



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

YOU ARE RECEIVING our latest newsletter at a time when our community is mourning the loss of our founder, Jean Vanier, who passed away on May 7th, 2019 in Paris. Jean left behind a tremendous legacy – 154 L'Arche communities in 38 countries around the world. Inspired by Jean's vision of community, we place immense importance on the living out of authentic mutual relationships in everyday life as a means of influencing the society in which we live.

L'Arche is marking its 50th anniversary in Canada with a number of special events, beginning with a celebration of the founding of L'Arche Daybreak, our 'sister' community in Richmond Hill. Many of us attended the landmark gala performance of Journey to the Greatest Gift, which included upwards of 180 participating community members on the stage of Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts. This moving and energizing production also featured our very own L'Arche Toronto Sol Express Performers Group.

I am very excited to share with you about our growing relationship with Daniels Development Corp. After extensive exploration into innovative housing models, L'Arche Toronto is now planning a specifically designed, accessible Condo unit in Daniel's ARTWORKS Tower in the neighbourhood of Regent Park. This marks a period of great anticipation and growth for our community.

L'Arche Toronto continues to reach out to the wider community to make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities. Holding events such as the annual Twist n' Sip or collaborating with the ReelAbilities Film Festival enables us to engage with cross-sections of people and provides us with deeper and wider opportunities for relationship. The Performance Group at Sol Express is also in the midst of creating their next accessible performance RED KNOWS: A Play on Words for the Toronto Fringe Festival in July.

Please join us at these events as we strive to help shape a world where everyone belongs. ★



Let's Build It Up – Way, Way Up

L'Arche Toronto's New Home

By Bronwyn Hannelas, L'Arche Toronto Board Member

THIS SPRING marked an exciting new chapter for L'Arche Toronto with the purchase of a 4,000^{ft}² pre-construction condo. The Board's decision was the result of careful listening, thoughtful study, and trust in God, trust that is at the very heart of L'Arche.

Forming relationships and creating community is where we excel and will be a real gift for the residents of ARTWORKS Tower and the evolving Regent Park neighbourhood.

L'Arche has never been a wallflower in this city, and we'll certainly share our special gift of welcome in the condo elevators and in the Regent Park neighbourhood – just think of the celebrations we'll host in the party room!

This winter was tough and highlighted our fragility, with a core member returning home from a hospital stay with new mobility limitations. Our beautiful heritage homes simply cannot meet the changing needs of our members.

The new condo will have accessibility baked into its bones, supporting core members to call L'Arche home even as they age.

The condo will also be a place for the community's young and young at heart – home to an emerging cultural and social scene on downtown's doorstep. Watch for us in local art spaces, pubs, and the 505 streetcar!

The Road Ahead to 2021

The condo was a long-held dream, and as it becomes a reality, we will have our work cut out for us. Community engagement and support, in terms of both planning and fundraising, will be key as we count down the next two and a half years to closing.

BUT WE'LL ALSO CONTINUE TO DREAM:

For more spaces in Regent Park neighbourhood for our other programs, such as TIFS.

For a successful fundraising campaign that will allow the community to consider making an additional home, enabling us to welcome even more core members.

With hard work, and our wonderful community cheering us on, we'll strive to make these dreams realities. The needs are real, and L'Arche Toronto has much to offer. ★



Join us at the Toronto Fringe Festival!

L'ARCHE TORONTO Sol Express will be taking to the stage again at the Toronto Fringe Festival from July 5th to July 14th with seven performances of 'RED KNOWS, A Play on Words'.

Through the intersection of where our clowns meet words, we'll be using the stage to address the felt sense of the need for play in our world. Exploring words and spaces; the sounds, meanings, and feelings that accompany them.

Join us for 'A sassy scrumptious analysis of words and silence through the lens of human relationship and connection and the complicated exaggeration around a notably exhilarating yet inspirational display of beautiful-not-perfect'.

All presentations will take place at the Al Green Theatre. For accessibility information and tickets visit www.fringetoronto.com or by phone 416 966 1062. ★



Broken

Broken by Madeline Burghardt

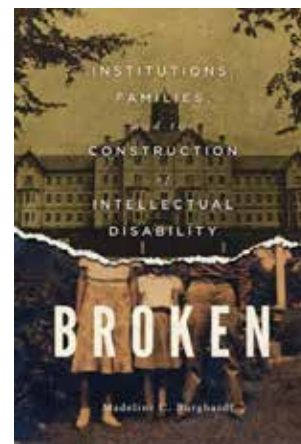
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, while in the midst of my doctoral studies, I attended a L'Arche funeral for a man who had lived much of his life in an institution. I was struck, as always, by the joyful celebration of his life and was reminded of the ways in which he had been able, in the few years he had been with us, to reveal himself as someone beautiful and meaningful. I became curious about other times and other relationships in his life when he might have been considered otherwise, and I decided to direct my curiosity to exploring the effects that institutionalization had on family relationships and understandings of disability. I began to speak with people who had been institutionalized, as well as with members of their families: brothers and sisters, parents, and also some people who had formerly worked in institutions. Now, several years later, a book detailing my findings and my reflections on them has been published by McGill-Queen's University Press, entitled *Broken: Institutions, Families, and the Construction of Intellectual Disability*.

Broken provides a detailed account of the rise of institutions in Ontario, and explains the social and political conditions that led many families to institutionalize their children with disabilities, even if this was not their preferred course of action. In addition, the book contains several chapters devoted to the stories of

institutional survivors and those closest to them, providing an intimate portrait of how institutionalization has affected, and continues to affect, hundreds of families. Many lessons emerged for me from this work, not the least of which is the need for society to remain vigilant against institutional practices that continue to oppress and contain people with intellectual disabilities, albeit in less visible ways.

While writing the book, I thought often of the funeral that nudged my research into this direction, and I have thought often since of the radical counter-narrative that L'Arche offers society through its mandate of mutuality and unconditional acceptance. The call is there for L'Arche to maintain its message and to support others who are also working to build a more inclusive and welcoming world. ★

Copies of *Broken* can be purchased via the McGill-Queen's University Press at https://www.mqup.ca/broken-products-9780773554832.php?page_id=73&, on Amazon, by phoning the distributor at 1-800-565-9523, or by contacting me directly at madeline.burghardt@uwo.ca.



Reflections on my Affiliation with L'Arche

By Karen Wingrove

LIKE SO MANY, I was not looking for L'Arche. It was L'Arche that found me, and now I have a story to share. It all started 21 years ago, when lovely Jane was referred to me for massage therapy. Little did I know what an impact that one relationship would have on my life, and like many of you, each year my involvement has become greater and greater.

The first core member that I worked with was Gillian. Since then, I have had the privilege and joy of working with many core members and assistants. In a clinical sense, there are many benefits to massage therapy. In general, it strengthens the immune system and increases circulation. This is particularly important for those who are wheelchair-users or not very active. And, of course, massage is helpful in relieving the pain associated with contractures, spasticity, and hypertonicity of the muscles.

All very important, but just as important is the connection. Many of the members have stress-related challenges and anxiety. Equally important is a touch that is kind, nurturing, and calming. I am aware that many of the people I work with have experienced some trauma in the past. I always think about that as I treat. Be respectful, compassionate, empowering, communicative, and above all, be gentle. Through my work with the L'Arche community

I have learned a great deal about communication, given that many members are nonverbal or compromised, yet we together must come up with a treatment plan and consent.

My involvement with L'Arche has grown over the years to include the participation of my clinic in the annual fundraiser. In addition, I gift one complimentary massage per month to a member who otherwise would not be able to afford the care. And the community has been great at letting me know when someone has had surgery, a stroke, or a serious medication issue, giving me the opportunity to reach out when possible.

Last year I became involved with L'Arche Toronto's TIFS program. I hire a core member to do some of the clinic laundry. Last week Vin was in, and as I handed over his pay, he grinned from ear to ear as he told me he was saving up for an Xbox.

I always feel so welcome when I stop by the Gathering Place or attend a party or the Good Friday service. I sometimes reflect on my affiliation with L'Arche: it's hard to imagine not being a part of L'Arche. I'm very aware that the experience and the people I have met have opened my heart, brought me joy, and taught me about communication, trust, and respect. I can't help wondering about how L'Arche has changed me in ways that I'm not even aware of. One thing is for sure: my heart belongs to the people of L'Arche. ★



So Much More Than a Job

By Elizabeth Nash,
Recruitment Coordinator for L'Arche Canada

WHEN YOU THINK OF RECRUITMENT, what are the words that come to mind? Maybe they are words like "enlisting," "growth," "candidates," or "employment." When I think of recruitment, the word that I think of is "storytelling." That is because in L'Arche, recruitment is, at its core, about telling our stories. It is about how we talk about our experiences and how we invite others to join us.

The vast majority of people who are hired to be assistants in L'Arche have come to us because they have heard about L'Arche from assistants or alumni. When we talk to people about our experiences, we touch that part of them that yearns for community and a place of belonging. When we remember to ask those people to join us, we are doing the work of recruitment in a natural and life-giving way.

Of course, we have tools that help to facilitate the process of learning about L'Arche and applying to be an assistant. If you have joined your community as a live-in assistant during the last five years, you will have applied using the Recruitment Website, www.larche-work.ca. This website is full of information about being an assistant and also houses the online application form. If you haven't already visited this website, please check it out. And don't forget to tell people who are interested in L'Arche to do the same!

We all want the best people to join our communities. People who are looking for meaningful experiences, people who are interested in sharing life. When we tell our stories and remember to invite others to join us, they are often attracted to engage with us, and the work of recruitment is done! I hope that you will continue this important work of recruitment in your community so that together we can welcome more people who want to share in the mission of L'Arche. ★



Banner artwork from L'Arche Toronto Sol Express art program

Community Wish List

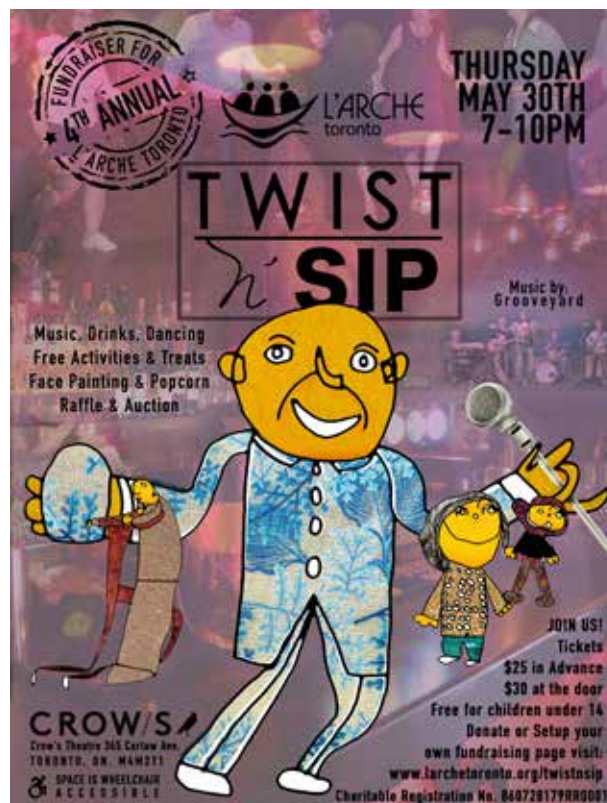
Tablecloths	\$50
Bed in a Bag sets	\$100
Paper Shredder	\$500
Desktop Computers	\$825
Mattresses	\$300 - \$500
Large Screen Smart TV for Gathering Place	\$1,000
Blinds	\$3,000
Professional Camera	\$2,500

For more information, please call **Caroline Hughey** 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 sign up: www.larchetoronto.org/donate/everyonebelongs



Thank You For Supporting the 4th Annual Twist n' Sip



Thank you, as well, to our hundreds of donors, ticket purchasers, anonymous donors and gift-in kind contributors!

Yes, I would like to make a donation to help sustain Jean Vanier's legacy!

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/donate **or call:** 416 406 2869 ext. 35

MAY 19

'We are not called by God to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things with extraordinary love.' – JEAN VANIER