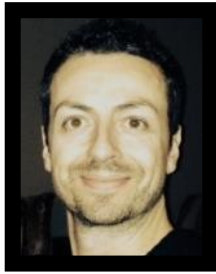




## Peter's Story—My L'Arche Journey

**My L'Arche journey** began when I was a student at the University of Manitoba while involved in the Social Work program. As financially strapped young students many of us searched out summer jobs to help pay the bills. Two of my friends found positions as summer assistants in L'Arche Winnipeg while I went in a different direction. However, in order to see them I had to go to the houses where they worked and I experienced things I didn't expect. **Although I was a stranger I was welcomed as a friend. Although I offered nothing I was given food and drink. Although I was ignorant of L'Arche I was shown politeness and compassion.** Beyond a doubt the seed was sown.



With that tenuous link bonds slowly started to grow stronger and stronger. **I was remembered, my family and I were asked about and I was prayed for.** I was so taken by this new friendship that I decided to give one year to L'Arche as a live-in assistant. I soon understood what it meant to be "thrown into the deep end". I was placed in a home where the House Leader was a retired police officer. I was the new recruit and put to work right away. My very first morning I was given a bucket filled with cleaning supplies and asked to clean all the bathrooms. A couple of weeks later the House Leader told me that this was one of his tests - if a new assistant moans or puts up a fuss about cleaning a toilet then he knew there would be a problem. Suffice it say the only squeaks he heard from me was the sponge running over that sparkling white porcelain bowl. **First lesson learned – humility.**

Growing up in an Irish, Catholic family my sister and I developed a strong and cherished faith in God and the church. It was my first two years in L'Arche that really helped to reinforce that faith and gave me a deeper understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of Jesus Christ. It is now clear to me that even from day one I was in the right place. That first L'Arche house was next door to a Catholic Church and every hour I heard those church bells ringing. **I saw and heard God on a daily basis.**

It didn't take long before I was assisting one of the core members with his shower. This consisted of standing outside of the shower and reminding him where to wash - "wash the face", "wash the hair", etc. When it came to the more private areas I was instructed to tell him to "wash the body" as that is what he understood. I was also getting involved in many of his other daily and weekly routines such as accompanying him and his house mates every Sunday to Catholic mass. I began to notice that when I would go up with him for communion I would always hear him chuckle softly to himself and I wondered what he found so amusing.

It wasn't until weeks later that I finally understood. What does a priest say to each parishioner when he gives communion? Receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ is a time of reflection, prayer and solemnity. Throughout our lives as Catholics we will go for communion hundreds if not thousands of times. We all know what we are receiving and we all know what the priest says but how many of us really listen each and every time. This quaint moment I shared with this man **opened my heart once again to faithfully hear and understand that I was taking into me "The body of Christ".**

*Continued on page 2*

### Our Mission is to:

*Make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.*

*Foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, while being faithful to the core values of our founding story.*

*Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.*

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**Editor: Sig Stark**

## Memorials and Tributes

L'Arche Greater Vancouver gratefully acknowledges gifts received in memory or in honour of loved ones and friends.

**In Memory:** Arleigh Slanina



## From Denise's Desk:

I am pleased to announce that L'Arche Greater Vancouver has been accredited for a period of three years for its residential and community inclusion programs. The latest accreditation is the fourth consecutive Three-Year Accreditation that the international accrediting body, CARF, has awarded to L'Arche.



Accreditation is a requirement for most organizations in this sector. By pursuing and achieving accreditation, L'Arche has demonstrated that it meets international standards for quality and is committed to pursuing excellence.

This accreditation decision represents the highest level of accreditation that can be awarded to an organization and shows our community's substantial conformance to the CARF standards. An organization receiving a Three-Year Accreditation has put itself through a rigorous peer review process. It has demonstrated to a team of surveyors during an on-site visit its commitment to offering programs and services that are measurable, accountable, and of the highest quality.

In the survey summary, the reviewers noted some of our strengths that included:

- A powerful sense of mutuality and belonging.
- Especially notable was the compassion and commitment of assistants and their willingness to be proactive and available.

- The assistants, leadership team and volunteers were identified as people who are skilled, caring, and willing to improve their capacity in meeting the needs of the core people of the organization.
- Core members have personalized rooms in beautiful homes... The environments convey a welcoming, personal atmosphere throughout.
- L'Arche assistants are passionate about their relationships with core members, emphasizing the unique value of each individual and their life-sharing journey of actualization. This creates an environment of trust, security, and mutual caring.
- L'Arche is commended for the unique Neighbours Helping Neighbours initiative... Their services are essential for the safety and quality of life for many elderly people in the larger community... This service has been extremely popular, addressing the needs of a vulnerable population in the community and the needs of core members with respect to job skills, self-esteem and social skills.

CARF is an independent, nonprofit accrediting body that promotes the quality of life of people with developmental disabilities through a consultative accreditation process.

I am so grateful for everyone who participated in the accreditation process. We have much to celebrate!

*Denise Hookett*

## *Peter's Story Continued from page 1*

**I soon began to feel God's presence more fully as I witnessed God's love from the core people and my faith was strengthened through their eyes.** Whenever there was time for prayer, which was often, many core people would give thanks for this person or that person. Thanking God for the assistant that made them a cup of tea that morning, thanking God for the bus driver that took them to work, thanking God for the sunshine and the beauty of the day. Their expression and profound sense of gratitude ran so deep. They gave thanks for things that we, that I, can take so easily for granted. **Little things mean so much to our core people. I used to think they were trivial. Believe me, nothing is trivial.**

That one year commitment I made has now turned into nineteen and counting. I have lived and worked in three L'Arche Communities – L'Arche Winnipeg, L'Arche London, England and currently L'Arche Greater Vancouver.

God knows where this journey will take me and I am comforted by the knowledge that **He has given me some wonderful, faithful and deeply spiritual guides to accompany me** on this path.



*Peter (centre) with friends Patrick (left) and Garth (right)*



## Gateway and Friends Support L'Arche

Jeff Lee originally learned about L'Arche through our friends at the Burnaby Board of Trade when he asked them about a local non-profit that could use some upgrades to their facility. Jeff wanted to do more than cut a cheque – he wanted to offer the expertise of his staff and trades contacts.

After various visits and meetings about our needs our building received various upgrades that included replacing lights with high-efficiency fixtures, adding occupancy sensor controls, replacing the old hot water tank which was nearing the end of its life, all with the goal of increasing energy efficiency. The final touch was a landscaping makeover at the front of our building. In total the project was valued at over \$25,000.

We are grateful to Jeff from Gateway Casinos and Entertainment for introducing us to new friends who were enthusiastic with their help: BC Hydro, Cedar Rim Nursery, Commercial Lighting, Emco, ESC Automation, FortisBC, GE Lighting, Luma Tech, Mac's II Agencies, Sancor Landscaping, Steele Electric and Trevor Mang, who photographed the celebration held at L'Arche on June 19, 2015.



*Representatives from the various businesses that assisted in the upgrade project gathered at L'Arche to celebrate its completion, giving people at L'Arche an opportunity to express our gratitude.*

*Photo credit: Trevor Mang*

## The Legacy of Geneva King

*A few years ago we learned that Geneva King had passed away and generously remembered L'Arche in her will. Through her we got to know her great niece, Ursula Schmelcher who has continued Geneva's legacy of giving. Here are Ursula's thoughts on her aunt and why she has taken up Geneva's support of L'Arche.*

My Great Aunt, Geneva King, was an important influence on my choices as an adult. She valued family, hard work, education and philanthropy. She was a strong pioneering woman, not shy to voice her views on any topic, but her philanthropy was a private matter; she quietly helped organizations she believed in.

From her I first heard of L'Arche. When my children were of an age to give her Christmas gifts we chose L'Arche as a recipient of their small amount of chore money to donate and wrote a card to let her know that was their gift to her. The first year we did this the pleasure was so evident on her face when she read the card that I knew we had given her the best gift possible and we continued this for several years. Passing on the spirit of giving to another generation had far more meaning to her than any tangible item.

Aunt Geneva lived to 103 and passed away in December of 2007. She had been very generous to us during her lifetime and also in her will.

The best way I could give thanks to her was to continue her legacy of giving. But I needed to know more about L'Arche. I arranged a visit and was given a tour of the community and invited to join in for lunch.

I have made several visits since my first and have been so impressed by the community of love, fellowship, and acceptance that I knew this was a place I also wanted to help.

I find the stock donation program to be a perfect vehicle for doing so. The paperwork is easy and it is tax efficient. Our personal circumstances have enabled us to help others and I know Aunt Geneva would be pleased that we learned from her example.

*If you'd like more information about making a donation of stocks or giving to L'Arche through your will, contact:*

*Sig Stark at [sstark@larchevancouver.org](mailto:sstark@larchevancouver.org)  
or call her at 604-435-9544 ex 35*



*Ursula (left) with Geneva at a family gathering in the 1970's*



## Canada Life 2015 Charity Softball Tournament

We were honoured to be chosen as one of the two charities benefitting from Canada Life's Charity Softball Tournament on July 24 at Softball City in Surrey. Even though it was the rainiest day of the summer, we had a lot of fun with the activities we hosted for players and their families. Money raised at this event will go towards a new community vehicle that will be shared by the houses.



Singing in the rain at the Canada Life Softball Tournament

## Upcoming Events

**L'Arche Annual Christmas Benefit Concert**  
**Sunday December 6 at 3:00 pm**

### FEATURING VanDeca

One of Vancouver's most exciting new choral ensembles

**Sherbrooke Mennonite Church**  
 7155 Sherbrooke Street Vancouver

Free Admission with an opportunity given to support the work of L'Arche locally and globally.

**2016 Art Calendars available**  
**October 1, 2015**  
 Only \$10.00 each

Prints and Art Cards, as well as a few remaining original pieces from our 2015 Art Together Show are still available for sale. Please contact our office at 604 435 9544 to place your order today

### Thank you to our Canada Life Silent Auction Contributors!

Choices Markets  
 Old Spaghetti Factory  
 Purdy's Chocolates  
 Trail Appliances Ltd.  
 Zazou Salon and Spa  
 The Keg Steakhouse & Bar

Science World  
 WhiteCaps Foundation  
 Metropolis at Metrotown  
 VanDusen Botanical Garden  
 Burnaby Village Museum  
 Safeway

Cactus Club Cafe  
 Pacific National Exhibition  
 Rocky Mountain Soap Company  
 Vancouver Symphony Orchestra  
 Vancouver Canadians  
 Mr. Mikes Steakhouse

### Thank you for supporting the work of L'Arche Greater Vancouver

Give online: [www.larchevancouver.org](http://www.larchevancouver.org) and click "Donate Now"

**CONTACT:**

DR.  MR.  MRS.  MS.  MISS  MR. AND MRS.

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