



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #74



Vickar Automotive Group's Walk with L'Arche

The 14th annual **Vickar Automotive Group's Walk with L'Arche** will take place on Sunday May 6th, 2018 at Oxford Heights Community Club, 359 Dowling Ave. East in Transcona.

We hope that many of last year's record 500 participants will return for this popular family-friendly walk. We also hope that there will be new people joining us. The walk not only raises much needed funds for L'Arche, it also brings together people with and without disabilities who can experience together an event that is a celebration of life, where you can experience first-hand what L'Arche is all about and create new friendships.

Check-in tables open at 12:30 pm on May 6th and the walk starts at 2:00 pm sharp. You can walk either 1 km or 5 km on a trail free of vehicular traffic, and then return to the Centre for free food, many prize draws, and entertainment for the entire family!

Event Registration & T-Shirts

Mail in or drop off your registration form & registration fee to the L'Arche Winnipeg office, or register online through L'Arche Winnipeg's website. You can request a free Walk T-shirt if you submit your registration form &

fee to the L'Arche office by **Monday, April 9th**, along with a minimum of \$50.00 in raised pledges. You can continue to raise more pledges until May 6th, the day of the Walk. Please note that no T-shirts requests will be accepted after the April 9th deadline.

Teams

Create a team by asking your friends and family to walk with you (a minimum of 5 people is required to be considered a team). Choose a team captain and a team name. You can get a T-shirt with your team name on it if the following conditions are met: each team member needs to raise their own \$50.00 minimum of pledges to get the T-shirt, and must submit that amount with their registration form & registration fee to the L'Arche office by **Monday, April 9th**.

Volunteers

A large number of volunteers are needed to make the walk a success. If you would like to help, contact our volunteer coordinator, Liz Gauthier, by

phone at 204-237-0300 ext. 20, or at volunteer@larchewinnipeg.org

Volunteers help to ensure that 100% of your raised pledges will be used to improve the quality of life of our L'Arche members with developmental disabilities and their assistants.

Prizes

The prizes at the walk are donated by the business community, organizations and individuals. If you have a prize that you would like to donate for the walk please contact Diane Truderung at 204-237-0300 ext. 1, or by email: dianetruderung@larchewinnipeg.org

More information about the walk can be found in our walk brochure and on our website. If you would like to obtain more brochures, pledge forms and registration forms, or require further information, please call the L'Arche Winnipeg office at 204-237-0300 ext 0. Registration forms and pledge forms can also be printed directly from our website. We look forward to seeing many of you on May 6th!

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

2017 ends on high note with “Songs of Christmas”



(l. to r.) Pat Grace, Craig Buckboro, Derrick Gottfried, Kitty Buckboro, Elizabeth Arychuk, Maureen Daeninck, and Susan Adams

A L'Arche *Solidarity* concert held at Blessed Sacrament Church in November was a memorable evening on many levels, and a great success as a fund-raising event with over \$3,700.00 raised. *Solidarity* is L'Arche International's program of support for L'Arche communities in poorer countries where little or no government financial aid is provided. A big thank you goes out to the Grace sisters & musicians who donated their time & talent for this important cause.

Documentary premiere on February 11th

Bringing up Down syndrome

Bringing up Down syndrome is a short documentary that shares the stories of two families raising children with Down syndrome. The film explores facing the fears of the future, childhood milestones, learning new skills, entering the work field, and gaining independence.

The documentary is produced by Holly Giesbrecht, a 20-year-old Creative Communications student at Red River Community College.

Pam and Ed Friesen, with their 25-year-old daughter Stacey, talk about Stacey learning to ski, starting to work, and looking at the near future of Stacey moving out. Donna Hrehirchuk, with her 6-year-old son Grant, talks about Grant going to grade one, learning to read, and taking the future one day at a time.

Learning your child has Down syndrome is a hard thing to hear and it can instill a fear of the future and how to handle it, says Holly, who hopes that her documentary can give a visual of what it looks like to raise a child with Down syndrome and relieve some of those fears and nega-

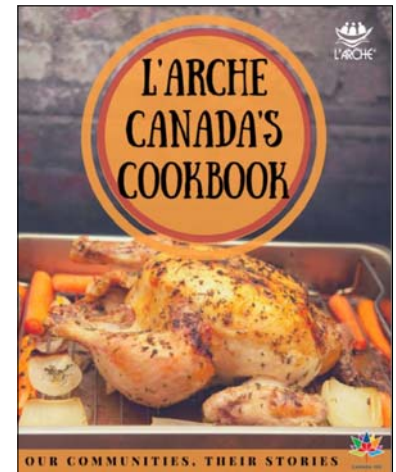


Stacey, who works at L'Arche Tova Café, is one of the people featured in the documentary.

tive thoughts because having a child is an incredible thing, whether they have Down syndrome or not.

There will be a free viewing event for 'Bringing up Down syndrome' on Sunday February 11th at 2:30 pm at the Health Sciences Centre in the Frederic Gaspard Theatre in the Basic Medical Sciences Building.

. Although the event will be free, there will be a donation box at the door. For more information about the event or the documentary visit the website at bringupdownsyndrome.wordpress.com or visit the Facebook page **Bringing up Down syndrome**.



L'Arche Canada Cookbook

Last year, L'Arche Canada Foundation chose to celebrate Canada's 150 years of confederation by creating a cookbook reflecting the diversity of our country and of our 30 Canadian L'Arche communities. The cookbook is also meant to be a way to introduce L'Arche to many Canadians who do not know what we do.

The 78 page online cookbook has various recipes as well as stories and photos from each community. You can find the cookbook online by doing a Google search of "larche Canada cookbook".

Café Music Nights

Our popular **Music Nights** at L'Arche Tova Café will resume in March. **Mick Grace** and **Gord Johnson** will perform at the Café on Thursday, March 15th from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tickets are \$20.00 each, and the price includes coffee/tea and dessert. Tickets are available for purchase at the L'Arche office.

Our June edition of *Gratitude* by email only

In order to save on printing and postage costs, our June, 2018 newsletter will be an **email edition** only.

If you are receiving this newsletter by mail, we invited you to send us your email address so that we might send you an email notification when our newsletters are available online. Please send your email address & request to:

newsletter@larchewinnipeg.org

Being Vulnerable/Discovering God's Love

by Jim Lapp
Community Leader

*"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."
(Romans 8 - 38, 39).*

Over the Christmas holidays I took some time to reflect on my spiritual journey and whether that included doing another four year mandate as Community Leader of L'Arche Winnipeg. I am 66 years old and my body is saying that the warranty is expiring. Do I have anything to offer? I am not aware of any other vocation or role that asks someone to go through a process like the mandate and selection process for Community Leader of a L'Arche Community. It is a time of real vulnerability as you discern with the community, the Board and the Regional Leader whether you should take on or continue in the role. It struck me over the holidays that vulnerability is present in every human life but we mask it much of the time. I certainly have over the last 66 years.

When we are vulnerable and let ourselves live in that vulnerability, it is my experience that we are more likely to discover God's love for us and for all creation. Though the passage from Romans makes it sound like only Christians are recipients of this love, my experience at L'Arche convinces me that this love is given to everyone, no matter what spiritual journey they are on. (I believe even atheists receive this love even if they don't recognize it!) Mahatma Gandhi is quoted as saying, *"In reality, there are as many religions as individuals."* Science, including quantum physics and ecology, tells us that we are all in relationship with the rest of creation and are dependent on creation to sustain our lives. We need water, oxygen, and food to keep going. As social beings we need the love and support of others. The Creator has given all of that to us. For myself, I find when I am most vulnerable, that is when I recognize God's presence and love in my life. Eight years ago when I was going through cancer treatment and feeling very, very vulnerable, I strongly felt God's presence, love and support.

In my reflections over Christmas, I became keenly aware of not only my own vulnerability, but also the vulnerability of the members of my family and everyone I met. In seeing their vulnerability, it was difficult if not impossible to be more compassionate towards them.

The members with a disability of L'Arche Winnipeg have always been vulnerable and I think most, if not all of them, are keenly aware of God's love for them. They have taught me much about God's love in their will-

ingness to accept me the way I am and forgive me when I have hurt them. In fact, the Spirit of God that I have experienced within L'Arche Winnipeg is the most profound spiritual experience I have ever had.

In gratitude for their friendship and all that I have learned about the Creator and His love in this community, I have agreed to do another four year term as Community Leader. I want to continue to journey with my friends and learn more about God's love.



The L'Arche community toasted Jim (2nd from right) at our January L'Arche Night, in appreciation for his "yes" to lead us in our new four-year mandate.

Join us in "Snack & Bowl" for Solidarity

You are cordially invited to join us for a fun evening of 5-pin bowling at Academy Lanes, 394 Academy Road, on Friday, February 16th from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. Tickets are \$20 each and they include rental of shoes, two hours of unlimited bowling, as well as unlimited popcorn and pop. Tickets can be purchased at the

L'Arche Winnipeg office, 118 Regent Ave East.

Funds raised will go to **Solidarity**, L'Arche International's program of support for L'Arche communities in poorer countries where little or no government funding is provided.

Thank you for helping us help others!





(left): Stacey and Daniel as Mary and Joseph; (top): musicians, singers, and cast of the Pageant

Christmas Pageant Joy and Generosity

Our 3rd annual Christmas Pageant in December was well appreciated by all who attended (approximately 300 people). We are thankful as well for the generosity of our guests who gave \$808.25 in free-will offerings. That amount has been given to the North Point Douglas Women's Centre to help them out in their ministry of providing a drop-in, support, training, resources and opportunities to women in the area.

Milestone celebration for the founder of L'Arche

A Letter From Jean Vanier

2018 will be a memorable year for all the L'Arche communities in the 37 countries of our Federation as our founder, Jean Vanier, will celebrate his 90th birthday this coming September! We are especially thankful to still have him with us, as he suffered a heart attack last September and is currently on 4 months of total rest. The following are excerpts from a letter Jean sent to the communities last month.

Since November 10, I have been back in my little house next to La Ferme, by the L'Arche community Chapel in Trosly. I admit that I am happy, my life is quiet and physically I am well, despite great tiredness. As my heart remains weak, I am waiting for it to grow stronger. Odile Ceyrac and Christine McGrievy, the leader of my L'Arche community in Trosly, have been very supportive of me and they continue to watch over me during this period of recovery which has been extended until the end of February. I spend my mornings in my room on the first floor resting, praying and reading. I derive a lot of joy in contemplating the birds through my window...

I have had to cancel all the retreats and conferences that I was due to give at La Ferme and elsewhere. Antony Paoli, the leader of La Ferme who has also given me a lot of support, has kept up the retreats at La Ferme by calling upon some wonderful people to replace me. The grace of L'Arche and the Gospel continues to be announced and I am very happy about that. In October, when I was still in the hospital, I felt that a new stage of my life

was beginning, a life more given to prayer, silence, reading, solitude and a few meetings. I thought this would be a good ending after a very busy life with L'Arche and Faith and Light. Now I have the impression that it is not an end but a beginning. A beginning of what? Only God knows, and God is full of surprises! So I wait for something new. Each day is a new day to know God better, to love Jesus better and to work for the Kingdom of God and for peace in our poor world.

I discover that I do not know how to pray, but I have always been told that wanting to pray is already a prayer and I very much desire it. I want to know Jesus better. One day I asked a contemplative sister how she prayed. She said, "I wait for Jesus!"

So, I wait with a lot of desire, hope and patience; I would like to know him better and be more united to his heart that loves each person. To learn to love as God loves each person in our great human family around the world, each with their wounds, their culture, their suffering, their religion, their expectations, their hopes, their weariness....

I would like to sing a very big thank you to each and every one of you, my brothers and sisters from our L'Arche and Faith and Light communities and so many other friends who have sent me your Christmas wishes for good health, and for a new year holy and happy. Thank you, thank you: alas, I cannot an-

swer each one as I would like, but know that each card or letter received is immediately transformed into a moment of communion, friendship and prayer. Yes, thank you to God for our great family around the world which he has raised up and given us. For this New Year, may the God of peace bless us, and help each one of us to become an artisan and messenger of peace.

I hold you in my heart and prayer,

- Jean

GRATITUDE FROM WINNIPEG

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