



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #84



Walking All Over This Land

by **Hubert Pantel**
Newsletter Editor

For the 2nd year in a row, the **Vickar Automotive Group's Walk with L'Arche** was a pandemic-limited virtual event on May 1st. People were invited to raise pledges, do their own individual walk, and to submit photos showing how they chose to support the 2021 L'Arche Walk. How would people respond to a second consecutive virtual Walk, I wondered.

In front of my computer screen on Walk day, the answer came in a flow of emails. It felt like Christmas morning, with the anticipation of opening gifts! Opening email after email, seeing the pictures and comments sent in was a very uplifting experience. People walked around the block in their own neighbourhood. They walk on the Niakwa Trail, and the Transcona Trail by Oxford Heights Community Club. They walked at The Forks, at Henteleff Park in St. Vital, at Bird's Hill Park, at Grand Beach, at Portage la Prairie Park. Some sent detailed information about their route: "...we walked over the Redwood Bridge, through little parks along the Red River, crossed over the Louise Bridge, through a park that took us to Henderson Hwy, then through Elmwood Cemetery..." There were also encouraging messages in the emails, one walker writing: "May God bless the L'Arche community of Winnipeg and the success of their 2021 virtual walk! We look forward to when we can meet in person with the L'Arche community."

It was several days later when the last of the Walk emails came in, the one that touched me the most. It had to do with Dorothy, a long-term member of L'Arche, who had passed away just 4 months previous. Dorothy's sister and two nieces decided to do their Walk with L'Arche in memory of Dorothy at Grand Beach, a place Dorothy loved to visit. Each wore one of Dorothy's hats, and they took a short video of themselves doing the bird dance, a favorite of Dorothy. The video ends with the text of an often heard comment from Dorothy, "Don't be a stranger!"

In the absence of a large Walk event with music, food, and much banter between 300 people gathered in one place, I am left with a deeper appreciation for all these small gestures, photos sent, and words of encouragement in emails. To have worried was futile. Friends and family members, businesses and companies, are all faithful in their support for people with developmental disabilities living in our homes - especially during these difficult times. In the end, financially, we did succeed in reaching our budgeted goal for the 2021 Walk.

It's true that various degrees of isolation and COVID confinement can lead us to be more and more like "strangers" to each other. Dorothy's invitation to stay connected is all the more relevant.

This virtual Walk has helped me appreciate the depth of personal connections between us all, and that the path forward is a hopeful one because, to quote a L'Arche song, "we are no longer strangers, but pilgrims together".



With Kathy's help, Hazel (left) was the top individual fundraiser, having raised a total of \$4,945.00 for the 2021 Walk.

More Walk pictures on pages 2 and 4.



Dorothy's sister and two nieces, each wearing one of Dorothy's favorite blue straw hats, walked and danced in her memory at Grand Beach

Diane's Retirement



L'Arche Winnipeg's Fund Development and Communications Director, Diane Truderung, retired at the end of May. Below are her reflections on working at L'Arche for over eight years.

I learned about L'Arche Winnipeg when I was the Executive Director of Transcona Biz. The L'Arche office was in the Biz Zone and I became familiar with L'Arche and its mission. I was asked to be a member of the strategy committee that was formed to explore the possibility of opening a social enterprise. It was decided that social enterprise would be a Café where individuals with developmental disabilities would learn skills that were related to the restaurant industry. After a feasibility study was done as well as a business plan it was decided to move forward. The perfect place was found for the L'Arche Tova Café which opened in April of 2012.

I had retired from my position at Transcona Biz. I became aware that the position of Director of Fund Development and Communications at L'Arche was available for a term. I applied and was very happy that I was chosen.

L'Arche is a wonderful place where everyone is valued and respected. It was wonderful to see the gifts that individuals with developmental disabilities have to offer and the skills that they learned at the L'Arche Tova Café.

It was my pleasure to get to know the L'Arche members and participate in many activities such as L'Arche Nights, Paint Nights and Art Nights.

I will be retiring but I will still be a part of L'Arche. I would like to volunteer when needed and when the L'Arche Tova Café will reopen it will be wonderful to see the participants once again serving customers.

- Diane Truderung



Recommended viewing:

Freedom

Freedom is a powerful coming-of-age story about a boy with Down syndrome who learns to navigate the world with a loving mother, an absent father, and a life-long crush. Since its' release on March 21, it has already won three international Film Festival awards (in Munich and Tokyo). Freedom is a co-production of L'Arche Canada, singer-songwriter Jordan Hart, and Tonic DNA animation studio. You can view it on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOW6QmcMYuU>

Love and Kindness Signs of the Spirit

by **Jim Lapp**
Community Leader

“No matter the religion or denomination in which we are raised, our spirituality still comes through the first filter of our own life experience.”
- Richard Rohr

As an interfaith community L’Arche has for years been open to including members that come from other faith traditions, including agnostics and atheists. L’Arche has also recognized that we are all on our own personal spiritual journey, and none of these paths are the same. As I ponder my upcoming retirement from the role of community leader of L’Arche Winnipeg, I ask myself: what has been my own life experience of being part of this community for almost 47 years?

When I first came in September 1974 as a young assistant to Rosseau Court, our first home, I was an agnostic searching for meaning in my life. I almost immediately felt at home by the warm welcome I received from Sister Marie Paradis, the founding community leader, by the assistants already there, and especially by the core members. Most of the core members had just recently moved to L’Arche from the institution in Portage La Prairie. That experience was traumatizing for them. Their suffering came out in different ways. But in the struggles we had, I, for the first time in my life, had my eyes opened to the presence of the Holy Spirit in my life. It was intuitive, but very real. I never experienced the Spirit as strongly, as tangibly, as I did in my first two years living at L’Arche Winnipeg. Now as I look back, I can’t help but smile at my lack of understanding, my lack of

experience of what was really going on around me for the first years of my life. Wherever love or kindness are present in the world, that is the Spirit.

Now I see the Spirit of God everywhere I go. But I still see it most often and most clearly in my experience at L’Arche Winnipeg. The last year of Covid has been very hard on all of us. Despite our fear and isolation, all our members continued to be kind to each other and help each other out. Our board of directors, our friends and donors have continued to support us and show us much kindness and love.

As I contemplate the next stage on my life’s journey, I am filled with gratitude to L’Arche Winnipeg for introducing me to the Spirit’s presence in the world, as it continues to help me to discover it again and again in new ways.

Remembering Linda, a Founding Member of L’Arche Winnipeg

*Sadly, L’Arche Winnipeg has lost another founding member of our community, **Linda Bauch**, who passed away on June 15 at age 74. Linda lived at L’Arche for the last 46 years of her life. Below is an excerpt from her obituary.*



Linda was one of the 1st members of L’Arche Winnipeg in 1974. It was here that she found happiness with good friends who accepted and loved her, and a strong faith in God. Linda remained a member of that community until her death. She worked for many years at Imagine Ability where she was a valued member of the team.

L’Arche provided many wonderful opportunities for Linda. She loved to bowl and was proud to share her scores from her bowling card. She took many trips, some of the most memorable ones were to Paris, and on numerous cruises, which Linda called ‘Love Boat’. Family was very important to Linda. She looked forward to her trips



to Thunder Bay to visit her brothers and when family visited her in Winnipeg. All those visits would include lemon meringue pie, miniature golf, a birthday party with gifts and a beer. When she visited Mesa, AZ she had fun picking oranges and making juice.

The most memorable event for Linda was when the L’Arche community, family and friends celebrated her life with a ceremony of blessing, organized by her close friends Petra and Rayleen. A ceremony affirming and acknowledging ‘Linda’s Wish’.

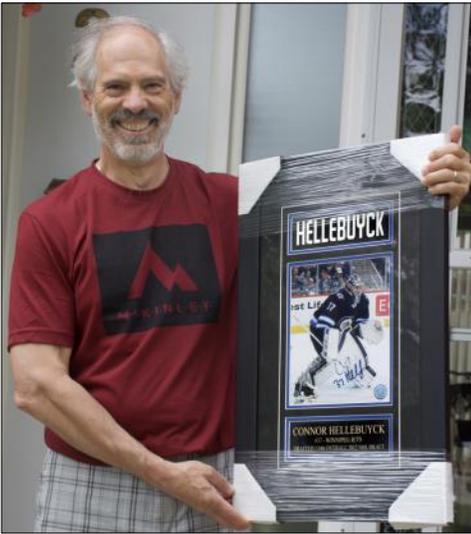
Linda lived a life that was bold and authentic. She was never afraid to express how she felt. ‘I got it!’ or ‘I love it!’ were phrases she would often say as she expressed confidence and gratitude through her many experiences. She was also one to flatter another with sweet endearing compliments of ‘hello sweet lady’ or ‘hello gorgeous’, with her signature blow of a kiss. Linda was a ray of

sunshine to anyone who has ever met her. She found joy in the simple moments that many take for granted. A warm ray of sunshine streaming in from the window would sometimes get Linda to burst with joy and break out in songs such as ‘I’ve Got Sunshine’. It’s in these moments Linda held space for us, kept us grounded and reminded us to live in the present and to appreciate the little things.

As Linda’s health declined and she was no longer able to enjoy the activities she once loved, she never lost that spark of joy. As she became increasingly frail, her thoughts turned homeward and she looked forward to seeing her Mom and Dad.

view the full obituary at :
[Chapel Lawn Funeral Home](https://www.chapelawnfuneralhome.com)

View the short film of ‘Linda’s Wish’ at:
<https://youtu.be/GJAvYIi9LyU>



Thank You to All Our Walk Sponsors!

Vickar Automotive Group, Wyatt Dowling Insurance Brokers, Western Financial Group, Casera Credit Union, BPG The Benefits Planning Group, and Payworks.

Your Photos!

Roland Marion was the happy winner of a prize draw - an autographed Hellebuyck Jets picture - (left). L'Arche Elpida household enjoyed walking together (below).

All other pictures: individuals walking for L'Arche in various areas of Winnipeg.

