



GRATITUDE

L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter #86



18th Annual Walk with L'Arche on May 7th

by **Hubert Pantel**
Newsletter Editor

The 18th annual **Vickar Automotive Group's Walk with L'Arche** on Saturday, May 7th, is being planned as a virtual event again this year. After two virtual walks in 2020 and 2021, we had hoped for a return to a gathering & party celebration for our 2022 walk, but pandemic safety is still a top concern, especially for our most vulnerable members.

Please check the L'Arche Winnipeg website and our social media channels in April for any changes to the Walk that might occur if there are changes to provincial pandemic restrictions.

We appreciate that many walkers and pledge collectors have continued to be very supportive of the L'Arche Walk over the last two years, and hope you will join us virtually again this year!

Registration and prizes

Registration for the walk is free this year. The registration form is found in the walk brochure, or you can register online through the L'Arche Winnipeg website at www.larchewinnipeg.org. You can also print registration and pledge forms from the website, then mail in your registration or drop it off through the mail slot at the L'Arche Winnipeg office at 118 Regent Ave. East.

All **registered walkers** who have **submitted pledges** will be eligible for prizes draws, which will be done after the walk. Winners will be contacted by L'Arche.

Choose your own walk path!

Walk 1k or 5k on a path of your choice on May 7th (while respecting government regulations effective in May). We encourage you to take pictures on your walk - of your location, of the people you walk with - and share with us the creative ways you supported L'Arche by sending in your pictures.

A selection of these pictures will be

published in the June edition of our Gratitude newsletter and on our social media networks. Please email your walk pictures and details to: newsletter@larchewinnipeg.org

The names of **registered pledge collectors** who **submit walk pictures** will be entered for a special draw of a \$50.00 Canadian Tire gift card.

Walk T-Shirts

Walk T-shirts can be requested by collecting a minimum of \$100.00 in pledges, which must be submitted (along with your registration form) to the L'Arche office by April 11th, 2022.

Walk Gift Cards

You can earn L'Arche Tova Café gift cards by raising pledges - the value of the gift card is determined by the amount raised (gift card value range is from \$10 to \$200). A letter will be sent in June to the pledge collectors who have earned a gift card. Fundraise by letting family, friends and co-workers know that you are **walking for L'Arche** and ask them to sponsor you. Even friends and relatives who live far away can sponsor you by credit card through the CanadaHelps.org link on our website. Direct them to www.larchewinnipeg.org and instruct them to write that they are sponsoring

you in the "message to L'Arche Winnipeg" box in the online donation process. Your online donors will immediately receive an income tax receipt from CanadaHelps.org.

You can continue raising/submitted pledges until the end of May. Please submit raised pledges to the L'Arche Winnipeg office by May 31st, 2022.

We appreciate your support in helping us live through these challenging times and for helping us make the 2022 Walk a successful one!



Nostalgia led some people to do last year's virtual walk on the Transcona Trail by Oxford Heights Community Club at 2 pm - the time and place where hundreds usually gather for the walk & party celebration.



Members of Elpida house walking for L'Arche in their Windsor Park neighbourhood.

Hazel Comes Full Circle

by Kathy French

Hazel, one of our founding core members, first joined the L'Arche Winnipeg community a little more than forty-eight years ago, on **January 17, 1974**. She moved into L'Ainé, meaning "first born," aptly named because it was the first L'Arche home to open in Winnipeg. At the time, the home was called Rosseau Court, named after the street where it is located in Transcona. Needless to say, Hazel was thrilled to finally have her own bedroom, after dormitory style living at the Manitoba School in Portage La Prairie.

Four months later, I arrived at L'Arche Winnipeg as a summer Assistant, moving into Rosseau Court and sharing a bedroom with Hazel.



Petra helping Hazel on move-in day

Initially, Hazel did not appear to appreciate having a roommate, but as time went on, the two of us soon discovered that we had a lot in common and became fast friends. We have since continued to nurture our friendship these past 48 years with daily phone calls, sleepovers, camping trips and travelling together to visit friends and each other's families.

I have always marvelled at Hazel's seemingly innate tenacity and determination to live life as a confident, independent woman, while at the same time remaining closely connected to the L'Arche Winnipeg community and the friendships she has developed and maintained over the years. After living at Rosseau Court (L'Ainé) for five years, she began to demonstrate an interest in more independent living. When the



Hazel has settled in her new room at L'Ainé

first L'Arche Winnipeg apartment opened up in St. Vital, Hazel moved in with an Assistant and three other core members. It did not take her long to discover that the St. Vital Mall was virtually a stone's throw away from her new digs. Hence, Hazel spent many a day window shopping at the Mall, looking out for bargains for her friends.

Four years later, Hazel started a part time job in the Garden City area. Although she had become very capable of independently travelling all around the city by bus each day, she decided to move into a house near her place of work. She moved into a Prairie Housing Co-op home with two other women. Garden City Shopping Mall was very close by so in her spare time, her window shopping days continued.

Seven years later, after several different work placements, Hazel decided it was time to retire. She moved back to Transcona, into her very own apartment, just down the street from Rosseau Court (L'Ainé). She enjoyed the freedom and independence to "do her own thing," such as cooking and household chores, while still managing independent daily outings on the bus to Kildonan Place Mall and the local Walmart. Hazel lived capably independent in her little bachelor suite

for almost twenty-five years. As her life evolved, she moved yet again to live independently in a Transcona senior's apartment building. She enjoyed socializing with the other seniors and was a crackerjack Bingo player, often reaping the winnings of Loonies and Toonies. Although she still maintained her independence, preparing many of her own meals, as time went on she welcomed assistance with daily household tasks from her L'Arche community friends. And then the Covid pandemic hit!

In March 2020, Covid restrictions limited social interactions in Hazel's senior apartment complex. As a result, L'Arche offered her the opportunity of moving back to L'Ainé, the home where she first began her L'Arche Winnipeg journey. Like all of us who have found ourselves requiring more assistance as we age, change can be challenging. But Hazel began the process of downsizing, embracing the next stage of her life with becoming fortitude. She moved back into L'Ainé in May 2021. While it was initially an adjustment, she is now happy to once again share in community life with her L'Arche friends. She has come full circle in the Circle of Life – back to her "old stomping grounds," she often exclaims, as she reflects on a life well lived.

Building Together a Place of Belonging

by **Dominic Opaka**
Community Leader

Warmest greetings to the dedicated community and supporters of L'Arche Winnipeg. In the last two months since I began my role, I have been reminded of L'Arche's greatest gift of welcome: making everyone feel they belong is what we do best! We are a people who welcome others, no matter who they are. We see the outsider and invite them in, making sure no one feels alone.

I am beginning to intimately engage in many aspects of community life. I have witnessed the beautiful, supportive circle of friends that surround L'Arche Winnipeg. I have also been present for the challenges, isolation, and exhaustion that our community continues to experience during the COVID-19 pandemic, the grieving and loss of pillars of L'Arche's daily life and the continuing uncertainty of how the pandemic will evolve.

I know so many of my life experiences over the last ten years, have connected me in very meaningful way to community. Belonging has been important to me ever since my first day in L'Arche, ten years ago. Here I came to understand that my life is richer when I am learning about other cultures and getting to know people from different backgrounds.

When I first arrived at L'Arche, I was naïve, and a little bit scared. I had no experience working with people with learning disabilities. Yet at that point I felt so welcomed for who I am. It was amazing – just to be yourself and be appreciated. What could be better than that!

Our L'Arche community has a heart-beat and a rhythm, one we have always had, that is an invaluable strength to us during this time of trial. Our long experience of consciously living daily life together has given us the relational muscles needed to flourish even in this extended time of being at home. We know how to appreciate the little moments together that create each day. Togetherness is not a burden, something we must accept while waiting to “get out.” Rather it is our purpose and the



Long-time L'Arche supporters Larry and Tova Vickar meet Dominic at L'Arche Tova Café

place where we find connection and meaning. I also see how our practice of listening to each person, irrespective of their role in our community, helps us to understand and respond to each person's needs in the best way possible.

L'Arche fosters an environment where habits of the heart are cultivated – careful listening so that each person's voice is heard; empathy; gratitude; recognizing and celebrating the personal gifts of others.

I am looking ahead to a time of rejuvenation and to maintain tradi-

tions, nurture relationships, and celebrate the seasons while protecting the health of the community. I remain hopeful of the joy and ingenuity of our community that cannot be restricted, even as activities and interactions must be adjusted.

My hope is that we can continue being resilient during these challenging times. It takes a community to navigate tough times. Together we can build a resilient community and find strength and hope to become a beacon of hope and light to our humane society.

10th Anniversary of L'Arche Tova Café

This year we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of L'Arche Tova Café, which opened as a social enterprise in April, 2012.

Anniversary celebrations are being planned for the beginning of April. Please consult the Café website and social media networks for upcoming details.

To be added to the Café email list, you can email your request to: newsletter@archewinnipeg.org

The Café is currently open at 50% capacity for dine-in, and proof of vaccination is required. Catering is also offered by the Café. All the details can be found on the Café website: www.larchetovacafe.com



Leadership Going Forward

by **Eliane Vieira**

Director of Fund Development and Communications

The New Year brought along many changes to our community. On December 6th, we gathered online to welcome our new Community Leader, Dominic Opaka. Two days later, we came together again to celebrate Jim Lapp's retirement as Community Leader, after 12 years in that role.

With over a decade of L'Arche experience, Dominic accepted the call to become our new Executive Director. He moved to Winnipeg with his family last December from Edmonton, where he worked as the Homes Coordinator for the L'Arche Edmonton community.

"L'Arche is one place where you find a blend of different cultures from all over the world working together to bring about a more humane society," he said in an article for the Winnipeg Free Press. You can read the full article here: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/Continuing-the-mission-575996201.html> As we welcomed Dominic, we had to say goodbye to Jim - a founding member and the

Community Leader for the past 12 years. Community members, friends, supporters, and two L'Arche Canada members joined us on December 4th to celebrate Jim's many years of service to L'Arche Winnipeg.

"I'm kind of speechless," Jim said during the online gathering, adding "L'Arche Winnipeg has been really important to me." You can read an article published in the Winnipeg Free Press about Jim Lapp's retirement here: <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/our-communities/herald/Endowment-fund-launched-by-LArche-575897601.html>

L'Arche Winnipeg and long-term supporters Tova and Larry Vickar partnered to create an endowment fund named after Jim to honour his legacy. The L'Arche Winnipeg Community Fund in Honour of Jim Lapp will support our community in areas close to Jim's heart.



Eliane from L'Arche Winnipeg receives a cheque from one of the first donors to the L'Arche Winnipeg Community Fund in Honour of Jim Lapp, the Wealth Planning Group.

Tova and Larry Vickar will match donations dollar for dollar up to \$50,000.00. They have already donated half of that amount to encourage us to donate as well. By the time this article was published, we had a total of **\$36,195.00**.

We are grateful for all donations made, and we invite you to continue supporting us.

Donate to L'Arche Winnipeg Community Fund in Honour of Jim Lapp here:

<https://www.mycharitytools.com/gift/wpqfdn/donate?fund=2658>

Local Business Commits To Support L'Arche Winnipeg

L'Arche Winnipeg is happy to announce a partnership with neighbour business **Ball Insurance Agency**.

As part of their community support initiative launched last year, the agency will donate to L'Arche Winnipeg Community Fund in Honour of Jim Lapp based on their clients' input.

For each new home or business policy, the agency gives customers an opportunity to select one of four local charities, including L'Arche Winnipeg, to receive a donation from Ball Insurance.

Born and raised in Transcona, new owner Rob Geswin is happy to support his community. Rob and his family have participated in our Walk with L'Arche fundraising event in the past. He assures us he will be there again in the future, supporting us.

Ball Insurance Agency, located at 112 Regent Ave. West (across the street



Jim Lapp has inspired people to support the L'Arche Winnipeg Community

from L'Arche Tova Café) offers various insurance services to families and business owners. If you wish to learn more about them, please visit their website: <https://www.ballinsurance.ca/> L'Arche Winnipeg is grateful for their partnership, and for our local community's incredible support.

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L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter # 86

EDITOR: HUBERT PANTEL
Published 3 times a year
(February, June, November)

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L'Arche Winnipeg Inc. is a non-profit organization.

Donations are tax-deductible.

Charitable Reg. No.
107597692 RR0001