



"We're Not Getting Any Younger"

Vicki Washek, Community Leader

"We're not getting any younger, are we, Vicki?" Sam and I always compare notes in this area, since our birthdays are only a few weeks apart. I must admit, it usually makes me nod my head in agreement and think about how true this is for all of us.

It is a fact of life that we all keep getting older – with all the challenges and transitions this implies. This past March, Leroy went through a transition when he moved from his apartment into Jubilee home. Leroy had been living in his own place for over 16 years with our assistance. A few years ago, his needs increased a bit and we were able to step up our support so he could continue to live in his apartment. Then in January, Leroy received medical recommendations that again said he needed additional assistance.

Leroy took some time to pray and process what this meant for him and where he could live to get the help he needs now and will likely need in the future. He decided to move to Jubilee home where there is full accessibility for a wheelchair dependent person and the ongoing presence of his L'Arche friends for companionship and support. The adjustment continues for Leroy and the other members of Jubilee, but they are all happy to be together and working through any bumps with care and respect.

However, Leroy is not the only one getting older! All the men and women who live in our homes continue to face issues of aging and decreasing mobility. The truth is five of our eight homes are two story structures unable of accommodating

individuals who experience difficulty using stairs. This is a challenge we must address as more of our members need one-story living. One of our priorities in the next few years is to change these 2-story homes to accessible ones to meet our members' increasing needs to the best of our ability.

L'Arche Erie is a faith-based community where life is shared between people with and without intellectual disabilities.



Leroy and Vicki

Spaeder Company Offers to Renovate Journey Home's Bathroom

Aging is a hard thing, especially when a switch from walking freely to using a wheelchair must be made. This is the situation that Journey home residents find themselves in currently. One of our eldest and first core members, Mary S, now needs a wheelchair most of the time. Her Journey home bathroom is a tight fit and cannot accommodate a wheelchair. The shower stall also cannot be accessed with a chair.

Upgrading a bathroom is an expensive proposition. That's why we were

ecstatic in February when Tim Spaeder called and asked if there were any projects his company could help L'Arche Erie with.

Thank You!



The Wm. T. Spaeder Co. has been in business since 1919. They participated in the **Extreme Makeover: Home Edition** last summer and felt a deep sense of reward from giving back to

the community. His company decided they would like to help again.

Madlyn Spaeder, Tim's aunt, was a core member in our community. She died 14 years ago. Our biographic video was also produced due to a generous gift from The Spaeder Co.

So far, we've met with Tim Spaeder, and they are drawing up the plans and getting the appropriate approvals and permits from Fairview Township. Tim expects the work to take one weekend and will be accomplished with the help of many volunteers.

We'll keep our website and Facebook pages updated so everyone can keep up on the progress and visit the home once the work is complete.



Easter 2010

Jess Haney, Community Life Coordinator

Celebration is at the heart of community. It is one of the faces of love. "Celebration is a communal experience of joy, a song of thanksgiving. We celebrate the fact of being together; we give thanks for the gifts we have been given. Celebration nourishes us, restores hope, and brings us the strength to live with the suffering and difficulties of everyday life." -- Jean Vanier from *Community and Growth*.



We have begun spring with celebration. In March we celebrated anniversaries of 5, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of commitment to L'Arche. Our community members were honored by having friends tell stories, share memories and appreciate their time spent in L'Arche.

Shortly after the Anniversary Celebration the end of Lent was near. In L'Arche the end of Lent and start of the Easter season holds many opportunities for staying faithful to our sacred traditions. We celebrated Holy Thursday by washing each other's feet modeling after Jesus, and then we shared a meal together. On Good Friday we observed the death of Jesus by praying together and sharing a meal in silence. We came together again on Easter Sunday to rejoice in the resurrection, praying, singing and celebrating with each other.

Erie Insurance Grants L'Arche Erie \$25,000

Erie Insurance recently generously granted L'Arche Erie \$25,000 for the purchase of a new van. With our core members getting older and many of our vans deteriorating because of use, it was the perfect time to receive these monies. The grant bought Heart's Garden a new van.



Bless One Another

Jess Ochalek, Community Life Coordinator

"We all need each other's gifts; we must encourage their growth and our fidelity to them. Everyone will find their place in community according to their gift. They will become not only useful but unique and necessary to others." *Community and Growth*

We were recently blessed with the energy and insight of Bob Kloos as he led our community in an afternoon of fun reflection and prayer as we came together to "Bless One Another" (the theme of

our reflection day). It was wonderful to be reminded that we each are a blessing.

Our time began with song and skit, both of which brought much excitement and laughter. Then we made a community banner with everyone's painted handprint on it to serve as a visual reminder that we do bless one another in our "ordinary daily routine" of life! We came back together in prayer led by our pastoral team, reminding us of our own unique gifts, and how these gifts help others to help the community become whole. We ended, as every great L'Arche celebration does, in breaking bread together with dinner prepared by the Hearth team.





THANK YOU to our 2009 Dinner & Raffle "Gold Level" Sponsors!

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Colleen Stumpf, Board President

L'Arche Erie would not be the community that it is without the love of our core members, the dedication of our staff, and the support of our volunteers. While all of these people deserve to be recognized for their constant efforts, I especially want to thank the members of the Board of Directors. Not only have the Board members given of their time and talent, they have also all contributed to the financial well-being of L'Arche Erie in 2009. This participation by the Board will be beneficial to L'Arche this year as our Development Director continues to explore various grants for the organization. Many grant applications ask if all Board members provide financial support, and this 100% participation by the Board is an advantage for L'Arche in the application process. Thank you again to the members of the Board of Directors of L'Arche Erie for sharing all of your gifts!



Colleen Stumpf

- L'ARCHE WISH LIST:**
- Small Appliances
 - Volunteers to Wash Our Vans
 - Dining Room Set
 - Silverware Sets

38th Anniversary Celebration

Paul DeSante, Board Member



Paul DeSante

Celebrating life and people and God's blessings are at the very heart of the L'Arche spirit worldwide. In fact, if L'Arche Erie had a middle name, it surely would be **CELEBRATION!**

Because the L'Arche experience so often involves a personal transformation, these anniversaries are frequently regarded as a "second birthday." A beautiful way of highlighting this is the tradition of having each honoree choose someone to speak briefly to the gathering about their gifts and/or a poignant memory.

This was apparent once again on March 21 when the Erie L'Arche community held the annual celebration of members' milestone anniversaries in the spacious gathering space at the Hearth (West 12th St.). Core members, assistants, and other staff were recognized for 5, 10, 15, and 25 years of belonging to and being nurtured by the community. In the quarter century group were Mary Therese Fahrs, Connie Reinwald, and Dana Lee Tanner. Community leader Vicki Washek presented each honoree with a small memento of the occasion.

The program also included prayer and song, followed by dinner. All present received a copy of a prayer composed by the late Sr. Barbara Karsznia in her last illness, reflecting her faithful acceptance of God's will.



*Beyond Intellectual Disabilities:
Learning Through the Heart of Another*



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Learning Through the Heart
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L'Arche Erie Raffle and Dinner Preview

This is the fourth year for our annual L'Arche Erie Dinner and Raffle. We continue to get better at throwing this party, and we wanted to give everyone a sneak preview of what to expect at this year's event.

This year, the Dinner will be held on **October 22**. We will again be at the Ambassador Conference Center on upper Peach St. The Ambassador has continued to amaze us with their service and menu options. This year's event falls on a Friday, which is a good way to start the weekend and also give the busy ones among us a free weekend evening.

We are incorporating an award into the Dinner. More details of this will be announced.

We have also decided to draw the first 100 Reverse Raffle numbers silently while dinner is being served and enjoyed. This should help to streamline the evening.

We have identified an amazing speaker and are waiting for confirmation. You can, of course, expect the same great baskets and people at this year's event!

We look forward to seeing you all and getting a chance to celebrate L'Arche Erie together!



**Our 4th Annual
Dinner & Raffle Artwork**
by Mary Smolinsky

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**Friday,
October 22**

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