



## Making an Impact in Canadian Society

Across Canada, L'Arche communities are creatively reaching out to include people who have intellectual disabilities but do not live in a L'Arche home. Through their involvement at L'Arche, individuals widen their social circle, find greater meaning in their lives, and ease stress on their families. I am pleased to share a few of these stories with you in this issue of the L'Arche Canada Foundation Impact Bulletin.

- Kathy Adamo, Executive Director

### In Brief...

**THE COMMUNITY OF L'ARCHE BELOEIL** announced the passing of artist and community member Harold Lejeune last month. His gentle soul and beautiful pictures touched many people across Canada.



Lejeune's *Le Violoniste Bleu* after Chagall

## L'ARCHE COMMUNITIES REACH OUT

### Discovering Community by Silas Donham

Spreading joy, laughter, and music wherever she goes, Barbara "Barbie" Deal illustrates some of the creative ways L'Arche communities are reaching out to include people with intellectual disabilities, even those who still live with their families. Barbie started her involvement with L'Arche Cape Breton as a member of the Ride the Wave summer program for young people, before beginning her weekly job at The Hope Chest used clothing store, as well as the Hear Me Roar art program. "As soon as she came in she would take her jacket off and start clapping," says co-worker Monica MacLellan. "She enjoyed it when I would sit with her and fix her hair and she would look at me and I just knew she felt good."

Before her involvement with L'Arche, Barbie spent her days at home with her mother. Neither Ontario, where she had grown up, nor Nova Scotia, has many options for adults with intellectual disabilities to fill their days with activity, to widen their social circle, or to have meaningful work. "You can never rest, it's never out of your mind," says Barbie's mother, who could tell Barbie was frustrated, too. "There comes a time in life to interact with and respond to people other than your parents." The L'Arche programs



Barbie Deal (l) with her friend and housemate, Tomke Ziegler (r)

allowed Barbie to find activities she enjoyed and to do it at her own pace.

After several years in the work programs, Barbie recently moved into Waycobah House where her connections continue to deepen. "She is super energetic and it's so easy for her to get excited about things," says her houseleader, Tomke Ziegler. "When I was in Germany they told me she was saying, 'My own Tomke!' It made me really happy because my name is not easy to learn."

### Adam Joins the Workplace by Carl MacMillan

Adam Whaley is one of the new people working at L'Arche Daybreak in Richmond Hill, Ontario. In 2007 Adam graduated from the Dante Alighieri Academy in Toronto. Adam is twenty-four years old. He had been looking for a good place to work when he and his family discovered L'Arche. Adam visited a few times and experienced several of Daybreak's programs. Since April 2010 he has been working five days a week at the Woodery and the Craft Studio. Adam is a valued member of the workplace and a natural community person. He enjoys community gatherings



Adam Whaley works at paper-making in the Craft Studio.

and he has made many friends at Daybreak.

Adam really enjoys helping his peers, commenting that "Everyone is my friend, I really like to come to work here with my new friends." He has a special

talent for bringing others out of their shells and getting them to participate in life around them. Adam lives in Maple, Ontario with his family. He is very happy to come to work every day at a job he really loves.

**A NEW EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE**

has just been launched by L'Arche Canada for senior elementary and secondary students. Based on the DVD *Dance in the Shadow: The Unfolding Story of Rebecca Beayni*, the educational kit introduces students to the mutually empowering experience of dance with someone who uses a wheelchair. This resource, free online on the Education page of [larche.ca](http://larche.ca), may be used to address issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, respect and social responsibility.

**LIFE'S GREAT QUESTIONS**

is the title of Jean Vanier's newest book, published by Novalis on October 1st. Who am I? Why am I here? What is my purpose in life? Jean's responses are thought-provoking and inspiring, leading readers to examine themselves and their belief in God.

**PARA NORMAL**

is the title of an award-winning short film by Rostyk Makushak that creatively captures the everyday life experiences of five people with intellectual disabilities at L'Arche Ottawa, where Rostyk is a house leader. The film won the 2015 TV Ontario (TVO) Short Docs contest last May, being chosen over 126 other submissions.

**WORK ON A VERSATILE TEACHER'S GUIDE**

for Pareil pas pareil has begun. In this moving video L'Arche members in Quebec speak very personally about the joys and sorrows of their lives. The teacher's guide will be available in French with English subtitles. It will be useful in student leadership and guidance programs, in pastoral education, and in programs related to social justice, the social services, and family life.

**Published by**

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**L'Arche Sudbury Community Participation Program** by Karen Andrews

"Meaningful work enhances an individual's dignity, personal growth and self-fulfillment."  
Chantale lives in her own apartment, takes the city bus, pays her bills and works two days a week at a retirement home. She is a valued employee of the kitchen department and a cherished core member of the L'Arche Sudbury Community. "The L'Arche Vocational Program has helped change my life. I have a developmental disability but I can do anything you can do! I don't have to stay in my shell anymore."

Chantale is a member of the Community Participation Program, which helps people with developmental disabilities find meaningful employment or volunteer positions within the greater community.

Since 1998 David has worked at Topper's Pizza. He knows his job inside and out. He wakes each and every day knowing that he has a purpose, people depend on him and he is supported in achieving his goals. He is a man of few words but would be the first to tell you, "I love to work!"

Gloria volunteers twice a month at the YMCA Day Care.

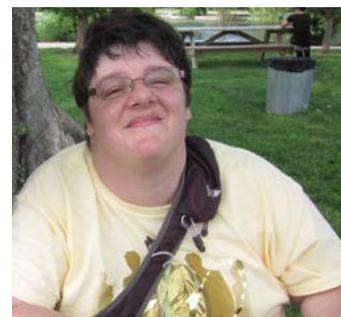


Chantale Guenette works in the kitchen department of a retirement home.



David Demers has worked at the same pizzeria for 17 years.

For seven years she has been playing with kids and setting up activity stations. They smile when they see her. There is a sense of ease and genuine caring when she is in the room. She shares her gifts with the L'Arche Community



Gloria Donato volunteers at a daycare and shares her gifts with the community of L'Arche Sudbury.

by helping out with art projects, cooking classes and participating in community vacations. "I think L'Arche is awesome! They helped find me a job and that makes me happy!"

**Friends of L'Arche Gatherings** by Wyndham Thiessen

Every month for the past 15 years, a diverse group of between 40 and 60 Saskatoon residents has been coming together to share food, fun and fellowship at the "Friends of L'Arche Gatherings." The group includes people with intellectual disabilities, family members, children, students, and residents from different group homes.

The gatherings start with supper; pizza is ordered and people bring salads and desserts to share. Then they take turns at the microphone giving updates of what has happened in their lives over the previous month: trips taken, music heard, noteworthy—or mundane!—



Food, fun and fellowship at the Friends of L'Arche Gatherings in Saskatoon.

events and achievements.  
People who once wouldn't be caught dead in front of a crowd have, over the years, found enough confidence to get up and share news with those gathered. "I went to the lake." "The Roughriders lost." "I'm going to Regina next weekend." Then

there's a shared activity such as dancing, bingo, drama games, or a show put on by a guest performer, and then, finally, birthdays are celebrated and a blessing is sung. The Friends of L'Arche Gatherings have been a wonderful seedbed for the growth of many friendships.