



L'ARCHE®
saskatoon

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LOOKING BACK WITH THANKS, LOOKING FORWARD TO GROWTH

On February the fifteenth of this year we celebrated our community's fifth anniversary. It's hard to believe, but over five years have passed since we welcomed our first core member, Laura, to Christopher House! I am filled with gratitude as I look back and consider the founding years of L'Arche Saskatoon. There are so many people who have had a hand in building and sustaining our community: core members, assistants, board members, donors, volunteers, and many, many friends. Our International L'Arche Charter states that L'Arche communities are "called into being by God," and I give thanks that God not only spoke L'Arche into being here in Saskatoon—let there be L'Arche!—but also that God continues to walk with us, guiding and upholding us in all that we are living together.

In September of 2012, we began a dialogue with the Ministry of Social Services about the possibility of opening a second L'Arche home. As our conversations continued through the fall, we identified a significant unmet need for a home for individuals who, while fairly independent, are not independent enough to live on their own. The Ministry supported this

vision for a new home in principle, but at that point they couldn't offer us any guarantees that we would receive operational funding for the 2013-2014 fiscal year. After carefully considering the matter we decided to take a step in faith, and we bought a second house.

In time, our second house—as yet unnamed—will become a wonderful L'Arche home! It is a large, inviting house with a spacious backyard, located only one block west of Christopher House. We tendered bids to complete the renovations that needed to be done, which included adding three bedrooms and a bathroom, replacing appliances, windows, and flooring, and installing sprinklers throughout the home for fire prevention. The total cost for the work, which was completed in September 2013, came to \$163,000. Having sprinklers installed stretched our financial resources—we had to take out a loan of \$24,000 to complete the project—but we decided that it was important to have them put in while the house was unoccupied.

In June, we were very disappointed to learn that the Ministry would not be able to provide funding this year for our second home. So, to cover the

costs associated with our new house—mortgage payments, utilities, property tax—we have rented out the home for the coming two years. And our dialogue with the Ministry continues! We pray and trust that the funding we need to open our home will be approved in due course, and we look forward to the day when we will be able to welcome new core members.

In the meantime, the life and work of L'Arche Saskatoon continues—at Christopher House, at our Collective Kitchen, at our Creative Peacemaking Workshop, and at our monthly Friends of L'Arche Gatherings and weekly Prayer Nights. *Would you consider making a financial donation to L'Arche Saskatoon? Your financial support is much needed and hugely appreciated.*

Many, many thanks to all of you who continue to support us in our mission to celebrate and make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities. May you be visited by the God of joy and new beginnings this Advent season!

Wyndham Thiessen
Community Leader



Erica and Norm enjoy a BBQ in the backyard of our second house.

MEET HARVEY WACK

Harvey is a faithful, long-term member of the Friends of L'Arche. He never misses a Friends of L'Arche Gathering and thoroughly enjoys the pizza, salads and treats when we get together on the third Wednesday of each month. Harvey's mother lives at St. Anne's Home, so he is able to visit her often. His three sisters, Lorraine, Marni and Joanie, live in British Columbia and Ontario, while his brother Ron, along with wife Lynn, live in Saskatoon. Family members, and especially his mother Ann, are very important in Harvey's life.

Harvey enjoys working at Cosmopolitan Industries, where he has many friends. He also works one day each week at the Autism Society, doing cleaning. He lives in an Elmwood Home with six other men. When he has a chance to travel, he enjoys visiting his sisters and taking holiday trips. Most recently Harvey travelled to Disney World, where he had a wonderful, eventful time and especially enjoyed the rollercoaster. He brought home lots of treasures, including a special Disney World cap that is now his favourite. At every Friends of L'Arche Gathering, Harvey shares his smiles, his generous spirit, and his friendliness.



THE 2013 L'ARCHE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Kate O'Gorman, L'Arche Saskatoon Board Member

Representatives from L'Arche communities across the country gathered in Vancouver from May 23 to 26 for the L'Arche National General Assembly. Hosted on the beautiful UBC campus, core members, assistants, community leaders and board members alike shared three days of visioning, voting and above all, laughter.

Among the items being voted on by delegates of the Assembly, the adoption of the Mandate of L'Arche Canada 2013-2017 was an important accomplishment. Along with the mandate, elections for national leadership included the reappointment of Hollee Card as National Leader and the appointment of Gabrielle Beaulieu as Vice National Leader.

One of the highlights of the Assembly was a public symposium entitled "Pathways to Peace" presented by Ruth Patterson. Ruth is internationally recognized for her work in the area of interdenominational peace and understanding. Ruth's background, coupled with her work with Jean Vanier in cultivating a culture of reconciliation, offered delegates an evening of insight and inspiration.

While the business portion of the weekend was an exciting and necessary part of why we were all called to gather together, for many the National Assembly was also an opportunity to reconnect with friends and reignite a passion for the vision of Jean Vanier and the L'Arche movement.

True to the L'Arche way, the Assembly concluded with a celebratory meal and an evening of joyful festivities. Communities collaborated to showcase their talents by sharing a song, dance or a skit.

As delegates began to say their goodbyes, sentiments of gratitude weaved their way throughout the banquet hall, though not without a whisper of sadness in the knowledge that our time together was coming to an end.

The 2013 L'Arche National General Assembly was an event that explored and solidified the future of L'Arche in Canada for the next four years. It was also an experience which united us in our common values, reaffirmed our identity, and rekindled our desire to live out the vision of L'Arche: we are people with and without intellectual disabilities sharing life and friendship, together.

Donations in memory of a deceased family member or friend, or to mark a special birthday or anniversary, are most welcome. A charitable receipt will be sent to the donor and a thank you card acknowledging the donation to L'Arche Saskatoon will be sent to the person or family indicated (please include mailing address).

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2013

- We have had a number of students volunteering with us this year: four students from Saint Thomas More College, and two students from SIAST doing their practicums.
- We had a wonderful retreat day at Queen's House on May 15, financially supported through a \$2000 grant received from the Mahoney Institute. 38 people attended the whole day and another 12 came just for supper. The theme of the day was "gifts". Chris Friesen, a Mennonite pastor, led us through reflections on the gifts that God gives us as well as how we are gifts for each other, using drama, crafts, songs, and prayer.
- We held another retreat day at the Shekinah Retreat Centre on September 18, attended by 24 people. Kate O'Gorman, one of our board members, did a beautiful job leading our day of the theme of being "fearfully and wonderfully made," using visuals, stories, music, activities appealing to our senses of touch and smell, and lots of yoga!
- The folks at Christopher House took summer holidays in July, doing a number of day trips in and around the city, and they were happy to be joined by holiday groups from L'Arche Lethbridge and L'Arche Winnipeg.
- We continue to receive financial support from CHEP to run our monthly Collective Kitchen meetings, with up to ten people coming together to make tasty food and have a good time cooking together. Some of the greatest hits this year were chocolate quinoa cake and a Mexican layer salad.
- Our "Creative Peacemaking Workshop" has been meeting regularly on Mondays since May 2012. The seven or eight people involved divide their time between creative undertakings (e.g. making candles, cards, mosaics), going out for coffee in different cafés around Saskatoon (a different café each week!), and exploring ways of being peacemakers in Saskatoon (e.g. bringing food to people in need, visiting people in the hospital, sending encouraging cards).
- Laura, Morgana, Wyndham (community members) and Kate (board member) attended the National Assembly in Vancouver from May 23 to 26.
- Laura, Andrea, Gisela, Wyndham (community members) and Myron (board chair) attended the Regional General Assembly in Winnipeg from October 25 to 27. Our five delegates took part in discussions about our mission and enjoyed opportunities to re-connect with friends from the other six L'Arche communities in Western Canada.
- We sent two assistants to the Discovering the Mission workshop in Edmonton and one assistant to the L'Arche Canada Emmaus Retreat in Montreal.
- Our house leader and two former board members were blessed to be able to attend a retreat on the Gospel of John given by Jean Vanier in Trosly, France.



Wrapping gifts at our May 15th retreat day

L'ARCHE IDENTITY STATEMENT

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an international federation.

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.

We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.



Cody and family at a Friends of L'Arche Gathering

WAYS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN L'ARCHE SASKATOON

- Attend a Friends of L'Arche Gathering (once a month).
- Come to a Prayer Night (Wednesday evenings).
- Become a prayer partner for L'Arche Saskatoon.
- Volunteer to work on a L'Arche Committee: Gatherings, Communications, Newsletter, House and Garden, Development and Fundraising, Special Events Planning (coffeehouse, garage sale).
- Assist with ongoing financial support for the special programs of L'Arche. Many thanks, if you have already donated -- and please continue to keep L'Arche Saskatoon on your list of worthy charities to support.
- Donate goods or services.
- Learn more about Jean Vanier and L'Arche around the world by reading books by and about Jean Vanier, Henri Nouwen, Sue Mosteller and others.
- Check out: L'Arche Canada: www.larche.ca; L'Arche International: www.larche.org; L'Arche Saskatoon: www.larchesaskatoon.org.
- Add your e-mail address to our Friends of L'Arche e-mail list to receive notices of events and copies of the newsletter by e-mail. (Your e-mail information is only for the use of L'Arche Saskatoon and will not be shared with anyone else.) Send your request to: wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org.

HOW TO CONTRIBUTE FINANCIALLY

By cheque to:

L'Arche Saskatoon
c/o Wyndham Thiessen
P.O. Box 23006
Saskatoon, SK S7J 5H3

- You will receive a charitable receipt for income tax purposes. Be sure to include your full name and mailing address so we can prepare the receipt.

For more information or to be removed from our newsletter mailing list, please send a message to Wyndham Thiessen, Community Leader, at: wthiessen@larchesaskatoon.org or by phone at (306) 262-7243.

ABOUT L'ARCHE SASKATOON COMMUNITY

L'Arche Saskatoon is one of 29 L'Arche communities across Canada. At the present time we have one home, Christopher House, and an extended community called Friends of L'Arche, which has a monthly Gathering. Ecumenical prayer nights are held weekly at Christopher House, and our Collective Kitchen members meet one Sunday a month. In these and other settings, we are working to build community and strengthen friendships as we live, work, play and pray together.

ABOUT L'ARCHE SASKATOON INC.

- We are a non-profit organization and a registered charity (#86345-4872 RR0001), able to provide charitable receipts for tax purposes.
- We have an Executive Director/Community Leader (Wyndham Thiessen) and a volunteer board of directors.
- We receive core funding support from the Government of Saskatchewan for the operation of Christopher House and we rely on donations from individuals and groups to cover additional expenses and special programs.
- Financial contributions are received with gratitude and used with great care to support our mission and our work.