

I'm Different, Just Like You

By Carl MacMillan

Our community's theme for this year is "I'm Different, Just Like You." It's an expression that tends to stop people in their train of thought – and smile – which is part of what we liked so much about it as we developed the theme. Many core members understand this theme instantly. Of course, people with intellectual disabilities know well what it means to be labeled as different. Many have also concluded long ago that everyone is different – and, as human beings, that we all have a lot in common too. Each of us is called to embrace this duality – a challenge not just for people in L'Arche, but for all of us.

Only in recent years have scientists begun to uncover the mystery of DNA. Even the tiniest wisp of hair or the smallest flake of skin contains within it a complex and absolutely unique DNA code that identifies each person as one-of-a-kind, a rare treasure. We are then, quite literally, *all* different. Difference, however, is not always regarded in a positive light. Sadly, quite the opposite is true. Many of us tend to be more comfortable with people similar to ourselves – in terms of age, race, religion, education, and social strata – to name just a few traits where sameness seems to trump difference most of the time. Our social institutions – schools, religious groups, and neighborhoods – historically have reinforced this phenomenon of grouping together people



Back Row: Sunny Park (Centre Street), Jun Jeon (Red House), Tim Wiebusch (Red House), Lauren Nagler (New House), Krystyna Myha (New House), Gemma Woticky (Church Street). Middle Row: Arvid Höfgen (Red House), Franziska Loessner (Corner House), Green House Assistant (Green House), Fabian Ahlberg (Green House). Front Row: Craig Jones (Church Street), Warren Pot, Carlos Santos (Centre Street), Toni Urbanski.

of "their own kind." This has been no less the case for people with intellectual disabilities. It was only in the mid-1960's when tens of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities in Ontario were warehoused in deplorable conditions, separated from the mainstream of society by vast distances. In 1969, Daybreak became one of the first group homes in the province. Eventually, this trend became known as the "community living" movement and it continues to the present day.

Dr. Amy Laura Hall, in the public talk she gave in Toronto, spoke with great eloquence about how we continue to be daunted by the very notion of difference today. One of the most engaging elements of Dr. Hall's talk was her commentary on contemporary parenthood. Long before the conception of their children,

many parents have become worn down by the sense that they must provide and inculcate the very best in their offspring in terms of everything from genes to feeding formulas to after school advanced tutoring. At a retreat Jean Vanier gave many years ago, he recounted a visit to a school where he saw a poster featuring two cars on a racetrack. The caption read, "Are You In The Passing Lane?" Vanier was troubled by the observation that, most assuredly, not everyone would be – nor should they be made to feel they must.

Canada has become a dynamic culture, in large part, due to its diversity. People with a broad range of intellectual abilities add an important dimension to the richness of that diversity. People of difference do make a big difference – for everyone. ♣

A Meditation by Henri Nouwen

Questions

We spend a lot of time and energy raising questions. Is it worth it? It is always good to ask ourselves why we raise a question. Do we want to get useful information? Do we want to show that someone else is wrong? Do we want to conquer knowledge? Do we want to grow in wisdom? Do we want to find a way to sanctity?

When we ponder these questions before asking our questions, we may discover that we need less time and energy for our questions. Perhaps we already have the information. Perhaps we don't need to show that someone is wrong. For many questions we may learn that we already have the answers, if we just listen carefully to our own hearts.

What are spiritual questions? They are questions from above. Most questions people ask of Jesus are questions from below, such as the question about which of a woman's seven husbands she will be married to in the resurrection. Jesus does not answer this question because it comes from a legalistic mind-set. It is a question from below.

Often Jesus responds by changing this question. In the case of the woman with seven husbands he says, "At the resurrection men and women do not marry ... have you never read what God himself said to you: 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob?'" He is God not of the dead but of the living" (Matthew 22:23-30).

We have to keep looking for the spiritual questions if we want spiritual answers. ♣

Growing In A French Country Garden

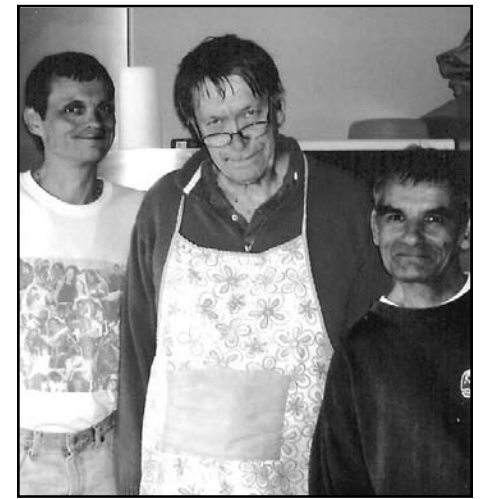
By Lorenzo Sforza-Cesarini

In January, 2006, I decided to spend four months in Europe in a L'Arche community. I was born in Italy and wanted to reconnect with my roots, recharge my batteries, and rediscover the mysteries of L'Arche. After much thought and discernment, I decided to go to the very first community of L'Arche Trosly in France.

I arrived at La Vigne in Trosly to live with eight core members – Carine, Dominique, Jean-Louis, Jean-Abdalah, Claudine, Norbert, Mariem, Michel – and four assistants.

I asked to be part of the Jardin Maraicher, the community's garden program, because I have a deep love for what comes from the land. My first day, as I rode in the yellow minivan for the five-minute commute to the gardens, I asked myself what I was doing there. As I became more familiar with the work I was to do, I became more open to the people I was to be with. Being able to connect with them allowed me to feel more at ease and gave me a sense of place in the group.

The garden has three fields and seven "tunnels" or greenhouses. Fifteen core members and a team of four assistants work with Hugue Volant. Hugue has a great love for L'Arche and much experience in farming. The work was backbreaking, but watching things grow and picking the fruits of hard labour gave me great pleasure. We grew beets, carrots, squash,



Lorenzo Sforza-Cesarini and friends Norbert and Jean-Abdalah prepare to wash the dishes in Trosly, France.

zucchini, lettuce, tomatoes, herbs, potatoes, beans, and eggplant. All the produce is sold to local people and to the L'Arche community homes.

As my French became more fluent, I discovered more deeply the beauty of the people I worked with. In turn, I was also discovered! Being in a different culture and speaking a different language forced me to find new ways to connect. I discovered parts of myself that I had put aside or that I did not know I had. These little but significant discoveries gave me great joy and helped me gain a new perspective on my journey in L'Arche and in life. ♣

Community Notes



Linda Slinger celebrated her 50th birthday with Liska Stefko and lots of other friends at the Dayspring!



Michael Ricci celebrated his 50th birthday with Tom Krysiak and friends at Centre Street.

Michael Ricci and Linda Slinger both celebrated their 50th birthdays with family and friends at parties at the Meeting Hall.

Elizabeth Buckley and Marie Paradis both celebrated their 75th birthdays with parties in the community.

Wendy Lywood and Tomek Sewilski were welcomed and blessed as Confirmed Members of L'Arche Daybreak in May. Tomek is House Leader at the Green House. Wendy is the Sacramental Minister for the community.

Beth Porter celebrated her re-confirmation as a member of the L'Arche Daybreak community at Dayspring in August. Beth works in communications for L'Arche Canada.

Mary Bastedo recently completed her Masters of Divinity at Regis College, U of T. She is now working as an intern in Ignatian Spiritual Direction at Loyola House in Guelph.

Barbara Swanekamp, a long-term member of the original L'Arche community in Trosly, died on July 14th. Barbara worked closely with Jean Vanier, organizing much of his travels, writings, and retreats. Barbara had an almost iconic stature that is intimately woven into the founding story of L'Arche.

Trish Glennon and Steve Knezevic welcomed their first child, a daughter, Frances Therese, on October 14th.

Jane McCaffrey celebrated 25 years as a community member at this year's Silver Anniversary Tea on October 17th.



Barbara Swanekamp worked closely with Jean Vanier for forty years.

Community Wish List

New bath towels.....	\$50
New sheets	\$60
Toaster oven	\$100
Frames for artwork.....	\$150
Shelves	\$200
Weeping Beech tree	\$250
Dehumidifier	\$300
Vacuum cleaner.....	\$500
Tree shredder.....	\$2,000
Outdoor storage building	\$5,000
Grounds equipment.....	\$10,000
New windows.....	\$14,000
Automobile	\$25,000

For more information please call Brenda Aburto at L'Arche Daybreak's Development Office (905) 884-3454, ext. 230.



The gang from Centre Street enjoyed a fall outing. Back row: Jeff Doucette, Kara Tigchelaar, Camila Benvenuto, Tom Krysiak. Front row: John Bloss and Michael Ricci

Faith & Pedagogy with Jean Vanier

The "Faith Meets Pedagogy" conference has been an annual fall event for teachers and students from Catholic School Boards across Ontario. On Thursday and Friday, October 25th & 26th, Jean Vanier led this year's gathering at the Double Tree Hotel near the Toronto Airport. The Spirit Movers opened the conference by performing "Veni Sancti Spiritus." Over 3,000 students and teachers participated. A month before the conference, L'Arche Daybreak welcomed 140 student leaders for a full day of leadership training and an introduction to Jean Vanier and the spirituality of L'Arche. ♣

L'Arche Ukraine

In March, L'Arche Ukraine became an official project of L'Arche. With 15 years of experience with L'Arche retreats and Faith & Light, the new community in Ukraine is blessed with a committed founding Board of Directors and a vibrant experience of community life in four workshops and a day program. They have already begun the search for a Community Leader as well as for the resources needed to create and open their first home. This will be the first L'Arche community in a post-Soviet independent country. ♣

Visit Us Online

Click on www.larchedaybreak.com to check out L'Arche Daybreak's updated website! This makes it easier than ever to follow the events of our community life online. There are lots of photos and a schedule for weekly worship services at the Dayspring. You can find out more about the Craft Studio and the Woodery as well as the products that community members make. There is also information about our homes and what it means to become an assistant at L'Arche Daybreak, as well as links to other L'Arche websites. ♣



Tracy Westerby leads a Conga line at the Barn Dance for Solidarity to raise funds for our sister communities in Honduras. Following Tracy are Anna MacLean, Linda Martin, Amanda Winnington-Ingram, Sharon Mair, Nancy Murtha and Lorenzo Sforza-Cesarini.

L'ARCHE DAYBREAK

The first and largest 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. L'Arche Daybreak's community of over 100 people 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 federation of over 130 communities where people with intellectual disabilities and those who care for them live, work and share life 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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Amy Laura Hall Visits Daybreak

By Carl MacMillan

Our community was privileged to be able to welcome Dr. Amy Laura Hall and her daughters, Rachel and Emily, from October 6th to 13th. Dr. Hall is Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics at Duke Divinity School in North Carolina. We came to know Dr. Hall and her work through Christi Dye who was a member of L'Arche Daybreak for nine years and who is now studying at Duke Divinity School.

On Thursday evening, October 11th, there was a L'Arche Forum featuring Dr. Hall at the Isabel Bader Theatre in Toronto. The Forum was sponsored by L'Arche Daybreak, L'Arche Toronto, L'Arche Ontario and the L'Arche Canada Foundation. The event opened with a stunning piece of movement and drama conceived and directed by Cheryl Zinyk of L'Arche Toronto. Entitled "I am," the piece was performed by Janet Munro and Suzanne Smith and was a commanding beginning to the evening. Helen Henderson, who writes a column on disability issues for the *Toronto Star*, emceed the evening and introduced the Spirit Movers who performed their dance, "How Can I Keep From Singing?" Clara Frascetti, Tiago Ciccone, Chris Jarvis, John Smeltzer and Liska Stefko led the music and singing.

The drama, music and dance comprised a beautiful prelude to Dr.

Hall's talk, "The Surprising Gift of Fragility in Community." Dr. Hall's erudite and inspiring lecture drew together an eclectic group of over three hundred people from human services, health care, religious groups and the academic community – as well as some of our longtime friends. Dr. Hall has become one of the preeminent theologians in the world regarding the ethical issues surrounding the eugenics movement. She is the author of two books, *Kierkegaard and the Treachery of Love* (Cambridge, 2002) and *Conceiving Parenthood: American Protestantism and the Spirit of Reproduction* (Eerdmans, 2007), as well as dozens of academic and mainstream articles on ethics, in particular bioethics.

Amy Laura, Rachel and Emily had a week-long L'Arche intensive visit in all of our homes and programs – as well as going to the Bow & Arrow Pub to see and hear John Smeltzer play the spoons. Amy Laura also facilitated an All Assistants meeting where she had an opportunity to discuss her work and its relevance to L'Arche. Long a fan of L'Arche, Amy Laura nurtured relationships here that we know will continue. It was hard to say good-bye, but it was a week to remember that deepened the already strong ties between L'Arche Daybreak and Duke University. ♣



Amy Laura Hall visited Daybreak with her daughters, Rachel and Emily.



Rachel and Emily enjoyed dancing while John Smeltzer played the spoons.

Francis Maurice Turns 85



Francis Maurice and Linda Martin enjoyed his birthday celebration at the Meeting Hall.

As Francis will be the first to tell you, he is the oldest elder in the L'Arche Daybreak community – a distinction he is quite proud of! This was utterly apparent as Francis welcomed dozens of friends and relatives to a grand birthday bash at the Meeting Hall on Saturday afternoon, October 13th. Arvid Högen, an assistant at the Red House where Francis lives, created a wall sized photo montage depicting Francis at various ages throughout his 85 years, including some now historic images from his early life in Ingersoll. At the center of this brilliant photographic essay is a big picture of Francis today with his longtime friend, Linda Martin. Francis was delighted to be celebrated — and relaxed enough to receive his guests sitting down! ♣