



L'ARCHE ANTIGONISH SOCIAL

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When the Ground Shifts

By Beth Wolters

2020 has been a very interesting year so far. How is that for an understatement? In February, we learned of abuse perpetrated by our founder and the following month we were in the first wave of a global pandemic. Our world has shifted and things we did or thought we knew, have changed.

Jean Vanier's books and writings are no longer what I reach for when looking for inspirational thoughts and quotes. His books sit untouched on my shelf as I try to integrate what he wrote with what he did, something I'm not sure I will ever be able to do. We are discovering new things about L'Arche's founding story. As an International Federation, we need the time and external expertise to integrate these new realities in all places and areas of L'Arche. For many of us, this is work needing to be done both personally and communally. The ground shifted beneath us.

The global pandemic has kept us in our homes for months as we fight against the fear that others are a danger to our safety. Not seeing family and friends, not being able to get that hug we so want, wearing a mask, not being able to eat together or gather in person have been losses for many of us. As things reopen, they are not the same and we miss our 'normal' life. The ground keeps shifting.

Yet, when the ground shifts beneath me, I have had the good fortune to have people around to help steady me.



The courage shown by the women who brought Jean's abuse forward, grounds me.

L'Arche International initiating the investigation into Jean's abuse, bringing these actions to light and working to integrate this information into our history and present day, grounds me.

Witnessing the care and compassion the members of L'Arche Antigonish have shown each other during the uncertainty of the pandemic, grounds me. The creativity and fun lived our homes during the first wave, grounds me. The notes and words of encouragement I receive, ground me.

Our Mission calls us to 'respond to the changing needs of our members'. When our response is encouragement, creativity, fun, care, compassion and courage, the shifting ground is less unsettling.

Thank you to all of you who have reached out to be this steadying presence for me and all of us at L'Arche Antigonish.

Living Apart, Loving Together

by Brianne Peters

I was talking to a friend of mine last week. Referring to COVID-19, she said something that stuck with me: “*We are all in the same storm, but each of us has a different boat.*” *Some of us are traveling in yachts, others in canoes...and some have no boat at all.*” This image of a boat reminded me of L’Arche and our vision of each person having a place of equal dignity and value, regardless of the kind of storm or boat we are traveling in. It is true that this pandemic has brought out the worst in all of us, as uncertainty, disconnection, and fear always do. But it has also brought out the best in us; empathy, understanding, love, acceptance, appreciation, adaptability, creativity to connect in new ways, and the joy that this connection brings.

This summer, our Board has missed our personal connection with all of you, but we have also been in awe of your abilities to continue to build and broaden our boat despite the challenges. This has been expressed in our solidarity to raise money for L’Arche communities around the world who do not have access to the same level of resources; sending homemade cards to our friends and supporters for no other reason except to check in (thank you!); sharing our love for sweets and local business in our first online “L’Arche Delights” (thank you again!); challenging ourselves to better ourselves physically (Christian’s push-up challenges have motivated me), intellectually (Elizabeth’s continued education at StFX), spiritually by taking a moment every week to reflect and pray, and artistically



– this is the time of year my class from the Coady Institute joins you at Abelard for drumming and storytelling – we will certainly miss it.

“Living apart, loving together” is the theme of this newsletter. Our Board would like to acknowledge how difficult it has been to keep our boat afloat and on course, and to thank you sincerely for doing it anyway. Your dedication to our community here in Antigonish and around the world does not go unnoticed.



Kelly Farrell & Tim Marmura hold up signs for the Virtual Fun Run promotional video. Don't forget to sign-up from anywhere in the world to take part in this year's Virtual Fun Run by visiting our website:

www.larcheantigonish.ca/events

The Journey of Life-Long Learning

An interview with Elizabeth Abler by Cara Jones

Elizabeth Abler is someone who has inspired me over the years. She has been a great friend and I value the way in which we have supported each other as we both faced the difficulty of saying “goodbye” to loved ones that left this world too soon. Elizabeth’s determination to achieve her educational goals while continually advocating for disability and inclusion reflects her passion for life-long learning. I was excited, after months of being apart from the L’Arche Antigonish community due to Covid-19, to accompany Elizabeth while she picked up her freshman bracelet at StFX University. She is a new student at the university and it is a huge accomplishment that she worked hard to achieve.

I sat down with Elizabeth to ask her a few questions about her love of education and how she felt about starting this new journey as university student.

Cara: Elizabeth, why is education important to you?

Elizabeth: I think that education is so important to me because I really like life-long learning and I’m trying to prove people wrong when they think that people with disabilities can’t go to college or university.

Cara: You came from an academic family. Did you find that this influenced you, and if so, how?

Elizabeth: Yes, it influenced me because both my late parents were professors. My mom was a professor of Geography and my dad was a professor of Anthropology. I think it influenced me because I learned to study hard and I became a good student because of that.

Cara: You first began your studies at the Nova Scotia Community College. What were you taking at NSCC?



Elizabeth: I was taking Social Services at NSCC because I wanted to be a helper. But I couldn’t finish the diploma program there because after my dad passed away I had no way of getting to Cape Breton and back.

Cara: Do you agree that accessibility is something that needs to change when it comes to education?

Elizabeth: Yes, I really do!



Cara: You are about to start St. Francis Xavier University; can you tell me how you are feeling about this new adventure?

Elizabeth: I am a little bit nervous but mostly excited because I have never been to university before and this is a really big accomplishment for me.

Cara: What are you looking forward to the most about starting StFX University?

Elizabeth: Well, my first class is Art 101, an Introduction to Drawing, which my dad and I wanted to take before he got sick. So, I’m glad I can still take the course and he will still be with me in spirit. I’m also excited because I have been accepted as a Peer Support Worker and will be able to help other students.

Cara: What piece of advice would you like to give other people who may feel discouraged when they are trying to access education based on what you have experienced? How would you encourage other people who may be thinking, “I can’t do that”?

Elizabeth: I would just encourage people to just really believe in themselves and stand up for what they believe in.

The Beat Goes On

by Tina Angustia

It was a Friday, middle of March, when we were asked to change some things about our lives in order to be safe and care for one another. A virus has stopped the world as we knew it and threw us into the Covid-19 pandemic.

Come Monday, day-program assistants like me started to spend our days in our L'Arche homes. With a wary heart due to so many unknown things in front of us, we started our day with a delicious breakfast, then a little meeting about this “Mr. C” also known as Coronavirus, and shared wishes and prayer that things will be alright.

One week into our "new normal," the Covenant House gang thought of different ways in which we could fill our days. Of course, when you have so many artists amongst us creative ways of expression always pop out.

We danced, made cards and told stories but, something was missing. We missed drumming!

Since “Zoom-ing” is the new thing, we asked if we could continue drumming this way. We got our links up and running and began drumming again one Wednesday afternoon.



Sure, it is because of our love of drumming that we continued but also because we wanted to see each other and hear how our week has been.

During this pandemic, a lot of people felt isolated. We have this need to connect. It's not the same at all with Zoom, but it was better than not being connected at all.

As Carlo would say, “It became a highlight of our week”.



The world might have changed in many ways we do not like or have begun to slowly to accept but we can always rely on each other. The light and hope we carry when we are together in a circle, in Zoom, or however we connect.

We have our creative ways, we have each other and that, my friends, keep our beat going!



Meet Our Great Artists



Jarrod Boddy

I like to work with my hands.
I like to see something finished.
I enjoy latch hooked rug making,
building models and embroidery.
I like to make beautiful things.

I like to make money.
I get my ideas from things
I see like lighthouses, boats,
and from my friend's chickens,
seeing new things with friends.

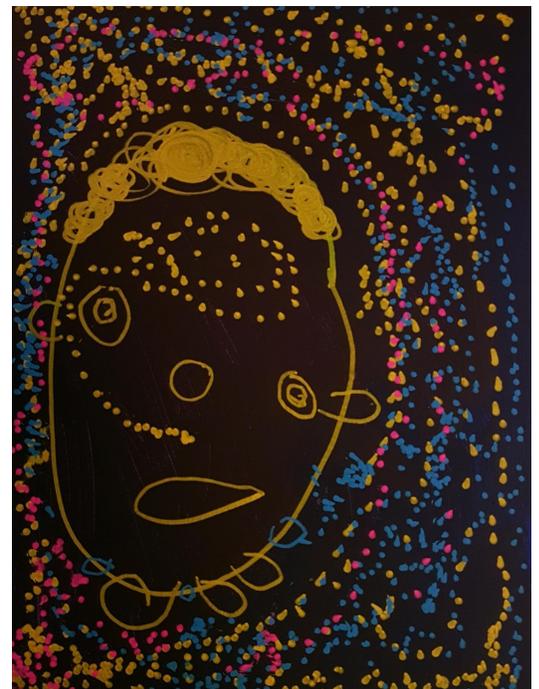
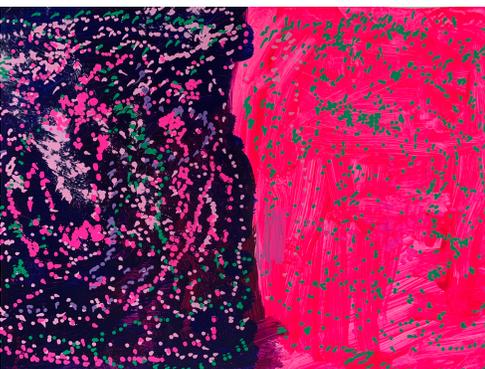
- Jarrod



Heather MacKinnon

I love to paint.
I like drawing and
painting people.
I love pink
- pink is my favorite color.

- Heather



Loving Together

by Keneth Atuhura

Coming to the L' Arche Antigonish community was one of the key steps of my transition from a fulfilled lifestyle to a relationship that is solid, strong and full of commitments.

I have learned to share and to explore new diverse cultures. This phenomenon is what I refer to as 'Loving Together'.

Despite the fate of tragedies that surfaced in the first three weeks of my arrival, the death of Mary Kathleen and the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world, I still remained brave and focused on the values of the community.

I found greater life satisfaction when I settled in here. It did not take me time and effort to connect with core members. Sachan was the first core member I connected with, and I introduced him to a card game that he liked.



We played it almost every day. His trust for me kept on growing and I proposed other activities, like bicycle riding, morning and evening walks, playing basketball, doing lawn mowing, playing a guitar and so on.



It became easy for me to get the attention of other members; the likes of Tommy Landry, Elizabeth Abler, Donny Macintosh and Kyle MacDonald. It turned out to be a celebration when all members opened up to me to know who they are, thus I was able to freely relate with every one of them. I discovered unceasing fun and love. Their kind reception and acceptance was overwhelming and undeniably preeminent.

I'm pleased to say that the smiles, the expressions of joy, the prayer songs sung before eating meals, the drumming sessions and the outdoor games among others, have been my initiation to the L'Arche Antigonish community lifestyle.

Despite some challenging moments at the beginning, such as the difficulty in memorizing particular names (of individuals and places), identifying where to find certain items, getting used to the food, weather and accent, I'm glad that I've managed to cope up and get immersed into the community.

I am grateful to my fellow assistants, the leadership team who have rendered me great support. Thank you for patiently providing answers to my numerous questions and teaching me a lot I didn't know. I will be forever grateful.

Our Journey Together



Heather & Matthew enjoying a spring day on the swing.



Eileen & Tina celebrating a special anniversary.



Happy Canada Day from Emmaus House!



Afternoon baking at Cornerstone with Florence & Mary Anne.



Cheers to friendship & cake.



Tim & Reyseil at a Lavender Farm



Hope House having fun body spelling.



Christian & Katie baking for L'Arche Delights.



Jubilee House enjoying Peggy's Cove



Covenant House taking in the view.

Black Lives Matter: Everyone Should See The Beauty of Diversity

by Hina Shehzadi

Time flies at L'Arche! It feels like yesterday when I arrived at L'Arche Antigonish's Jubilee house in April 2019. As a woman of colour coming from Pakistan it was a great relief to see people from all over the world working at L'Arche Antigonish. I feel privilege to be part of such a diverse community, while living far away from my home, friends, and family. L'Arche Antigonish makes me wonder, "How come this place is incredibly unique and different in so many ways?"

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd, a 46-year-old black American man, was killed in Minneapolis, Minnesota, during an arrest for allegedly using a counterfeit bill. We watched this heartbreaking news on TV everyday and how people were protesting in a number of cities in different countries all over the world. We discussed that it is important to show our solidarity, not only with black people living in different parts of the world, but also with our core member and assistants working at L'Arche Antigonish who are from black communities.

Due to Covid-19 we had very tight restrictions for the safety of our community and we were not able to attend any public demonstrations like we used to do in the past such as attending "take back the nights" or "climate change march".

We agreed that there were still a number of ways to connect with the world and express solidarity. Thus, at Jubilee house we made a poster stating, 'Black Lives Matter' to share on the L'Arche Antigonish social media platforms. It was important to us to convey the message that we felt deeply about the issue.

Black Lives Matter is an international movement which began as a call to action in response to state-sanctioned violence and anti-Black racism. Our intention was to connect our solidarity with Black people from all over the world who have a shared desire for justice while honouring and living one of our core values at L'Arche to "Shape a More Human Society."

