



## Message from the Community Leader

Much has happened in our community since our last newsletter. We have welcomed five new Assistants after having successfully navigated through Immigration Canada's new system. We welcomed two new core members, one at Ruah House and one at Chinook House. We have completed the comprehensive review of community structures named in our Mandate, this will help us to put into place the leadership and administrative structures needed to support our community life. We continue to grow in living our Mandate and deepening our understanding of what we are being called to live as a community.

In October I was able to attend a L'Arche International training session in Trosly, France. This was a very rich time with a group of 37 other new Community Leaders from around the world. We spent time with our International Leaders and received training to help us and our communities continue to grow and to live our Mission. This experience helped me to connect to the International

reality of L'Arche. We are a very diverse organization; we are made up of people of differing abilities, people of different faiths, and people of different cultures. But we are united in our experience of being transformed by entering into relationship with a person with a disability.

As the halfway point of our Mandate approaches and I continue to grow into my new role as Community Leader, I have a deep sense of gratitude. We are given many gifts in our community life. A sense of new life continues to bubble up as many members of our community share their gifts. I am grateful for the many partners we have to make our community life possible, our Board Members, friends, volunteers and donors. I invite you to continue to be a part of our community through your generous donations.

Many blessings to each one as we enter the Christmas season

Tim Wiebe, *Community Leader*

## Message from the Board Chair of L'Arche Lethbridge

I am amazed how quickly time passes. We are already over a year into our new Mandate and our L'Arche Lethbridge community continues to flourish under the leadership of our new community leader, Tim Wiebe.

As board chair, I am sometimes asked "what is the role of the board in our L'Arche community"? This very question was discussed at a recent meeting in Montreal of board chairs and community leaders from across Canada. I'd like to share a few insights from that discussion. We were presented with a new Federation policy entitled The Role of the Board in L'Arche. In the introduction to the policy it states that "A L'Arche community is a medium for revealing the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities so that society can benefit from these gifts and become more human." That in a nutshell is our primary Mission. The board's role is fundamental so that L'Arche's action of love and social justice can thrive and that our Identity and Mission can be supported, resourced and lived out to the fullest extent possible.

The new policy, clearly states that in today's L'Arche the board is a key partner in the Mission and an integral part of the structure of governance of the community. That is why it is so important for board members to fully understand and

support the Identity and Mission of L'Arche. As a board, we carry authority and responsibility in a number of areas including supporting the community in living the Mission, implementing the Mandate, ensuring the legal and financial integrity of the community, ensuring the credibility of the community with local authorities and contributing to the future development and growth of the community. I know it sounds boring; but that's what we do.

Our board appreciates very much the support of everyone involved in our community. At this time of the year we especially want to thank those who have supported us financially in the past. Your generosity enables our community to carry on a wide variety of activities and to deal with the unforeseen emergencies such as getting a new van when the old one "gives up the ghost". Your ongoing financial support is essential for the extras not funded through our government grants.

On behalf of the board I want to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and all the best in 2016.

Bob Campbell, *Board Chair*



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## Board Member Profile: Jen Culler

My name is Jennifer (Jen) Culler and I have been on the L'Arche Lethbridge Board for almost 9 years. I have also had the privilege to be closely connected as a friend of the Community. This means that I have been able to join with Community Members on activities, retreats, and all kinds of fun events. In addition, I also have the privilege of going regularly to one of the L'Arche homes to share a meal, fellowship, and friendship. I also visit the other homes as time permits and enjoy this very much.

Who am I and why is L'Arche Lethbridge so important to me? I was born with a physical disability, called cerebral palsy. All my life, I, guided by my parents, have strived in all areas for independence. My connection with L'Arche is abundantly clear because I feel I can identify with the Core Members and the family atmosphere that the L'Arche philosophy has created. I feel this sense of family includes me too. The Community of L'Arche and I are on a similar path in a lot of ways. This is why I am deeply called to serve L'Arche Lethbridge and its identity and mission to the best of my ability. I will continue to do this as long as I am able. The gifts I have received from L'Arche are too numerous to count. But what I will say is something that I have repeated over my many years of involvement with L'Arche -- "I get as much as I give"! My faith is very personal but is grounded deep within me. L'Arche and this wonderful Community has allowed and encouraged me to express my faith as freely and as openly as I desire.

As a Board member I have served to the best of my ability, keeping the above philosophy in mind. I feel



that I have a personal interest in L'Arche Lethbridge, as well as a perspective like no one else. This is why my contributions to the Board and Public Relations Committee are very valuable to me.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to L'Arche Lethbridge for allowing me to grow and feel more and more valued everyday in the ways that I serve the Community.

In the service of our Lord, blessings, Jen Culler.

## What Does the Spiritual Committee Mean to Me?

It was a lifegiving moment as I got welcomed as a spiritual member of L'Arche Lethbridge. It was the winter of 2011 as long as I remember.

I was very happy about it not only because I could be still part of the community after my leaving but also the word 'spirituality' has been meaningful to me in my life. So there began my spiritual journey.

After I left the community I've been getting emails regularly. Most of them are news letters including changes and latest news in the community. I also sometimes get prayer requests which I read them and pray for them after. They are different prayer request items. Some are lighter and easy to reflect and pray for. Some are more urgent and serious.

The most exciting prayer request as I remember was when the community opened the third home of L'Arche Lethbridge. The big exciting transition! I was so glad and excited to be part of the process, praying for the community. However, there is time that I get little overwhelmed with

the news such as the loss of Doug Anderson. Then I need my own time first to take some grieving moment. That is sometimes hard and I need a lot of time to reflect especially when I am very far away physically. Still I enjoy very much praying for and thinking of the friends in the community. While I pray for them I experience different feelings and emotions. Love, peace, gratitude, thanksgiving, sorrow... mostly warm feelings...

In a busy city life, it is not always easy to take time to reflect and pray for others. I mostly use night time or short break on the bus. In that sense, this is a very precious chance to me that I can reflect and feel close to the people in the community. It gives me a great opportunity to be reconnected to the community in a very deep fundamental way. I've grown up through this relationship a lot and am still on my way to growth. I feel very lucky and happy to be part of the community's growth journey and would like to grow more through it!

*Hyeonhee Kim*





## Amani House: Sweet Memories of Camping

Summer is gone. And hot, colored, exciting days too. Now we are enjoying only sweet memories. One of the unforgettable memories for Amani House was camping in Enchant. For a long time, we had been carrying in our hearts the desire for camping life. To sleep in a tent, to sit beside a camp fire, to taste warm tea in late evening while listening to stories and simply laughing-it was all that we were thinking about. It took time for us to choose a date, prepare a plan, get equipment and break out from the daily routine. Still not all members had an opportunity to participate in this remarkable event for our house.

On the morning of the 27th of August, we woke up with a huge excitement. Finally, we were ready to begin our journey. Harold - Isaac's father - helped us a lot. He is a camper with a lot of experience and was our counselor and guide all the days of preparation and during the camping.

Enchant Municipal Park is a lovely place with a small lake. There is a sandy beach and a nearby town museum. As soon as we reached the camping ground and found the perfect place, everybody started joyfully unpacking. We set up our tent and trailer, organized the eating-seating space and started to get ready to explore the surrounding area.

We spent almost three days in an atmosphere of joy, adventure and togetherness. We had an experience of canoeing, swimming in the lake and cooking on the fire. Furthermore, we attended the Cornfest in Taber, where we

ate and celebrated corn and other famous Taber vegetables. Also we enjoyed local music bands, entertainment, shows, food and rides. Another significant time was our mornings and evenings. Sleeping was unbelievably restful and refreshing. We started our mornings by preparing breakfast, drinking fresh cups of tea or coffee and having small conversations, that friends are used to having. It felt peaceful and delightful just because we were together with our beloved friends. And then came the evenings. It was during such a beautiful time of sitting around the one table, passing the food and enjoying whispers of nature that we discovered the presence of the tender and amazing love of Our God.

We came back home refreshed, energetic and happy. Our hearts were full with gratitude for this opportunity of camping together, for the beauty of nature that we embraced and especially for each other. It was the first camping for Amani house. May we have a second, third, fourth and many more! May it all will be for God's glory!



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## News from Chinook House

Chinook House is very excited to announce the arrival of two new assistants. They are:- Jithu from India – who is a former assistant in L'Arche Nandibazzer, Kavala; and Olya from the Ukraine.

The other piece of exciting news is that we welcomed a new Core member, Todd, who moved in August 1st. We are so glad to have him. He is fitting in very well and contributing his own special gifts, of which one is his capacity to tell jokes and keep everyone laughing!

### **In Memoriam: Doug Anderson**

I will always remember 2015 as the year we lost our dear friend Doug. The sense of loss still seems quite fresh but as time passes, I find myself thinking about the dear memories that he left more and more.

Doug was a little man with a big heart. He was the friend and brother you could always count on to make you smile and to lift your spirits. If you were feeling sad, he tried his best to bring you joy. He was a joker that liked to tease people and share a laugh with them.

Doug was a cheerleader. He was always encouraging his friends and his favourite sports teams.

Doug was an educator. He taught people compassion, patience and loyalty by his own example.

Doug was a ground breaker in his community. He was one of the founding members of L'Arche Lethbridge and one of the first participants at the Quest day program.

Doug was brave. He willingly shared his heart with others and would be the first person to extend his hand to a stranger in friendship. Doug had many people come and go in his life and although these departures would hurt him deeply, it didn't stop him from reaching out to others.

Doug was a man of determination. If he wanted something badly enough he did his best to get it.

As you think about Doug, remember the legacy he leaves behind. Cherish his memory and smile. He would want that for you.

*Bill Alles*

## News from Ruah House

Members of Ruah House have gone through significant changes this year. Besides changes of assistants, in November 2014, we celebrated the birth of Natalia, a baby of our former assistant Ilona. In January of this year, we experienced the death of our beloved Core member Jean Anderson. Her loss was very hard for all of us but through this time of mourning, we experienced significant moments of bonding as a home. We got support from many friends in and out of the Community and this made us feel closer to each other as well.

We had a chance to prepare our home and ourselves to happily welcome in September, our new core member, Nicol. She has been a gift to our home with her joy, energy and enthusiasm as well as increased volume with her singing and boisterous jumping.

As a household we are working on beautification of our home. We have painted some of our rooms as well as bought new curtains for the kitchen and living room. It all looks lovely! We are happy that our apple tree, for the first time, produced many apples.

### **Opportunities to Get Involved**

- Become a member of our Board of Directors
- Volunteer in one of our homes
- Attend our weekly prayer nights every Tuesday evening, 7:30pm at First Baptist Church (1614, 5th Avenue South).
- Come to our monthly potluck supper the first Tuesday on each month 6:00 pm at First Baptist Church (1614, 5th Avenue South). Bring some food to share.



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*L'Arche Lethbridge needs to raise \$50,000 externally annually. The value of salaries and materials devoted to this fundraising is about \$5,000. All funds are used to provide homes and support for adults with developmental disabilities. Thank you to The Warwick Printing Co. Ltd., and Haul-All, for excellent service and prices.*

