swirsky on July 2nd. He was 46 years old.

L'Arche Winnipeg got to know and appreciate Dale when he came to live with us as a summer assistant in 1990. That fall, in an interview aired on the television program SUNDAY SCOPE ("L'Arche - Community of Hope"), Dale had this to say about his experience in L'Arche: "I've always wanted to be able to work in a friendly atmosphere with other people. I'm very happy I joined ... How peaceful it is (living in L'Arche), the saying hello to people when they come home from work, and how handicapped people are with each other - "how was your day?" It is a homey atmosphere - and that's something you don't get very much in the "outside" world, it's very rushed. As Vanier says, "it's important



to take time for others" - that's something I really got used to and appreciated this summer."

Dale had a lengthy career as a teacher at St. Mary's Academy, and for many years was the volunteer coordinator for their student group of Amnesty International. Dale was especially renowned as a passionate basketball coach.

In the last few years, Dale had reconnected with L'Arche - as a volunteer at L'Arche Tova Café and as an Accompanier for our assistants. He also volunteered as a Walk Marshal at our Walk with L'Arche event this past May.

Christmas at L'Arche Tova Café

Christmas Baking

L'Arche Tova Café will be busy with Christmas baking for the next few weeks - and you can benefit by purchasing boxes of mixed dainties at the Café! A variety of cakes, dainties, cinnamon buns, scones, and breads (Potato Dill, Hearty Multi-Grain, or Country Rye) can be pre-ordered. Call 204-421-9388 for more information.

Catering

The Café can cater your Company meeting or family gathering. See the Café website for catering menu items, pricing and conditions.

Holiday Closure

The Café will be closed from Sunday, December 24 until Tuesday, January 3rd, re-opening on Wednesday.

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:

larchetovacafe@larchewinnipeg.org
or visit the Café website and fill out the online subscription form.

GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

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