



SPRING 2012 NEWSLETTER

L'Arche Lessons

By Jane Suh

My journey in L'Arche has brought me through a variety of positions in the community: I began in June 2008 as a support person working in Emily House and Nazirah House for over a year; afterwards I moved into Nazirah House to be a live-in assistant for a year and then after that I was welcomed by Creation House as a live-out assistant, where I'm still learning new things each day.

My journey in L'Arche parallels the process of God showing me how much He valued me. For years I struggled with self-image, self-worth and went through periods of depression. One of the primary lessons I've learned from my time in L'Arche is that through the challenge of recognizing and acknowledging the value of other people, I actually learned to find value in myself.



Jane (3rd from right) & Creation House at her wedding

As an assistant my role in the house is to work with my housemates to have the highest quality of life we can achieve. That means finding out what we're each good at. What we're bad at. And how we can make opportunities for each other to do things we're good at and things we enjoy. It's so easy to assume you know everything about someone—and think that you know all their habits and what they'll like and what they'll decide. The thing I had to keep reminding myself is that my housemates have lived years and years before our paths met here. I have no idea how they lived the many years before we met and there is no way I'll ever know everything about them. But I can keep learning about their strengths and joys and tears and fears.

Whether it's at Nazirah or Creation House the one thing that never fails to unify us is emotion. They or I may not understand what is being said or what is happening sometimes, but they understand if I'm angry or if I'm happy and I know they have feelings too. In moments when we are really not communicating or connecting I just have to give up doing it intellectually and all with my head. I have to look at how they're feeling and how I'm responding to their feelings. I have to forget about how I'm feeling or what I'm thinking – and focus on trying to feel things the way they are feeling them. I think learning to value others begins with little things like this. Finding ways that the **other** person can better understand things. Doing things in a way that the other person can succeed.

In L'Arche we talk a lot about recognizing the gifts of others and encouraging them to use them—seeing what people CAN do versus what they CAN'T do. Wayne is a great greeter – he never fails to make me smile when I come to Creation House and he opens the door for me with his own giant smile and laugh. One of my jobs is to encourage Wayne to be the amazing greeter he is, and to grow other gifts that he has. Arthur is Creation House's man of prayer – he says grace at each meal and leads the Lord's Prayer to close the table. And Patrick is a fashionista who always reminds me that I have a cute nose or cute hand or a cute whatever he happens to see first. He is also an expert shmoozer and a great socialite. Patrick also affirms my gifts and in this way shows me that I'm valued – he tells me that I'm a good cook and a good driver and a good housemate.

Through sharing life in L'Arche God has taught me that, although it is important to find value in yourself, it is even more important to find value in others if we are to live together in community.

I can't say enough about how much my friends at L'Arche have affected me: They have given me love and continued to help me to learn valuable lessons. I know God led me here on purpose – to show me my own capacity to love others and how much I can grow when I myself am loved.



Jane (Centre) with her friends from Nazirah House

"Happiness...comes when we choose to be who we are, to be ourselves, at this present moment of our lives; we choose life as it is, with all its joys, pain, and conflicts. Happiness is living and seeking the truth, together with others in community, and assuming responsibility for our lives and the lives of others. It is accepting the fact that we are not infinite, but can enter into a personal relationship with the infinite, discovering the universal truth and justice that transcends all cultures: each person is unique and sacred. We are not just seeking to be what others want us to be or to conform to the expectations of family, friends, or local ways of being. We have chosen to be who we are, with all that is beautiful and broken in us.

We do not slip away from life and live in world of illusions, dreams or nightmares...We are not letting the light of life within us be crushed, and we are not crushing it in others. On the contrary, all we want is for the light of others to shine."

- Jean Vanier, Essential Writings

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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From Denise's Desk:



As I write this people are gathering for the first day of the L'Arche International General Assembly in Atlanta Georgia. The theme song for the meeting is called "Carry the Dream", written by singer/songwriter John Coleman from L'Arche in Australia. It is a significant time for L'Arche around the world.

Atlanta is the birth place of Martin Luther King Junior who had a dream that inspired millions of Americans to work for social change and include a segment of society that had been placed on the margins because of race.

Whenever there is an International meeting L'Arche organizers link people with the history of that place and a significant person who has made a difference in this world by their actions and their lives. In Assisi we got to 'know' St. Francis. In Kolkata we went on pilgrimage 'with' Gandhi.

In February I had the privilege of attending the second session of the Gospel of John with Jean Vanier. Jean also has a dream, not unlike these great men, that is about a world where every person, regardless of ability, gender, race, or religion is of unique value and has a gift to offer. In his talks Jean referred to the communities of L'Arche as part of a 'trickle of peacemaking' in our world. There are many such communities. For this trickle of peace to grow, it is important that we are aware of them, nourished by them, and build links with one another.

The afternoon sessions were given by Jean Claude Mallet, who is very close to and inspired by a number of communities including L'Arche, Taize and the Sisters of Charity. As a judge

with a background in human rights and diplomacy he has worked as an advisor to the French Government in the Ministry of Defense as well as with the United Nations. He has been close to some of most horrific conflicts in recent decades. Jean Claude is a man of deep prayer and contemplation and spoke of the extraordinary gift which has been given with the Gospel, the gift of forgiveness and mercy. They are the key and cement to peace. He spoke of peacemaking and its stakes as being the primary and urgent call for Christians today.

Jean Claude encouraged us to continue to be faithful to our mission to welcome and celebrate diversity and the unique and sacred value of each person. I believe L'Arche has an important role to play in our world as a sign of hope, a place of welcome, a little light that shines in the neighbourhood, a place in the stream of peacemaking, a place where we carry the dream and participate in the 'beloved community'. I leave you with three quotes that inspire me:

"Ultimately, we have just one moral duty: to reclaim large areas of peace in ourselves, more and more peace, and to reflect it towards others. And the more peace there is in us, the more peace there will be in our troubled world."

-Etty Hillesum who died in Auschwitz

"At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love"
Martin Luther King Jr.

"The peace of our hearts makes life beautiful for those around us"
Brother Roger of Taize

Denise Hookett

Our THIRD Art of Being Together

It took months of planning and then happened so quickly. On March 10, 2012 L'Arche Greater Vancouver hosted our signature event for the third consecutive year at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre in Burnaby. Once again, this multi-layered art-centered event brought together the general public, working and emerging artists, respected art judges, sponsors and musicians.

Thanks to new funding from Festivals Burnaby this year, we were able to expand our space and engage new people. Throughout the afternoon guests also took up paint brushes and, with the direction of local artist Jane Appleby, created a painting called "Community Garden" that was presented to The Fairhaven United Church Home in South Burnaby at the end of the event.

Three separate galleries were featured: Finalist, Honourable Mention and Art Together. The Finalist and Honourable Mention galleries included the work of local working and emerging artists. All the artwork submitted used the idea of community as its inspiration.



The Community Art Piece, presented to Fair Haven United Church Homes



The Art of Being Together Continued...

Guests voted on their favourite painting from the Finalists Gallery for the People's Choice Award. At the end of the event the Judges announced their choice: "Dine Out" by Frank Bennett. Itsuka Hiraga's "The Air of Sharing" was chosen as the People's Choice. The third gallery, The Art Together Project featured paintings created by teams of people with and without developmental disabilities.

Our final presentations were introduced with a performance by the Taiko Tatsu Drummers and MC'd by Lien Yeung of the CBC.

A huge thank you goes to everyone who made the day a success:

- Artists who submitted their work,
- Our art jury - Alan Wylie, Janice Robertson, and Rick McDiarmid who gave us their expertise over two days.
- The planning team and the more than 50 volunteers who executed the day with a smile
- Musicians Lily Xu, Sheldon Leung, Mili Hong and Ivan Dimitrov
- Our generous sponsors
- The many guests who had fun in participating in the various activities

Calling all artists! For information on how and when to submit your original art for the next event, look for our Art of Being Together page on facebook. For those interested in attending next year's event, mark your calendars for March 9, 2013.



Alex and Sue show off their painting with Doug Woolard from CLBC



Guests enjoying the artwork

Thank you to our 2012 Sponsors:



Thank you to the following people and businesses for contributing to our silent auction:

Ash Abhyankar	Jason Wong
Barbara Der	JH Fine Art
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Jane Appleby	Winnie Jang-Wong
Jason Husmillo	



Happy 38th Birthday L'Arche Greater Vancouver!

Birthdays at L'Arche are always a big event. The biggest birthday celebration of the year is the anniversary of our community. This year's party was held on April 28 and included an evening of live music, dancing, special guests, and birthday cake!

A group of friends from L'Arche Comox Valley came and presented a card and candle in recognition of our special day. In preparation of the celebration, people in the L'Arche community were busy with "38 Ways to Care" a project that involved people reaching out with intentional acts of kindness in the wider community. The pictures at the party demonstrated how much fun it was to give.

Rock Hard entertained us with the old classics and got everyone up dancing. Thank you to everyone who planned and attended the anniversary celebration.



Ken, Denise, Gwenda, Christina and Garth cut the L'Arche Birthday Cake

Upcoming Events

Canada Life Softball Tournament!

L'Arche Greater Vancouver has been named one of the charities of choice in Canada Life's Charity Softball Tournament on Friday, July 27. Come out and cheer for the L'Arche team, The Ark Angels, at this all day event at Softball City in Surrey.



Contact Caitlin for details
604.435.9544
ext 33.

Tribute Giving

L'Arche Greater Vancouver gratefully acknowledges the gifts made in memory of the following individuals:

John Hector Bale, The Beebe Family, Dennis Vaughan, Mervyn Coffin, Gordon Thomson, Alphonsine Marie (Therault) Costello

And in honor of the following individuals:

*Leonard Hiebert, Diane Bruce, Helen and Kevan Hill-Tout, David Hill-Tout, Erin Hill-Tout
 Joel and Sarah Macht-Woods, Joel, Helen & Julia Berarducci*

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