



L'ARCHE[®]

CANADA FOUNDATION

Caring. Educating. Inspiring

This Issue:

Caring

The creation of "a culture of caring" is one of the goals of L'Arche. Everyone needs support. Equally, each person has a contribution to make. A culture of caring allows me to receive the support I need and to make my contribution. This bulletin offers some snapshots of how L'Arche is fostering this vision of caring.

- Nathan Ball, Executive Director

In Brief...

L'Arche Lethbridge rated 100 percent

in the tri-annual Alberta Government evaluation for certification, an extensive assessment of files and interviews at all levels of the community and board. Such a rating is the result of years of faithful relationships and responsible caring.

"I am honoured. I think L'Arche is an extraordinary organization, and when I meet Jean (Vanier), I am touched by him." - Pamela Wallin's comment on completing an interview for the September issue of L'Arche's A Human Future.

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Making an Impact in Canadian Society

Caring Until the End

"We should all be so lucky to have a death like Rufus MacKinnon," says physician Mark Bennett. Rufus, a member of the L'Arche Cape Breton community, was a man who loved long walks and ice cream and hugs and sweeping the floor and drying dishes, and who did not speak and needed assistance with most tasks of daily life. Mark Bennett is a doctor in family practice in Inverness, Cape Breton. With over 3000 patients on his case load, Rufus stood out to Dr. Bennett. "Who can explain why I liked Rufus? I think everyone liked Rufus!" comments Dr. Bennett.

As Rufus aged and neared the end of his life, Dr. Bennett supported Rufus' fam-

ily and L'Arche community in their decision to have Rufus die at home. He provided telephone consultations and visited



Rufus out and about with L'Arche friend Michaellette Barrington, 2004

Rufus at home to give advice on the various medical decisions. Says Dr. Bennett, "It was a privilege for me to be involved in caring for Rufus as he died. To see him at home, surrounded by family and friends, comfortable and peaceful, helped me understand what L'Arche is all about."

L'Arche Vancouver: Caring about Society

"I feel good inside when I make the cookies, knowing who they are for," says Mary Hillhouse of L'Arche Vancouver. L'Arche Day Program people then take Mary's cookies to a local ecumenically sponsored foodbank. They serve Mary's cookies and, equally important, they visit with the people in the waiting area the church provides. Mary's and this group's social consciousness is characteristic of L'Arche Vancouver. It is involved in a variety of civic initiatives.

This summer, several L'Arche members helped at the World Peace Forum, which was attended by visitors from many different countries. Says Arturo Breton, "People were very interested to see that I have a physical disability and am working with people with



Arturo and Ken Milne with a visitor to their Peace Forum table

developmental disabilities. I explained how we help each other according to our abilities." Denise Haskett was one of several special invitees at an August symposium at Simon Fraser University on aspects of spirituality unique to the continental Pacific North West. She and community leader Landys Klyne are also part of an SFU study group on Citizen-

...Continued



In Brief...

Praise for L'Arche: Under "Most Favoured Housing," the March 2006 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Research Highlights bulletin has the following note:

"L'Arche model: L'Arche was the only group home that was identified as a best practice. L'Arche homes exist in a number of provinces. All are faith-based, geared to aging-in-place, and feature employees who function more like family members than staff."

The CMHC bulletin describes the results of its two-year study of housing options for people with intellectual disabilities.

(CMHC is Canada's national housing agency.)



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ship and Religion, which is looking at the place of religion in civil society.

L'Arche Vancouver also takes an interest in interfaith matters. They have invited a local rabbi and clergy to speak to them on the Jewish roots of Christianity, and the community is in the process of joining the new, much-touted Vancouver Interspiritual Centre.

A Remarkable Recovery

In March, Richard Goto of L'Arche Hamilton underwent major surgery for a neck fracture sustained in a motor vehicle accident.



Richard Goto, L'Arche Hamilton

Doctors spoke of Richard perhaps being in a wheelchair permanently. L'Arche members visited and prayed for Richard daily and worked with a physiotherapist to prepare for his return home. After six weeks, he came home with a neck brace that he was to wear indefinitely.

"Richard's recovery has surpassed all expectations," says Jeff Gilbreath, community leader. "He is able to walk again and, while fragile, has regained all his independence." On July 4th, his L'Arche friends and family held a party at Richard's home to celebrate the removal of his neck brace. He received the doctor's go ahead and gladly threw it into a decorated garbage bin that night.

New Life for L'Arche Saint John Member

"I'm going back to work!" Debbie Turnbull exclaims joyfully. A stroke caused Debbie to lose skills that had enabled her to work at a local Burger King for 13 years. Now, her L'Arche Saint John community has helped her find a place in a program run by Key Industries. There, she will have an opportunity to relearn some skills and find work she can do. "It's a kind of rebirth," says Dan Kirkegaard, the L'Arche community leader.



Mary with cookies for the foodbank visitors

A Caring Community

"My sister Madeleine moved to a L'Arche home in Montreal about 6 years ago, after living with my husband Tom and me for 11 years. She soon made friends and now, in her words, she had 'two homes' and felt quite 'grown up.' She was then about 53!



Madeleine (left) with Tom and Susan Burpee, and cousin, Ros (right)

Then tragedy struck: she developed such a severe depression that she had to be hospitalized. It took over a year for doctors to bring her back to her old self. It was terrible! - for her, for us and for her housemates at L'Arche. During all that dark time, those who cared for her in L'Arche Montreal never gave up visiting and supporting her. They helped her reintegrate when she was released and have since been supporting her, and thereby, me, in every way. That's what I call a caring community!" - Susan Burpee



Debbie with housemate John Pike. Debbie moved to L'Arche Saint John soon after the community opened in 2005