

# Signs of Hope

By Carl MacMillan

“Signs of Hope” is not only the name for our capital campaign – it is the theme for our community year at L’Arche Daybreak. “Signs of Hope” is actually a seasoned L’Arche expression, familiar to many of us who have been around L’Arche for a long time. While not new language, it is still rich with potential that we are confident our community can break open in new ways over the course of the coming year.

Recently, David Harmon and I, along with several other community members, participated in an interview by CBC Radio’s Mary Hynes for the Sunday afternoon radio program “Tapestry.” The show’s team had wanted to do a program centered on the theme of “Welcoming the Other” and they thought L’Arche would be an ideal place to anchor the discussion. One of the realities of our community life that I explained to Mary is that there are many people with intellectual disabilities who would love to be able to be part of L’Arche Daybreak – yet there are real limits in terms of space and resources, and we cannot welcome everyone who would like to come. Our “Signs of Hope” campaign is one way that we are responding to the great need locally for programs of work and daytime activities for people with intellectual disabilities.



2010 Orientation Group from left: Toni Urbanski (Volunteer Coordinator), Francois Gsell, Hannah Behles, Philip Klostermann, Paul Ababio, Marc-Andre Urban, Yvonne Asah, Hanna Jeong, Will Grassby. Front row: Warren Pot (Assistants Coordinator), Cheryl Maksymyk, Ikumi Maruzaki, Carlos Rivera, Johannes Kneip.

Mary asked if it were hard for us as community members to live with this fundamental inadequacy, knowing that L’Arche cannot open its doors to everyone. I replied that, of course, it is hard – yet the challenge is one that we share with many families and with other organizations who are deeply committed to the well-being of people with intellectual disabilities. L’Arche has long recognized that it is “not a solution, but a sign.” Mary Hynes asked me what that meant – for L’Arche to be a sign.

L’Arche is a sign that it is possible for men and women of difference to live together in peace – and when we

say “difference” we are not talking only about people who are different because of intellectual disability. In L’Arche, difference cuts across social origin, culture, and religious belief, as well as intellectual capacity.

One of the benefits of welcoming guests, which we do regularly in L’Arche, is that their experience of our community offers a reflection back to us about the beauty of what we are living – something very helpful, even essential, as living in community is sometimes tough going! Still, L’Arche remains an important sign in a troubled world that people of real difference can live and learn together. ♣

A Meditation by Henri Nouwen

## The Fruit of Hope

There is an intimate relationship between joy and hope. While optimism makes us live as if someday soon things will go better for us, hope frees us from the need to predict the future and allows us to live in the present, with the deep trust that God will never leave us alone but will fulfill the deepest desires of our heart.

Joy in this perspective is the fruit of hope. When I trust deeply that today God is truly with me and holds me safe in a divine embrace, guiding every one of my steps, I can let go of my anxious need to know how tomorrow will look, or what will happen next month or next year. I can be fully where I am and pay attention to the many signs of God’s love within and around me.

We often speak about the “good old days,” but when we think critically about them and let go of our romanticizing memories, we might soon discover that, during those very days, we were doing a lot of worrying about our future.

When we trust profoundly that today is the day of the Lord and that tomorrow is safely hidden in God’s love, our faces can relax, and we can smile back at the One who smiles at us.

I remember once walking along the beach with a friend. We spoke intensely about our re-



65 arborists from the Ontario Society of Professional Arborists gave a day of service on May 5th.

lationship, trying hard to explain ourselves to each other and to understand each other’s feelings. We were so preoccupied with our mutual struggle that we didn’t notice the magnificent sunset spreading a rich spectrum of colour over the foam-capped waves breaking on the wide, silent beach.

Suddenly my friend exclaimed: “Look...look at the sun...look.” He put his arm around my shoulder, and together we gazed at the shimmering ball of fire vanishing gradually below the horizon of the wide ocean.

At that moment, we both knew about hope and joy. ♣

## Arborists Donate Day of Services

65 Arborists descended on L’Arche Daybreak’s Yonge Street property on May 5th for a “day of service” from the Ontario Society of Professional Arborists. Each year, one Ontario charity is chosen for this enormous gift of services from arborists across the province. They pruned, felled, chipped, treated and planted trees throughout the 14 acre site, leaving it more beautiful than ever. The summer edition of their magazine, *Ontario Arborist*, features a lovely cover story article about the day with many photographs. ♣

## Community Notes



The “Walk for Hope” on Saturday, September 11th, started and ended at the Dayspring.

**The Walk for Hope**, which took place on Saturday morning, September 11th, raised over \$20,000. The Walk, conceived by *Signs of Hope* Campaign Cabinet member Patrick Sinn, served as a forerunner to the *Signs of Hope* launch and involved over 100 walkers.

**New York City** was the destination for a Corner House summer holiday in July. Old friend and former assistant Lisa Cataldo helped to welcome the group and see the sites in Manhattan.

**Antigonish** in Nova Scotia is home to a L’Arche sister community led by former Daybreak member Gus Leuschner. A group from the Green House flew to Nova Scotia for a week’s holiday in Antigonish at St. Francis Xavier University.



*Spirit Movers*, including Becky Till, Anna MacLean and Kim Lageer, danced at the Campaign Launch.

**Debbie Steckley** is the newest core member to join the L’Arche Daybreak community. Debbie lives at the Red House. She is from Richmond Hill and has settled into community life very easily.

**The Spirit Movers** performed on September 10th at Jean Vanier High School in Richmond Hill to celebrate the 82nd birthday of the founder of L’Arche.

*Tapestry* is CBC Radio’s Sunday afternoon program centered on issues of spirituality. Mary Hynes, the host of *Tapestry*, visited L’Arche Daybreak on September 23rd to interview David Harmon and Carl MacMillan for a program on the theme of “Welcoming the Other.” The program is scheduled to air on Sunday, October 10th at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time.

### Community Wish List

Twin bed sheets.....	\$50
Japanese Maple tree.....	\$100
Plexiglass candle moulds.....	\$200
12 setting dinner set.....	\$500
Spirit Mover costumes.....	\$500
Barbeque.....	\$650
Recycling storage shed.....	\$1,500
Tree shredder.....	\$2,000
Patio furniture.....	\$3,000
Sun shade for the Day Program.....	\$3,000
Stairlift.....	\$7,000
Grounds equipment.....	\$10,000
Sanding machine for Woodery.....	\$10,000
Mini-van.....	\$35,000

For more information, please call Jean Jarvis at L’Arche Daybreak’s Development Office (905) 884-3454 ext. 244.



## Campaign Chair Inspires Launch Audience

*Helen Cleary Stynes is the courageous Chair of the "Signs of Hope" Campaign. At the Campaign Launch on September 16th, she gave a very personal and eloquent closing address that has been adapted here for our newsletter readers.*

It was my daughter Miriam who introduced me to L'Arche Daybreak. She had worked at Stephenson House where Ellen, Caroline, and Susanne live. Caroline, Ellen and Susanne visited our home regularly and I became a frequent guest at Stephenson House. Then Miriam told me about the Friday night services at the Dayspring.

Well, what a discovery! I noticed how happy the core members are, and how the assistants who support them are so wonderfully caring. I listened to them pray for each other, and for their families. Some of them clearly love to sing and dance – which they do with absolute freedom and delight.

When I was about 15 or 16 at home in Ireland, one Christmas morning, I saw my mother preparing this care package. I saw that she had placed a freshly cooked, roasted and stuffed chicken, an iced and decorated Christmas cake, a plum pudding and a bottle of orange crush in a box. I then asked her who it was for. For the first time in my life she told me it was for her brother who was in an institution in Clonmel, about 15 miles from home. We had never been told about Uncle Tom because it was considered a blemish on the family to have someone

belonging to us with a mental disability. Back then, the thinking was that it would be best to put people like Uncle Tom away in an institution so nobody would know about them.

Can you imagine my amazement when I came to L'Arche Daybreak? Here the unique and sacred gift of each person is recognized and celebrated. I never see disability when I come to Daybreak. I see Caroline, the artist, who draws beautifully smiling faces. I see John who would challenge any Irish musician to playing the spoons. I see Kim, who hasn't a mean bone in her body, and who had the courage to sing a solo in front of hundreds of people at L'Arche Daybreak's 40th Anniversary Gala.

This kind inclusion – in our neighbourhoods, in our workplaces, and in our society – is the way people with intellectual disabilities can make their valuable contribution. I believe that L'Arche is at the cutting edge of understanding humanity, spirituality and sociology. We need communities like L'Arche Daybreak to keep reminding us of what it means to be fully human.

I will do everything I possibly can to make this campaign a success. I know that you will too. Our goal is 1.5 million dollars. Over the next couple of months you will be hearing a lot about our campaign – and you will be part of the energy and excitement that brings this campaign into the public eye. Thanks to each one of you for being here tonight! ♣

### L'ARCHE DAYBREAK

The first L'Arche community in North America, L'Arche Daybreak began in 1969 and now includes eight homes in Richmond Hill, as well as *The Woodery* wood-working shop, *The Craft Studio*, *Daybreak Books & Media* bookstore, and the *Dayspring* spiritual centre. The L'Arche Daybreak community is a dynamic example of how people of different intellectual capacity, social origin, religion, and culture can live together.

#### WORSHIP SERVICES

**Monday, Wednesday and Friday** mornings at 8:30 at Dayspring.

**Friday** evenings at 7:30 at Dayspring.

#### L'ARCHE

L'Arche is an international movement of over 130 communities where people with intellectual disabilities and those who care for them live, work and learn together. Canadian Jean Vanier founded L'Arche in France in 1964.

#### L'ARCHE MISSION STATEMENT

- *To make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.*
- *To engage in our diverse cultures, working together towards a more human society.*
- *To foster an environment in communities that is inspired by the core values of our founding story, and that responds to the changing needs of our members.*



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## Angela James Featured at Campaign Launch

Angela James, the first woman to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, was the keynote speaker at the Community Launch for L'Arche Daybreak's *Signs of Hope* Campaign on the evening of September 16th at Dayspring. Representatives from every level of government also participated in the evening, including MP Bryon Wilfert, MPP Dr. Helena Jaczek, and Mayor David Barrow. Anglican Bishop George Elliot gave his greetings and sang a song of blessing – the first unexpected solo of several odes sung that night. Senator Pamela Wallin sent a moving tribute to L'Arche Daybreak that was read aloud to the standing-room-only crowd that gathered for the evening. The Spirit Movers opened and closed the evening with dances that captivated everyone.

Angela James, who is now Director of Athletics at nearby Seneca College, spoke about her experience as an athlete and as the member of a gold-medal team, "One of the most important lessons that I have learned is this: How I belong to my team, and how I have confidence in the way that

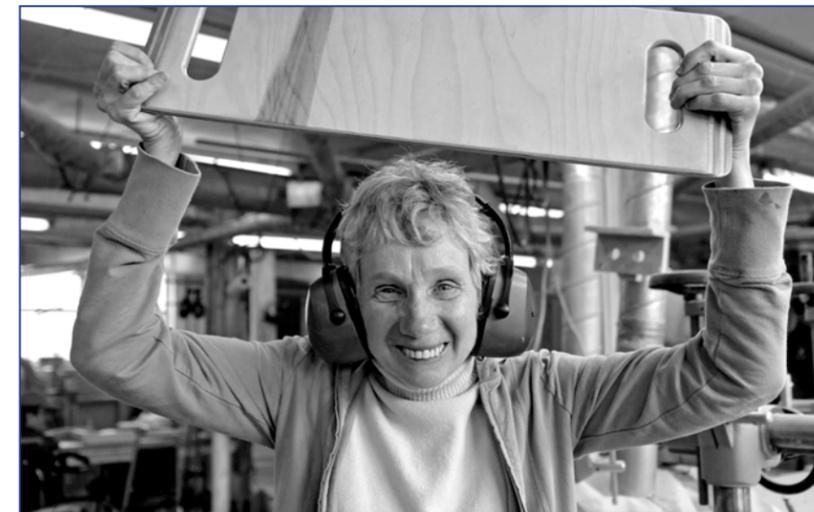


*Board President Jim Christie greets Angela James, the first woman to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, at the "Signs of Hope" Campaign Launch on September 16th.*

we will work together as a team, is far more important that any technical skill I can ever develop as a single hockey player. And when we work together as a team, each one of us on the team can play hockey really well.

"What I have observed here at L'Arche Daybreak is that this is a

place where people know what it means to belong to a team. They know what it means to belong – period. L'Arche Daybreak is also a place where people grow and develop and learn new skills. It is a place where every person becomes a valued citizen in the community." ♣



### DON'T SHUT OUT POTENTIAL

Angela James continued, "The public awareness poster for the *Signs of Hope* campaign has that challenging imperative, 'Don't Shut Out Potential.' I want to say to you that as a young, black woman playing hockey

in the 1980s, I do have some sense of what it means to have your potential shut out. I am sure you do too. There are times in all of our lives when each of us has felt that our own potential was not recognized or honoured. We can also appreciate how wonderful it is to be told that you are good at something, to be encouraged to meet

new people and to learn new skills.

"Since coming to know L'Arche Daybreak, I have become aware of how so many hundreds of people with intellectual disabilities in York Region have had their potential shut out. These people are invisible to most of us. They do not feel that they belong on any team. Sadly, they have never even had a chance to participate.

The *Signs of Hope* campaign is about creating possibilities for many more people to have a place to belong, to grow, and to know that they are valued citizens in our community. It has been a great privilege for me to come to know L'Arche Daybreak. I sincerely hope that this campaign will enable many more people to be part of the extraordinary teamwork that happens here. Let's help L'Arche Daybreak create a community where everyone belongs!" The *Signs of Hope* Campaign has a goal of \$1.5M and has just passed the \$1M mark. ♣