

The ABLE Network Comes to Richmond Hill

L'Arche Daybreak welcomed new neighbours this summer when the ABLE Network opened its second site in the Dayspring space originally occupied by the former Daybreak Publications. Co-founded in 2008 by Joan Hurst and Barb Allan in Aurora, the ABLE Network facilitates work experiences, recreation, and friendship opportunities for fifteen young adults.

Co-founders Joan Hurst and Barb Allan are both mothers who years ago had begun to dream of a life after high school for their soon-to-be adult daughters. They envisioned lives for their daughters that would be as full, interesting and relational as their other children had faced as young adults. Barb and Joan worked closely with another family over a three-year period, formed a board, and launched the ABLE Network.

Over the years, the ABLE Network has developed a highly effective program that incorporates work experience, recreation, literacy and life skills, volunteering, social skills, and transit training. The ABLE Network is extraordinarily vibrant in Aurora, bringing success to participants and



Members of the ABLE Network in Richmond Hill from the top left: Mina, Theresa, Kirstene, Lindsay, Debbie and Jolen meet daily in their new space at the Dayspring.

enthusiasm from employers.

In recent years, The ABLE Network's Board of Directors developed a Strategic Plan for growth, based on an organic expansion into nearby communities. They set their sights on Richmond Hill as the ideal place for a second location. The Dayspring, which is an easy walk from the local VIVA bus stop at 19th Avenue and Yonge Street, is ideally suited for ABLE participants.

When the ABLE Network came to Richmond Hill, Debbie Steckley was delighted to become one of the first people to participate at the new site. Debbie lives at the New House at L'Arche Daybreak, and she was very excited by the opportunity to work in local businesses. She thoroughly

enjoys her experience with the group, and has just started a work placement at Winners, a local department store in Richmond Hill.

Every ABLE participant has a personalized daily and weekly plan of activities based on his or her interests and learning goals. The ABLE Network's approach is based on social research and strong principles of inclusion. The ABLE Network believes deeply that the inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities in natural settings provides them with an equal opportunity to make a contribution to the well-being of the community where they live. L'Arche Daybreak is thrilled to have the ABLE Network as neighbours, colleagues, and friends. ♣

My First Three Months with The ABLE Network

by Debbie Steckley

August 4th was my first day at the ABLE Network in Richmond Hill. I am happy to be taking part in something new. I have a busy schedule at ABLE. I like trying new things and meeting new people. I go to the gym three times a week with Lindsay and my friends. We do a lot of travel training to learn the bus routes. We also do volunteer work at the Coptic Church on Wednesday mornings. We help with vacuuming, polishing

tables, cleaning windows and dusting the pews. On Thursdays we go grocery shopping and then we make our own lunch. Sometimes we do some baking. I like grocery shopping and cooking. I feel proud because I went to a job interview with Kirstene at Winners and got the job! I started working in the warehouse sorting clothes and shoes on September 8th. I look forward to many more experiences at ABLE. ♣



Debbie Steckley enjoys her work placement at Winners in Richmond Hill.

Making Room

by Carl MacMillan

“Making Room” is L’Arche Daybreak’s theme for the 2015-2016 year. Each year we think about the theme carefully on our Spiritual Life Committee and Community Council. We do our best to discern a theme that embodies the spirit and the challenges of our community today. We will “break open” the theme at our Community Weekend in late November and explore it in small groups, drawing on music, drama, dance and art as means of expression. This is a playful and fun way to grab hold of a theme that will thread its way through the seasons of our year together.

When I discussed the theme “Making Room” with the Core Member Council, a group of three core members with whom I meet monthly for counsel, the reflection was very lively. One person talked about the idea of building a new room onto the Woodery so there could be more space for having lunch together and a quiet area for when someone needed a break or time away from the group. So, there was the idea of actually creating a *room* that people could occupy — in solitude, in a pair, or as a larger group.

The Council also talked about making room to welcome new people to participate in the community. They said how much they liked welcoming new people and getting to know them. One person emphasized the importance of being kind,



This fall’s Orientation Group, assembled by the Big House, includes from the left, back row: Benjamin Wong, Lorcan Keller, Areeb Ali, Hanul Kim, Toni Urbanski, Levi Ng. Front row: Carlene Danes, Christopher Miller, Fabricio Puliafco Artur and Janan Au. Missing: Fiona Mak.

and making room at the table for a new person or a visitor.

The Core Member Council didn’t take long before they began talking about what it means to “make room in your heart.” When I asked what that meant, one Council member told me, “Sometimes you have to make room in your heart when somebody does something you don’t like. It’s kind of like forgiveness.” Long-time core member Gord Henry has been delivering the fundamental message to “open our hearts” for many years. It can be one of the most challenging places to make room — yet it is also the place where in community and in relationships of all kinds there are never-ending opportunities.

Over a year ago, the ABLE Network (the lead story of this newsletter) approached L’Arche Daybreak to ask if we would consider renting a space in our Dayspring building. We have long counted people at the ABLE Network as friends, and we have admired their work and their mission from when they first started. Our Board of Directors listened attentively to their proposal, and they were duly impressed. Building relationships with cutting edge organizations like the ABLE Network is an exciting way for L’Arche Daybreak to make room for new ideas and encourage inclusion for some of the many people in York Region who continue to seek a place where their gifts can be recognized and shared. ♣

Community Notes



Ellen Weinstein welcomes the new Terry Fox statue at Ransom Park in Richmond Hill.

A Terry Fox Tribute took place on Saturday, September 12th, at Ransom Park near the corner of Yonge Street and Centre Street in Richmond Hill where the new Terry Fox statue was unveiled. The dedication of the statue marked the 35th anniversary of the Marathon of Hope. Ellen Weinstein, a long-time admirer of Terry Fox, was on hand for the event. 35 years ago, Ellen wrote a letter to Terry Fox that is now in the Archives of the Canadian Museum of History.

Wedding Bells rang on August 1st for Sharon Mair and Alex Karney. Sharon is the leader of the Day Program. She and Alex were married in the Dayspring and had their wedding reception under a tent on the lawn in front of the Meeting Hall on a glorious summer day.

John Smeltzer suffered a bilateral fracture of both hips on October 5th. He has been at Mackenzie Health since then and he will remain on bedrest for several weeks to come. When John returns to the New House he will have a new, more accessible room on the first floor.

Toni Urbanski retired from her role as Volunteer Coordinator this fall. Toni continues to serve as L’Arche Daybreak’s Community Relations Coordinator, but she has shifted down to half-time.

Anne Todd is the new Volunteer Coordinator for L’Arche Daybreak. A seasoned member of the community, Anne has served in a broad variety of roles over the years — an ideal preparation for welcoming and orientating new volunteers.

A Meditation by Henri Nouwen

Making All Things New

Once we have committed ourselves to spending time in solitude, we develop an attentiveness to God's voice in us. In the beginning, during the first days, weeks, or even months, we may have the feeling that we are simply wasting our time. Time in solitude may at first seem little more than a time in which we are bombarded by thousands of thoughts and feelings that emerge from hidden areas of our mind. One of the early Christian writers describes the first stage of solitary prayer as the experience of a man who, after years of living with open doors, suddenly decides to shut them. The visitors who used to come and enter his home start pounding on his doors, wondering why they are not allowed to enter. Only when they realize that they are not welcome do they gradually stop coming. This is the experience of anyone who decides to enter into solitude after a life without much spiritual discipline. At first, the many distractions keep presenting themselves. Later, as they receive less and less attention, they slowly withdraw.

Solitude is not a spontaneous response to an occupied and preoccupied life. There are too many reasons not to be alone. Therefore we must begin by carefully planning some solitude. Five or ten minutes a day may be



The Silver Anniversary Tea on October 20th at the Dayspring welcomed four new members with 25 years of experience. From the left: Lori Vaanholt, Kathy Kelly, Joe Child and Clara Fraschetti.

all we can tolerate. Perhaps we are ready for an hour every day, an afternoon every week, a day every month, or a week every year. The amount of time will vary for each person according to temperament, age, job, lifestyle, and maturity. But we do not take the spiritual life seriously if we do not set aside some time to be with God and listen to him.

The discipline of solitude, as I have described it here, is one of the most powerful disciplines in developing a prayerful life. It is a simple, though not easy, way to free us from the slavery of our occupations and preoccupations and to begin to hear the voice that makes all things new. ♣

Year End Tax Receipts

The end of the calendar year is a time when many of our supporters send a donation to us. Daybreak always welcomes this generous support. The Canada Revenue Agency rules have become very strict regarding the issuance of year-end tax receipts. Donations sent by mail must be dated and postmarked by December 31st for a tax receipt to be issued for that year. Donations that are postmarked after December 31st will be dated for the new year. L'Arche Daybreak is grateful for gifts from donors that come all year long. ♣

Covenant Companions is a special retreat offered by L'Arche Canada that brings together pairs, each comprised of a core member and an assistant, who have shared their journey in L'Arche for many years. This summer, Linda Martin and Wendy Lywood attended the Covenant Companions Retreat in Quebec.

Alan Dobb, the Facilities Coordinator at L'Arche Daybreak, received a Community Partners Award from the Richmond Hill Fire Department on October 15th at the Richmond Hill Centre for Performing Arts. Alan was celebrated at a luncheon at the Club the next day.

The Silver Anniversary Tea on October 20th welcomed four new members to this special group of people at Daybreak with 25 or more years in L'Arche. They are: Joe Child, Clara Fraschetti, Kathy Kelly, and Lori Vaanholt.



Alan Dobb received a Community Partners Award from the RH Fire Department.

Community Wish List

Pillows.....	\$50
Blanket.....	\$75
Tablecloths.....	\$100
Spruce tree.....	\$100
Art supplies.....	\$500
Pots and pans.....	\$500
Barbeque.....	\$650
Compact upright piano.....	\$2,000
Tree shredder.....	\$2,000
Sun shade for the Day Program.....	\$3,000
Sectional sofa.....	\$4,000
Stairlift.....	\$7,000
Grounds equipment.....	\$10,000
Mid-size car.....	\$25,000

For more information, please call Warren Pot at L'Arche Daybreak's Development Office (905) 884-3454 ext. 285.

The Barn Dance is for Solidarity

by Lisa Jarvis



The L'Arche communities in Honduras have workshops where community members make crafts and other products. These community members are making mopheads. They also make excellent hammocks.

"Bound together by solidarity and mutual commitment, they (L'Arche communities) form a world-wide family." (L'Arche Charter.) Daybreak's annual Barn Dance for Solidarity took place on September 12th this year, as it has every September for the past 11 years. The Barn Dance is a time where we come together as our individual L'Arche community here in Richmond Hill — but when we keep in mind our brothers and sisters in L'Arche around the globe. We have fun together, catch up with old friends, meet some of the newer assistants, and of course, we dance, including the now famous "Plate Dance" led by our long-time friend Steve Ellis. With its early September timing and its setting in Daybreak's historic barn, the Barn Dance has become a signature event in the L'Arche Daybreak calendar. Proceeds from the Barn Dance support L'Arche Daybreak's commitment to Solidarity.

Link with Honduras

The tradition of the Barn Dance has been built around our relationship with the L'Arche communities in Honduras. Over many years we have had the privilege of getting to know the two Honduran L'Arche communities in Tegucigalpa and Choluteca. Members of Daybreak and other communities in Ontario have visited Honduras and

brought back stories and pictures, as well as crafts and products made in their workshops. These visits have fostered a relationship where the Ontario communities and the Honduras communities have learned something about how the other is living out the mission of L'Arche, how our daily lives are similar, and how they are different.

Other Friendships

In addition to this relationship of Solidarity with Honduras, friendships that Daybreak has with Zenia Kushpeta in Ukraine and Kathy Baroodi in Palestine have kept us in touch with the realities of life in L'Arche in very different cultures. Daybreak welcomes assistants from many different countries. Some assistants have served in a L'Arche community somewhere else in the world — just one of the many ways in which the concept of Solidarity comes to life and has meaning in our L'Arche community life. Through these connections to L'Arche communities in different places and cultures, we can better understand our own gifts and challenges as a community. They also help us to understand L'Arche as a sign of hope in the world. The community of L'Arche Daybreak is part of something bigger and deeper that we want to recognize and celebrate at events like the Barn Dance. ♣

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*, 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 and learn together.

WORSHIP SERVICES

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

Friday evenings at 7:30 at Dayspring.

DAYSPRING CLOSED

Friday, November 21, Community Wknd

Friday, December 25, Christmas Day

Friday, February 5, Assistants Wknd.

L'ARCHE

L'Arche is an international movement of nearly 150 communities around the world where people with intellectual disabilities and those who care for them share life together. Canadian Jean Vanier founded L'Arche in France in 1964.

"Can we reasonably have a dream of a world where people, whatever their race, religion, culture, abilities or disabilities, whatever their education or economic situation, whatever their age or gender, can find a place and reveal their gifts?"

-Jean Vanier



Daybreak Newsbreak

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