

GRATITUDE

The L'Arche Winnipeg Newsletter June 2024 Issue 93



50 years & BEYOND



Photos from the 20th Annual Walk with L'Arche Event

We're All in This Together – 20 Years Walking for Inclusion



Erin Sawatzky
Community Events

"We're all in this together- and it shows when we stand hand in hand, make our dreams come true," sang the L'Arche choir at our 20th Annual Walk with L'Arche.

A beautiful sunny day on May 5th brought together nearly 300 people to support our community during our milestone fundraising event. Participants strolled and rolled down the Transcona Trail, visited over burgers, danced to live music, took home prizes and enjoyed a dance performance by our L'Arche community members. "I just find it a deeply joyful event," shared one participant- appreciating the ways the gifts of

our core members were celebrated through artwork, volunteering, leading prize draws and performing alongside the live band.



But why do we walk together?

Julie Rempel (L'Arche Spiritual Life Coordinator), has been walking with L'Arche for over 13 years. "It was exciting for me because I've seen the changes over the years... seeing that progression of how [the walk] has grown; how that spirit of community continues, and how there's new life as well," she shared. "The highlight is seeing people as you walk- that

engagement is so much fun because people are so joyful... and the outdoor part of it brings the joy of the springtime and new life along with it as well."

She explained how she walked and talked with a variety of different people along the way- friends, community members, and assistants and their families.



Leonard & Friends Walk Together

"That movement of friendship is kind of a metaphor for how we are in community... This movement of touching each others' lives at L'Arche. I think of this Biblical quote- 'In Him we live and move and have our being'- and I just feel that that spirit of God was present on that day and within the community."



Gina & LeeAnn Enjoying the Live Music

Together we raised over \$51,000, which will make a huge difference in sustaining and growing our community over the year ahead!

——— *Continued on next page*

Follow L'Arche Winnipeg and L'Arche Tova Café on Facebook and Instagram for more!

Continuing from front page —

We are so grateful to Vickar Automotive Group and numerous other sponsors for your incredible support through the years; for the dozens of volunteers who gave your time and energy to make this event happen, and to all the participants who came out to show your support. As we dream about our community's future, it is deeply meaningful to know that our larger L'Arche family is here, walking alongside us for the journey. **We really are all in this together, and for that we are incredibly grateful.**

20TH ANNUAL VICKAR AUTOMOTIVE GROUP WALK WITH L'ARCHE

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Singing Solidarity



Jubilee Dueck Thiessen

Communications & Fund Development Coordinator

When I joined the L'Arche Winnipeg community in October 2023, I quickly came to appreciate just how many people worked together to continue fundraising during the 9-month absence of a Communications and Fundraising Coordinator. Various people stepped up to continue successful fundraising efforts and communication with our community, hosting many remarkable events including the 50th Anniversary Gala, and 19th Annual Walk with L'Arche which raised over \$65,000. While undoubtedly difficult, this period of teamwork revealed just how participatory our community's fundraising efforts are.

Our Solidarity Fundraising Events are a powerful example of the teamwork required to sustain L'Arche's mission of inclusion and

belonging for all. In "Solidarity," L'Arche communities like ours fundraise to support L'Arche communities around the world who need more support: those who receive little or no government funding; who experience the insecurity of environmental crises; who live with the uncertainty of violence and war. In times of need, these communities are supported by L'Arche International, who distributes the Solidarity Funds that are raised – in small but not insignificant part - by our Solidarity Music Nights.

Later this summer we are hosting our biggest Solidarity Music Night yet, and we need your help to fill over 300 seats! Join us Friday August 23rd at 7pm for "This Is Me," an evening of interactive musical storytelling. Karaoke lovers, friends, and family will enjoy singing along to an uplifting variety of Jazz/Pop singles, Broadway hits, and songs from movie musicals – including a performance from our very own

core members! Featuring Winnipeg singers and artists, this event is presented by Tricia Magsino Barnabe (A Million Dreams) and Joanne Roberts, in partnership with Kultivation Festival. We hope to raise at least \$5,000, and this goal is supported by a sponsorship from Vickar Automotive Group, and Media Sponsorships from Pilipino Express, Manitoba Filipino Journal, and 92.7 CKJS Multilingual. You can purchase your tickets at the L'Arche Winnipeg Office (118 Regent Ave E) via cash, cheque, debit/credit; or online through EventBrite.

THIS IS ME
An Interactive Musical Experience
FUNDRAISING FOR L'ARCHE SOLIDARITY
Kultivation Festival
August 23 at 7:00 PM
PTE, Winnipeg, MB
Kids & Seniors: \$15
Adults: \$20



My Dear Friend, Ross Maccoomb

By Kathy French

I have many special memories of my dear friend, Ross, from his early days of coming to L'Arche Winnipeg. I was a live-in Assistant throughout the first 3 years of the community. Ross arrived the second year that I was there and we hit it off immediately. I remember Ross both as a "character" and a sweetheart – a real charmer, to say the least! He had a wonderful sense of humour and an amazing sense of rhythm, which he demonstrated through his musical skills with drums and spoons.

In the Fall of 1975, L'Arche communities from around the world embarked on a Pilgrimage to Rome. In preparation, a photo of the Pope was on display in the dining room of our L'Arche home. Every evening after supper, we would pray for all those we would meet in Rome, especially the Pope. As time went on, Ross began to tell everyone he met that he was going to shake hands with the Pope. He would practice this by jumping for Joy, with his arms held up high in the air, shouting, "Pope Paul! I'm Ross from Winnipeg!" When the time came for us to travel to Rome, I was a

bit concerned that Ross would be disappointed at not being able to shake hands with the Pope. Our gathering in St. Peter's Basilica was exciting – hundreds and hundreds of us, from L'Arche communities around the world. But we were such an enormous crowd – how could "Ross from Winnipeg" possibly get close enough to the Pope to shake his hand?!



Ross in Rome, 1975

Well, sure enough – he did! As the Pope was being carried on a throne down the centre aisle of the Basilica, Ross swiftly wiggled his way through the crowd, stretched his arms up and over the barricades and just as the Pope was bringing his right hand down to bless the crowd near Ross, their fingers touched, as Ross shouted, "Pope Paul, I'm Ross from Winnipeg!" I could not believe what I had just witnessed! It really was nothing short of a miracle! Of course, immediately following this Holy interaction, the Swiss Guards came running and I was a bit worried that Ross was going to be arrested. But nothing of the sort happened and a very elated Ross flew back to Winnipeg a few days later, with the knowledge that his goal of shaking the Pope's hand had indeed manifested itself!

Upon hearing of Ross's passing, Eileen Glass, who was the House Leader in the early years of

L'Arche Winnipeg, wrote this to me from her home in Australia...

"It's comforting to know that so many of Ross's friends were with him in his last days and at the moment of his death... I remember meeting him in The Manitoba School at Portage la Prairie where I thought he had a spinal deformity as he walked bent over from the waist. When we brought him to Rosseau Court, he came in and sat on the couch and out of the corner of his eye he saw some bongo drums. He went across the room and picked them up and put them on his knees, sat up straight and started to play them. He never walked bent over again! That was the first transformation I saw in his life and he just kept adding to them!... I'm keeping his family and friends, especially those who were his housemates over the years, in my prayers."

Ross was a very special man, dear to my heart for many years. He loved birthdays, especially his own – who could ever forget April 10th?! He loved to celebrate and as time marched on, every day became his birthday. He taught me much about how to live every day to the fullest – to celebrate every day, as if it were a birthday. I like to imagine Ross celebrating with all of our L'Arche friends who have gone before us, waiting for others of us to join him in celebration.



A Friendship of Fifty Years

By Hazel Van Damme
& Kathy French



Kathy & Hazel celebrate 50 years of friendship

Kathy and I celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our friendship on May long weekend, when I visited Kathy and Roger for three days. We did lots of fun things together that weekend, like walking her dog, Oakley, and playing my favourite game – BINGO! We also went out for supper with our L'Arche friends, Laraine & Paul, who we have also known for 50 years!

I came to L'Arche in January 1974 and moved into Rosseau Court, which is now called L'Aine. Kathy came to L'Arche as an Assistant in May 1974. We met at Riding Mountain National Park because the whole community was camping there at the time. After the weekend, we shared a room together for four months and that is when our friendship began.



Kathy & Hazel in 1994

A few years later, Kathy and I each moved into our own apartments. Kathy became a teacher and she invited me to volunteer to help her in her classroom. I met many of Kathy's teacher friends and I am still friends with some of them. Even though we each lived in our own apartments, we still enjoyed each other's company, doing many activities together.

Kathy and I both love music and we have been to many concerts together. The summer we met, we went to the Winnipeg Folk Festival, with some of the other Core Members and Assistants at L'Aine. Over the years, we have been to the Concert Hall downtown to hear Rita McNeil, Anne Murray and Kenny Rogers. We have also been to the Regent Ave. Casino to hear Petula Clark, The Proclaimers and Boney M.

I love to travel and meet new friends, so Kathy & I have been on a few trips together. We have been on road trips to visit my Manitoba brother Doug & my sister-in-law, Val. We also took a few other road trips together, to visit our good long time L'Arche friends, Kathy & Ed in Saskatchewan, as well as other friends. A few times, we have even been on airplane trips to visit Kathy's Ontario sister, Liz, and her other family members.

After Kathy retired from teaching, we volunteered together, once a week for 8 years, at the L'Arche Tova Cafe. We really enjoyed welcoming customers and serving them coffee with their lunch orders. We were disappointed that we had to stop this activity in 2020, when the Covid pandemic spread around

the world. But thankfully, from time to time, we are now able to enjoy meeting for lunch at the Cafe.

These days, I often visit with Kathy and Roger for sleepovers on long weekends. We just celebrated the 50th Anniversary of our friendship and are now looking forward to celebrating Canada Day together!

L'ARCHE TOVA CAFE UPDATES

Come shop L'Arche Tova at the Transcona Biz Community Market (131 Victoria Ave W) this summer!

- June 27
- July 11
- July 25
- August 8
- August 22

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