



## Making an Impact in Canadian Society

Everyone desires to contribute in some way to the lives of others. This is part of becoming fulfilled as human beings. People with intellectual disabilities are no different in this regard, and they have gifts that can transform situations and transform others, but they have often been denied this opportunity. In L'Arche we try to ensure that each person's contribution can be given and celebrated. This bulletin highlights some contributions of L'Arche members across Canada.

- Murray McCarthy, Executive Director

### In Brief...

#### WISDOM ON THE JOURNEY: WALKING TO A SACRED PLACE

To build and strengthen bridges of understanding and friendship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, L'Arche Canada is partnering with others to host a special event near Calgary, Alberta on June 7 and 8, 2013. This event will bring together people from diverse communities and will examine the legacy of Indian Residential Schools and support the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

[www.wisdomonthejourney.ca](http://www.wisdomonthejourney.ca)

#### THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

of L'Arche Canada will take place in Vancouver in May 2013. These gatherings, held only every four years, bring together delegates (assistants, core members, and board ...Continued

## THE TRANSFORMATIVE IMPACT OF L'ARCHE PEOPLE

### Debbie—Transforming the Present Moment

I have heard Debbie Turnbull in nursing homes, all along the path to our destination, greeting unknown individuals with a warm "Hello" and, "You look nice today." Debbie's marvelous inner freedom draws her to connect with new people and to set them at ease. We gave a talk to a class at the local community college together. Presentation concluded, as I was tidying up our materials, I looked up to see Debbie circling the room, introducing herself personally with a handshake to all 42 students. Time and again, Debbie transforms the present moment and builds bridges by her candour, gentleness, humour, and warmth. When Their Honours, The Honourable Graydon Nicholas, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, and Her Honour, Mrs. Beth Nicholas, visited McKim House (the L'Arche Saint John home), Debbie and her housemates created the warm welcome and hospitality that has led them to become close friends of our community. On their most recent visit, hearing of their busy, busy schedule, I asked



Debbie was delighted when, as he promised, the Lieutenant Governor brought his drum to sing her Happy 50th Birthday. Why a drum? His Honour Graydon Nicholas was born and raised on the Tobique First Nation (one of New Brunswick's Maliseet First Nations). Before being appointed Lieutenant Governor, His Honour was a provincial court judge. Looking on in the picture is Kristina Cooper, the newest core member at L'Arche Saint John.

them what they do to rest and renew. Quickly, the Lieutenant Governor replied, "We come to L'Arche!"  
*Jocelyn Worster, Community Leader, L'Arche Saint John*  
<http://www.larchesaintjohn.org>

### A L'Arche Café transforms a Business District

In 2012, L'Arche Winnipeg opened the L'Arche Tova Café. It is located in the heart of the business district of Transcona, a suburb of Winnipeg. The café is one way that L'Arche Winnipeg is living out the L'Arche mission to "make known the gifts of people who have intellectual disabilities" and ultimately to build a more compassionate society. The café offers a place of hospitality where local people can meet over good food and can interact with L'Arche members who have meaningful employment welcoming customers, clearing tables and helping in the kitchen.



L'Arche Tova Café

The café has been welcomed by local business people. Says customer Brent Thomas of the Casera Credit Union, "Downtown Transcona was overdue for a café. There is lots of buzz about it. People think it is a great place to come."  
...Continued



members) from the 29 communities across Canada. Each sends four representatives. Decisions will be made on emphases in the mandate for L'Arche Canada over the next four years and on national leadership as well as on typical business items.

**A NEIGHBOURLY WELCOME**

L'Arche London, like other L'Arche communities, welcomes neighbours, and is especially a place of welcome for young people who have an intellectual disability. Taylor Rusland, a boy and now a young man who grew up near L'Arche London, has found a warm welcome over the years. He has helped L'Arche members become better known in their neighbourhood, and has become a good friend to the L'Arche core members and assistants. He even had a high school co-op placement at L'Arche London, where he helped cook and do house maintenance. Taylor now comes weekly for dinner as an associate member. He also helps with the community's bi-weekly worship time.

[www.larchelondon.org](http://www.larchelondon.org)



Taylor visiting with Angel at L'Arche London

**A L'Arche Café...continued**

The menu offers a variety of breakfast and lunch-time fare. It includes salads, sandwiches, a quesadilla plate, Fair Trade and specialty coffees and teas, and the "Blue-collar special"—a substantial, very reasonably

priced all-day breakfast named to reflect Transcona's early history as the location of Winnipeg's huge railway yards.

[www.larchetovacafe.com](http://www.larchetovacafe.com)

L'Arche Winnipeg members Petra (Café Manager) and Sandra (part-time employee)



**L'Arche in Quebec City prepares an Inspiring Gala**

As we are assembling this bulletin, the people in L'Arche l'Étoile are collaborating with the students and staff of Collège secondaire Saint-Charles-Garnier in preparing a gala presentation titled "L'Arche Around the World." They will be presenting it to an audience of 700 people on March 17th in the school's Jean-Paul-Tardif auditorium. The show has been two years in preparation. The L'Arche core members play various scenes from life in L'Arche, scenes much like those that take place among the 5,000 people who live in L'Arche communities around the world. Many people from different countries come to L'Arche, and as they rub shoulders with people who have obvious limitations they become more accepting of their own fragility as human beings. Their hearts are opened to live what is most important—the simple, true things in life. While



In January, the Bonhomme of the Quebec Winter Carnival visited Collège Saint-Charles-Garnier to remind everyone of the Carnival and also to announce the up-coming gala. L to R: Paul Morin, L'Arche core member, Lynda St-Pierre, L'Arche community leader, the Bonhomme, and Mario Gagnon, director of the school and honorary president of the gala.

they clearly have limits to their autonomy, the actors reveal that they also have remarkable gifts. The presentation shows L'Arche as a way of living in the world that is flexible, ecumenical and multicultural, a lifestyle not turned in on itself but humble and full of light and peace.

An exhibit of photos and art work by L'Arche members will add to the ambiance. The

gala, a benefit for the L'Arche community, is a fine example of community partnerships. In addition to the collaboration with Collège Garnier, individuals and citizens' organizations where L'Arche core members are involved are making significant contributions.

<http://larche-quebec.ca>

**"BEING FIRST" – A Workshop presented by L'Arche Ottawa**

For several years L'Arche Ottawa has given workshops to local faith groups and community organizations. Themes have ranged from "embracing our belovedness," to "caring for one another in the health care field," to "death and dying." Our "BEING FIRST" workshop focuses on the transition from Doing to Being, especially as we age. It is a grant project funded by the New Horizons for Seniors Program, and it includes a booklet. The title, "BEING FIRST," is a play on words: it points to our learning from the L'Arche core members, that it is important simply to

BE in the present moment. The discussion in the workshop is on the transition we are called to make as we age, from "doing" to "being," and what we need to let go of to make this transition. The later phases of our lives can present challenges to our sense of self as the things we "do," our social roles, and the reputation that may be associated with these, are stripped away. This letting go is fundamentally a spiritual journey. In L'Arche we accompany people with a disability as they age. From them, we have gained much wisdom, and together we share some of this in this workshop.



Some of the workshop presenters L to R: Ashley Moggy, Jim Cassidy, Lucie Hanak

Participants have called the content "deep" and "profoundly moving."

Lucie Hanak, Coordinator, "Being First" Project  
[www.larche.ca/en/communities/ottawa](http://www.larche.ca/en/communities/ottawa)

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