



L'ARCHE®
saskatoon

www.larchesaskatoon.org

Reflection from the Community Leader

Well, as promised, our newsletter has a new name! We received many fine suggestions—and thank you to everyone who sent them in—but in the end *Bridges* struck us as being the most suitable name, for a number of reasons.

We liked that the name is reflective of our city. Saskatoon is known as the “City of Bridges,” as we have seven bridges spanning our river, the South Saskatchewan.

The name also captures something of what life in L'Arche is fundamentally about. L'Arche is about building relationships, or “bridges” between people. These relationships grow and are nurtured in many different settings, and in a number of different ways. Our members with disabilities and assistants at Christopher House grow in relationship with one another as they share life together on a daily basis. There are also many wonderful relationships that have developed over the past ten years at our Friends of L'Arche Gatherings. At weekly Prayer Nights, people come to know each better through prayer and fellowship (and cookies!). Others meet together



Wyndham and Cody - hoping for birds

at Improv Nights, or at our Collective Kitchen meetings. Saskatoon only has seven bridges—but L'Arche Saskatoon has more “relationship bridges” than I could put a number to!

The final reason that we selected the name *Bridges* was that it expresses the nature and purpose of our newsletter: to nurture our connections with everyone who is involved in some way with L'Arche Saskatoon. Some people are engaged and active in our community life and events; others are involved by supporting us through donations, or in other concrete and meaningful ways. We want to let all of you know what we are doing, and how we are living out our mission as a L'Arche community in Saskatoon. We are grateful for the “bridges” that exist between us, and we hope that this newsletter will help to keep these bridges strong and well-maintained. (On a related note, our website at www.larchesaskatoon.org is being

re-vamped and we will update it regularly with community news.)

On behalf of L'Arche Saskatoon, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supports and participates in the life and mission of L'Arche Saskatoon. A special word of thanks to all of our donors - your financial support makes it possible for us to live out our mission. And another special word of thanks to our many volunteers - we couldn't do it without you! With your support we continue our work to create, in the words of Jean Vanier, “a little place of peace where we love each other and where God lives. To be a sign that love is stronger than hate.”

In our troubled and violent world—our “falling world,” as one of our Friends of L'Arche described it in her writing—may we be drawn closer to the Prince of Peace this Advent season, and may we all be bearers of the hope that he brings.

WyndhamThiessen

FROM JEAN VANIER'S LETTER TO THE COMMUNITIES OF L'ARCHE

Sept. 2010 (an excerpt)

My role today is to try and live and to announce L'Arche through my life, through little gestures of love in daily life, in this world which for many appears so horribly painful and violent, with no apparent hope. . . .

I like the words that we pray at compline every evening, "God is our refuge, He protects us and covers us with His wings." In a world where there is so much violence, fear, insecurity and hopelessness we can, with so many others, create a little place of peace where we love each other and where God lives. To be a sign that love is stronger than hate.

To create these places of peace, gentleness and tenderness, we need to work on ourselves, as the Patriarch of Constantinople, Athénagoras, used to say: "The hardest war is the one we wage against ourselves. We need to disarm ourselves. I have waged this war for many years. It was terrible, but now I am disarmed of the need to be right." The path to peace is always a path to humility.

The word which comes to my spirit and my heart, time and time again, is "presence". Being present to reality and to others, not escaping into imaginations and ideas; living in the present moment, not fleeing into dreams of the future, or shutting off in the past. Accepting myself with my weaknesses, my difficulties and my gifts and opening myself up to the Presence of God. Quite a programme for the coming year!



Nancy and Candace get busy in the kitchen

L'ARCHE COLLECTIVE KITCHEN: A TASTY EXPERIMENT!

Amy Bunce

Candace and I used to meet every two weeks to spend time together and to work on a craft project. It was a lot of fun! Many people attended our Sunday afternoon sessions. We made pom-pom pets, Christmas ornaments, rosary kits for St. Phillip's School, and sock dolls for a conference put on by the Catholic Health Association of Saskatchewan. We made some beautiful things together and, most importantly, we grew in friendship.

After a year or so of making crafts, we wondered about meeting in a different context. We talked about cooking together. I attended a week-long workshop put on by CHEP (Child Hunger and Education Program) to become a certified Collective Kitchen leader, and the L'Arche Collective Kitchen was born! A Collective Kitchen is a small gathering of people (usually no more than eight) who pool resources and time to make meals to take home. A Collective Kitchen is a really good L'Arche undertaking because everybody contributes: we all help to prepare the food, we all chip in some money each month, we all help

to clean up, we all benefit from being in relationship with one another—and we all go home with food!

Over the months our Collective Kitchen members—around seven or eight people—have made some great food together. Some of the highlights were our cucumber salad, our lemon yogurt loaf, and our honey baked lentils. At our first session together, we tried to make bread and it was a disaster! But we had fun and we have laughed about it ever since.

Our kitchen has been sponsored financially by CHEP and we are very grateful for their support. Our members put in money each month, and these contributions have been matched by CHEP. Additional funds have also been contributed by CHEP to supply "basic shelf" items. Thank you CHEP for this opportunity!

Our kitchen will conclude its six-month commitment in January and will be looking to start another session. The L'Arche Collective Kitchen is food for the body and the soul. "Taste and see that the Lord is good. Happy are they who trust in Him." (Psalm 34:8).

We mourn the loss of two of our Friends of L'Arche, Clark Baker (Dec. 5, 1989 – May 14, 2010) and Majella Lapierre (April 16, 1944 – September 12, 2010).

Clark was a friend of Christopher House, and we miss his playful sense of humour and his boisterous laugh.

Majella was well-known and loved by many at our monthly Gatherings, which she attended regularly with her husband Leo and her son Norman.

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.

MISSION FIELD

I didn't know that I was a mission field

I didn't know I was thirsty
Until you offered me a sip from your
straw

I didn't know that I was hungry
Until you broke bread with me

I didn't know that I needed healing
Until you placed your hand on my
forehead

I didn't know that I was lonely
Until you called me friend

I didn't know that I was empty
Until you filled my cup with coffee and
left room for the milk

I didn't know that I was a mission field
Until you were sent to me

With good good news

*By L'Arche assistant Laurie Carnduff
Laurie is currently spending a year as an
assistant in L'Arche Kent in England*

MEET RENÉE YAGER

Renée Yager works at Sherbrooke Community Centre, where she has many friends. She takes the coffee cart around and sells coffee to the residents and visits with them. Renée enjoys golfing and watching baseball in the summer and hockey in the winter. She has a group of close friends whom she works with at Blades hockey games selling snacks. Her favourite sports teams are the Blue Jays, the Roughriders and the Blades. Renée likes to attend Friends of L'Arche Gatherings each month and the Wednesday evening prayer nights at Christopher House. Some of the special things Renée likes are shopping, going to Waskesiu, and spending time with her parents, her brother Cameron and his wife, her two nephews and the puppies. Have a great year, Renée!!



Renée volunteering at Sherbrooke

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR (2010)

- After the earthquake in Haiti on January 12th, Cody and Carina came up with the idea of baking and selling bread to raise money for our two L'Arche communities in Haiti. People who were interested in buying our bread were invited to make a donation, but there was no set price. In one month, Christopher House baked 70 loaves of bread and 36 dozen buns, raising \$1581.25 for L'Arche Haiti!
- For the second year in a row, Christopher House welcomed university students from Saint Thomas More College's "Cultivating Humanity" class. In February, two students came for a week-long live-in experience of life in a L'Arche home.
- In April, we sent one of our assistants, Laurie, on a mission for a year to L'Arche Kent in England. L'Arche Kent is the oldest community in England—founded in 1974—and we're one of the youngest in the Federation, so we told Laurie to come back with much wisdom and many insights!
- We held a retreat day on July 28th at Saint Peter's Abbey in Muenster. Amy led our day with sessions focused on the invitation from Jesus not to worry, and "to consider the birds." Between sessions, we fed chickadees, which ate seeds out of our hands.
- We had a wonderful time on our first community holiday at a cottage beside Lake Diefenbaker, from July 5th to 9th. On the downside, a mouse chewed through Sasha's headphone cord. On the upside, we got to go boating!
- Once again, and for the fourth year in a row, Steve Halabura ran the Queen City Marathon in support of L'Arche Saskatoon, as well as three other charitable organizations. He raised more than \$12,000 in pledges for the four agencies. We are proud of you Steve!
- Rock of Ages Church has very generously given the use of one of their offices to Wyndham, our Community Leader. The church is just a few blocks down the road from Christopher House, so the location is ideal. Thank you, Rock of Ages Church, for your support, and we look forward to this new relationship.
- We have been in full welcome mode this fall! Since September, we have welcomed three new board members—Robert Stevenson, George Janzen, and Myron Rogal—and three new assistants: Morgana Ximenes (from Brazil), Caroline Power (from Ireland), and Martha Cowie (from Ontario).



Lindsay with her parents, Terry and Dawn.

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, Finance, 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.