

Reciprocity and Respect

Submitted by Tim Wiebe, *Community Leader*

As the weather turns cool and summer comes to an end I've been reflecting on the last months since our spring newsletter. Summer is a time of rest and relaxation, the kids are out of school, many people take a time of vacation to travel. I've had a good summer but I'm also aware of a feeling of unease – the war in Ukraine continues, inflation and the cost of living continues to rise, the litany of natural disasters around the world show the ongoing effect of climate change, the Province of Alberta has posted a record profit while we continue to run our community on funding approved in 2014.

This got me thinking about what place our L'Arche community has in front of such challenges. In a world where the richest man in the world can decide to spend \$44 billion to buy a social media platform while we need to find ways to support people on funding from eight years ago – something seems very much out of balance and the challenges are much bigger than our small community can address. Our world continues to measure someone's value by what they own or how famous they are, the message I often receive from Governments and society is that people with disabilities have no value.

One of L'Arche's founding values is honouring each person's value because of who they are rather than how much they have. Because God created each of us good, because we are precious, that each person has a gift to give because of who they are, rather than what they can do. This summer I read *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimerer. It begins with a beautiful Anishnabe creation story of Skywoman creating Turtle Island with the help of the animals. It is a story of reciprocity and respect. I felt a harmony between this creation story and what I experience in our L'Arche Community at its best, where we are a body of different people each giving and receiving the gift of ourselves and others.

My hope is that our community, in its small way will continue to do our part to build a more human society – one based on reciprocity and respect for each person – where we can welcome people and give them a glimpse of what a group, world, community might look like if we treated each person as beautiful. I am grateful for each person that makes our community life possible.

Board Update

Submitted by Sharon Yanicki, *Board Chair*

The board continues to be busy. In June, we met with Christine Monier, Western Regional Leader. It was helpful to meet with Christine and learn more about the national Mission in Action Plan (MAP) process. With the relaxing of COVID-19 restrictions, we were able to hold in-person meetings in June and August. We are grateful to be able to meet with each other in person again, however, we plan to include hybrid meetings options as needed.

It was great to welcome a new board member, Barbara Raiche at our June meeting. This brings the board to six members. **We are however still seeking a few more board members.** If you are interested in joining the board, talk to Tim (TWiebe@larchelethbridge.org) or contact Sharon (yanism@uleth.ca).

While the board usually takes a break over the summer months, this year we held a special meeting in August to review the new MAP process and the bylaw changes proposed by L'Arche Canada. I am looking forward to attending my first National Meeting in Montreal this year, at the end of September to discuss these important changes.

As we approach our Annual General Meeting on **October 19, 2022 at 7:00 pm**, I'd like to invite all L'Arche Lethbridge members to attend. This is your chance to hear more about the work of the board and the continuing success of L'Arche Lethbridge in meeting our mission and living our values. It is also a time for us to come together in gratitude for the unique gifts shared in L'Arche. Join us.



My Time with L'Arche Lethbridge and Ruah House



Hi my name is Liki Yun Widjaja, just call me Liki, simple and easy :). I came to L'Arche Lethbridge in September 2016. I left on July 1st 2022. Almost 6 years in the community of Lethbridge. Fresh in my mind when I left the house, when I turned back and see all the members of the house were standing on the sidewalk outside the house, couldn't believe if that will be my last scene to see the house and the members of Ruah House.

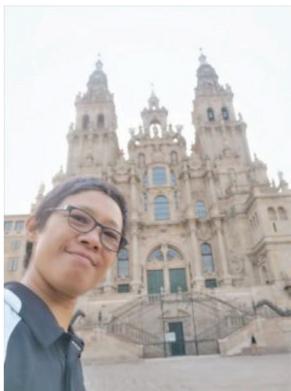


Since I arrived I live at Ruah house. Lovely house and very dynamic. I love it :). Beside I live and sharing life together, I had learned lots. This is one of the things I love about community life. I am sure I will miss about sharing life together.



What the things I like while I was with the community?

It's living together with people from different backgrounds and personalities. Everyday could be the same, but there are also differences. Everyday can be a surprise. As normally (I guess so) I don't really like surprise, even though I like to give surprise to people :).



What I have learned and shared is how to enjoy every moment, to be in the present time. No matter what the seasons is :). Because it is precious, lots of fun, lots of creativities, etc. You won't regret it. I have learned from everybody (core members, assistants, respites and also people in the community). I learned about others and about myself through them.

Community life, I think this is one of many reasons why I come to L'Arche. Besides I also enjoyed living and working with people with and without disability. With my experiences living together in Taizé community, Camphill community,

L'Arche Calgary; makes easier for me to adjust myself in living together in the house.

Nevertheless it is not mean no challenges during my living in L'Arche Lethbridge. The conflict is one of the common

challenges in the community, also in L'Arche. I had few conflicts while living in L'Arche home. Communication both ways are always help for people to get to know more about each others and most of the time to understand the behaviour. When we understand, it will be easier for us to accept it or accept others. Never be afraid to have a conflict or argue, because we could grow in many ways. Don't be afraid to speak up, make a conversations, let people know your feelings or your thought, how you are doing, etc. The friendship, the family, the freedom to be yourself and to accept other as they are.

I appreciate how L'Arche thought me with patience and gave the time or chances to people and me to growth. Some people growth fast , some slow. How they give chance to everybody to see the gifts in their self and in others. The servant leadership also is a great implementation to give the opportunity to people to believe themselves that they have leadership in themselves.

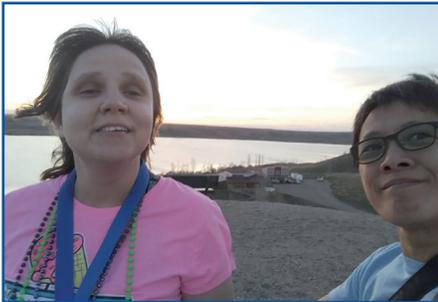
Be open and give time and you will not regret as long you know what you love and enjoy it and as long you know about yourself and how to balance your life. Be like a water :)

I thank you for everybody in the community, for being in my journey during my time with L'Arche Lethbridge. For accepted me as I am :).

Note: I used pictures from my journey on the Camino de Santiago. As could connected with what I write. Pict 1. St.Jean Pied de Port Station the starting point; Pict 2. In front of the sign at Roncesvalles; Pict 3. in front of the sunflowers field - Joyful and Happiness; Pict 4. Alto do San Roque; Pict 5. The last part of trail before arrived in Portomarin, the challenges part with injured foot. Pict 6. Monte de Gozo (The Mount of Joy); Pict 7 and 8. In front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.



My Time with L'Arche Lethbridge (continued)



Our Home Away From Home

Respectfully submitted Jen Culler & Mary Shillington

Margaret and Todd got the opportunity to reside at Pemmican Lodge East, an independent senior's residence of the Green Acres Foundation, while Chinook House was being renovated (May to late September 2022). Jen Culler and Mary Shillington from L'Arche's Public Relations (PR) Committee interviewed Margaret and Todd about their experience. Assistants from their home supported them during their interviews.

We learned for both Margaret & Todd, this stay was a very positive experience. Margaret shared it was like being in a "HOTEL" because she was waited on "hand & foot" and "she felt like a baby" and her coffee cup was always full, which she really enjoyed. She also told us that there were lots of beautiful flowers including orchids, and greenery for her to look at. Margaret pointed out that there was a great variety of music for her to enjoy. There was time for her watch her Salvation Army Church services as well as L'Arche Prayer night on her tablet. As a senior citizen she still has an adventurous spirit. Upon returning to Chinook House, she is glad to be reunited with her Chinook family and renewing her special relationship with Brad. She also appreciates the renovations

of her now accessible bathroom.

Todd found his stay both positive and less positive in Pemmican Lodge because the gathering room with Margaret was connected to Todd's bedroom. Todd being very quiet and private missed having that. However, he did find delight in the variety of delicious foods especially roast beef, Yorkshire pudding & gravy. Having the choice of two desserts after each meal also was really exciting for Todd, for example he loved the fudgesicles. Todd found it easy to get to know people in Pemmican Lodge especially 4 men whose names he learned, and he wants to continue to connect with them. Another thing Todd liked was the variety of activities -- like barbeques, the antique car show, movie nights/special films and the Salvation Army Choir. What does he now appreciate about being back at Chinook House; -- having root beer available to him; his own room and more privacy.

Margaret and Todd both enjoyed their stay at Pemmican Lodge but now are glad to be back in the surroundings they know and love with their Chinook family and brand-new features as a result of the renovations. Thanks for the hospitality of everyone at Pemmican Lodge East!



Catch Up with Brad

Submitted by Allison Baptista, Volunteer



Not everybody in Lethbridge knows Brad, but it sure feels that way. I was one of the exceptions, fortunately, that situation was rectified when I was asked to interview Brad for our fall newsletter.

It was said in a manner suggesting that I should just know who Brad is. I had no idea who Brad was. No idea where he lived, what he was into, or even so much as what he looked like. Brad was this mystery figure. To highlight my ignorance when I was telling my mom my little mission, she responded, saying "Brad? I know Brad!" Long story short, if you're like me, and don't know Brad, or you do know Brad but would like to learn more about him, read on.

Brad has been a member of L'Arche Lethbridge since 1999, when he lived at Ruah House, and is now living at Chinook House. Brad loves movies, with "Transformers" at the top of his favourites and some great musicals on the list as well. He's also an avid Lego builder and a top tier board gamer who wins all the time. I told him to face my sister (who's the luckiest player that I believe to exist) and he confidently told me he'd "take her down". I have no doubt about that. Among many other talents, Brad enjoys cooking and assured me he can "make anything". I asked about pancakes, and sure enough, pancakes on the weekend are a must. One of his most impressive skills on a long list of talents is his guitar playing, where he specializes in leading everyone at Chinook House in "This Little Light of Mine".

Up until a couple weeks ago, Brad had spent the last few months living at Amani House, while Chinook was under renovations. He's now the expert and can rank all three L'Arche homes - I won't share his ranking though. Confidential information, you know. The renovations included new hallway and bedroom flooring, which he expressed as being "really nice", and a beautiful bathroom reno, now including a much larger, accessible shower. This, Brad decided, was the best change. Coming back to Chinook has been refreshing and it has been "great to see everybody again", particularly Margaret and Todd, who resided at Pemmican Lodge during the renovations, as well as all the assistants at Chinook House.

During his time at Amani House, Brad was excited to tell me he got reunited with his old friend, Virginia. They're close friends and he said it was great to reconnect. Brad also shared that he was fortunate to have made the move alongside many others, who were able to support him while he was there. Amani House provided a welcoming and comfortable stay.

After enjoying some time away from home, Brad's glad to be back in the familiarity of Chinook, alongside the new renovations. He would like to extend his thanks to everyone at Amani for a great stay and looks forward to seeing his new (and old) friends very soon.

Fundraising

Submitted by Sandra Riddell, Fundraising Chair

Henri Nouwen has written a beautiful little treatise called *The Spirituality of Fundraising* which has helped me develop a perspective that understands fundraising as grounded in community.

He writes that "Community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another." Who we are as a L'Arche community is a gift to be shared within the wider community of Lethbridge. Thus, our committee aims to create lasting relationships with our donors who are an integral part of our community. To that end, we have created a very short survey to determine your interests/priorities and the best way to communicate with you. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey (below).

P.S. Save the Date for our annual online dinner with Umami Shop: February 25, 2023.

Please scan the code on a phone or tablet to access the form to access the survey.



Renovation Update at Chinook

In November 2021 we suddenly received news that our application for an Enabling Accessibility Grant from the Federal Government had been approved!

This grant was to make the hallway and bathroom at Chinook House accessible. Three of the four Core Members at Chinook use wheelchairs or walkers everyday and it was getting harder to help them because of the physical layout of the home.

This grant allowed us to remove two hallway closets and widen the hallway, to combine an ensuite and bathroom into an accessible bathroom with a wheel-in shower, and to widen two of the doorways in the bedrooms so it is easier to wheel in and out.

