



A Note from Our Executive Director and Community Leader, Raphael Arens

WE HAVE HAD busy and exciting times over the last eight months, with the implementation of our new program Trying It on For Size (TIFS), the Twist n' Sip and Harvest Howl fundraisers for L'Arche Toronto, Sol Express's first solo art exhibit and the return to the Toronto Fringe Festival, our traditional core member holidays in July, and welcoming Patricia, our newest core member, to our community in November! Now, we all look forward to spending time with family, friends, and neighbours as we celebrate the upcoming holiday season and Christmas.

Please enjoy this newsletter which highlights the wonderful outreach that L'Arche Toronto Sol Express has been doing in the community with its two-week art exhibit at the Papermill Gallery at Todmorden Mills and its eight-show run of Birds Make Me Think About Freedom, part of the Toronto Fringe Festival. As well, it features stories about our traditional core member holidays and our newest program, TIFS.

We are especially happy to share with you that, despite our growing budget deficit, we have been able to welcome to

Greenwood House a new core member who was in urgent need of a home. In partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services we were able to create this opportunity within our community and greatly appreciate the financial commitment from MCSS. At the same time, we continue to explore new and innovative housing models that will enable us, during the coming years, to welcome more individuals who are in desperate need of a home.

This fall, we were excited and relieved that we were finally able to purchase a new and much-needed fully wheelchair accessible van because of generous financial support. Please be assured that your generosity towards L'Arche Toronto, in response to fundraising campaigns and events such as the Twist n' Sip and the Harvest Howl Open Mic, helps people with intellectual disabilities lead fuller and more meaningful lives through day support and programming. We thank each of you for your continuing support!

We wish you all the very best for a Merry Christmas and the holidays! Happy New Year! ★

Goals Reached!

By Amanda Hickey

TODAY IS THE DAY. We have trained, practiced, and prepared for any situation that may arise. He is ready. Today is the day that one of L'Arche Toronto's TIFS participants will reach his goal. He is taking the TTC by himself from his home to the TIFS apartment. This is no easy task, as he must transfer from a bus to the subway and then walk from Chester Station to the TIFS apartment. At 1 pm, I look out the window and see him walk towards the TIFS apartment beaming with pride. Perfect! One community goal reached.

There have been many goals reached at L'Arche Toronto TIFS. All goals are person-centred and developed with the TIFS participant. Goals fall into three categories: community, life skills, and belonging. Community goals encourage TIFS participants to engage and broaden their community. Life skills goals are taken from STEPS to Independence and are skills that are necessary or desirable for full participation in everyday life. STEPS to Independence is a holistic guidebook that helps to determine the TIFS participant's skills and areas for improvement (where more learning can happen) and next steps to focus on.

Many life skill goals have been reached. Life skills goals can be as small as learning to change a light bulb or cleaning a bathroom from top to bottom, or as complex as creating a meal plan for the week, shopping independently for groceries, and cooking meals independently. It is always exciting for TIFS participants to eat a meal that they cooked independently. The achievement they feel is palpable.

Belonging goals encourage TIFS participants to increase their capacity to develop and grow their places of belonging. TIFS participants have created belonging goals that are fun. During the summer, a TIFS participant held a women's BBQ and invited women from L'Arche Toronto in order to establish connections and friendships. The BBQ was a success! She made new friends, went to the movies (with her new friends), and had a birthday party, to which she invited the friends that she made at the women's BBQ.

TIFS has been welcoming participants since April 2018, and will continue to welcome more participants who would like to set and achieve new goals. ★



Birds Make Me Think About Freedom

a production of Sol Express and Victoria Freeman

FOLLOWING a successful run of Seasons at the 2017 Toronto Fringe Festival, L'Arche Toronto Sol Express returned to the 2018 Fringe with *Birds Make Me Think About Freedom*, a meditation on interdependence, inclusivity, transformation, and imagination from the perspectives of people who had been institutionalized for having developmental disabilities, their families, and their friends.

The Sol Express creative process was guided by survivors of institutions, and the production honoured their knowledge and resilience. It showcased the creativity and performance skills of Sol Express participants who still face many of the same prejudices. Given the sensitivity of the subject matter, the performance was not a raw testimony of abuse but used metaphor and other indirect and/or nonverbal forms of expression. Incorporating live music, song, video, visual projections, poetry, and dance, the show reflected the many expressive modes of people with intellectual disabilities.



Robert Gray, a Sol Express performer, shared his experience of the production: "It felt good to be on stage and to educate people. The topic of institutions was different than when we performed Seasons at the Fringe in 2017. This topic was a new one, it was the first time I had heard stories by survivors. This was more serious and emotional – a heavier topic. It was hard and sad, but we shared it together. It was hard to understand why people were put in institutions. We gave hope by sharing the stories of survivors." ★

A Part Of Me Is A Part of Us

Sol Express Creative Arts

OVER THIS PAST YEAR, members of the Creative Arts group explored works from a diverse group of artists in order to further cultivate their personal styles and interests. The art exhibit *A Part Of Me Is A Part Of Us* addressed themes of diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Hosted at The Papermill Gallery at Todmorden Mills, the exhibit showcased original artworks and paintings by the artists.

Sophia Shugart writes about her experience.

Hi, my name is Sophia Shugart, and I am a participant at L'Arche Toronto Sol Express. I want to talk about what I liked about the art exhibit that we held last June. It was brilliant and outstanding, the group worked from the top to the bottom, from our first focus on bristol boards with what we love to do, to our paintings in acrylics. I also enjoyed going to the AGO, and I have two most-favourite artists: Van Gogh and Raphael. I like their artwork the best. I like the portraits, landscapes, and very cool techniques of the other artists; it makes me feel like I would enjoy doing that at Sol Express.



Art makes me feel much happier and helps me to relax and reduce all that work-related stress stuff. Art really helps me a lot to focus on what I am doing. Art is my interest, not just a hobby. I like to keep going to L'Arche because I belong, I am happy being a part of Sol Express. I want to learn from making mistakes and doing group work and keep working on my own studio art. I can get creative and that makes my heart feel that I am not empty or alone; I am with people I like, they are new friends.

I am here today, writing this piece to help people get to know me, hear my voice, and understand the preparation of the art show, the group, and L'Arche Toronto. I'm speaking to the rest of the people who want to have a chance to be inspired by the arts. This is about L'Arche and myself. I enjoy it and love it. ★

Our Summer Holiday

by Emma Morden



THIS SUMMER I got the chance to go to Sunset Retreat with Dan, Harlan, Robert, and Abbey for core member holidays. Core member holidays are a great way to relax and connect with core members. The theme of the week? Minimal stress and maximum fun.

We stayed by the water and went kayaking. There was an individual kayak that I went out on a few times, and it was incredibly peaceful to just sit out in the middle of the water as the sun was setting.... at least until Harlan would start shouting to me

and blasting Mamma Mia lyrics. But actually, even that was kind of relaxing because at least he was telling me that I should go out farther; maybe he knew how much I was enjoying myself because he was too.

Another highlight was when we got a chance to see the Mamma Mia sequel, and the music became the soundtrack of our holiday. We were all transformed into dancing queens and members of Abba as we sat around the campfire making s'mores and drinking too much pop.

On our holiday we did so much, at least when it wasn't raining... We went for a walk in Collingwood – and then it rained. We went to get ice cream – and then it rained. We went to make a BBQ – and then it rained. It was safe to say we got quite washed out. But at least we had a large television and lots of movies to watch. And our trio of guys got along quite well. Coleman, Gray, and Comeau were like three peas in a pod.

And luckily, we all loved Tim Hortons. A lot. We made a trip Every. Single. Day. Enjoying tea and chocolate milk. Definitely a trip highlight for all of us.

Overall it was a lot of fun, and we saw lots of sites. The Elmvale Zoo, Eugenia Falls, the Elvis Festival, numerous ice cream shops.... we managed to get to everything before it rained.

It was hot, it was wet, but it was fun. So much fun. Mamma Mia, here we go again. ★

Community Wish List

Shower Caddy and Bathmat	\$50
Shoe Rack	\$50
Paper Shredder	\$500
Breville Barrista	\$725
Framing of Sol Express Artwork	\$1,500
Apple I Mac Computer	\$1,500
Professional Camera	\$2,500
Commercial Dishwasher	\$5,000
Stairlift installation for Simpson House	\$10,000

For more information, please call **Caroline Hughey** at L'Arche Toronto's Development Office 416 406 2869 ext. 35.



Sign up as a monthly donor to support women and men with intellectual disabilities and help grow our community. As a monthly donor, you will help create a stable income for L'Arche Toronto throughout the year.

To be part of this exciting adventure, **sign up at** www.larchetoronto.org/donate/everyonebelongs

Thank You For Your Generosity

We'd like to say thank you to everyone who has contributed to L'Arche Toronto's recent fundraising events and campaigns.

RAISED
\$57,098



Twist n' Sip

May 31, 2018 at the Crow's Theatre

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



RAISED
\$12,468



Harvest Howl Open Mic

October 17, 2018 at the Brunswick Bierworks

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



And special thanks to volunteers and all the boys in the band, Work in Progress.

RAISED
\$16,055



Giving Tuesday

November 27, 2018

Yes, I would like to make a donation to help Transform Lives

Single Gift: \$250 \$100 \$75 \$50 Other: _____

Payment: Visa Mastercard Cheque (payable to L'Arche Toronto Homes Inc.)

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: _____

Cardholder Name: _____

Cardholder Address: _____

Signature: _____

Phone Number: _____

You can also donate online at: www.larchetoronto.org/AnnualGiving2018 **or call:** 416 406 2869 ext. 35

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"Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission." **HENRI NOUWEN**