

Wisdom Art in L'Arche

By Jacquie Boughner

I remember my first reaction to the art in L'Arche. I was mesmerized and also confounded by it, all at the same time. I was puzzled how to name it. I knew what it wasn't. It wasn't professional art, amateur art or folk art. But I felt that the art in L'Arche had a profound presence of liberation — a freedom rooted in our human reality and physicality, that transcends the body, and that, paradoxically is experienced by the viewer, intuitively in their own body. A very confusing experience for the heart, and for the head. This cannot easily be categorized. The closest I can come is to call it wisdom art.

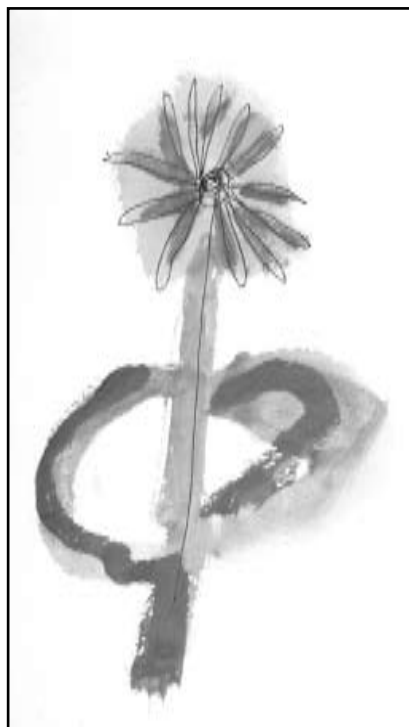
Francis Maurice, in his art class, has done something really important. By inviting people into his art room, he invited them into something special—something important. Most people think that art is not very practical or useful—you can't eat it, you can't drink it—it isn't necessary for survival or even everyday living. But by inviting people into his art room in the midst of their daily life—he has said that it is necessary, it is important. Francis knows that it is nourishment for the soul.

I heard a choreographer describe the act of creating as being in a free fall and then being caught—that sense of letting go and trusting. When I look at the art in L'Arche, I experience what that freedom and trust feels like—the 'spirit of wisdom' that filled the artisans building the tabernacle in Exodus.

Francis and all of the core member artists are wisdom teachers and sign holders. In Jeremiah, God tells the Israelites that on the way into exile they are to, "Set up road signs for yourself, make yourself guideposts or signs; consider well the highway, the road by which you went." God tells them this, so that when they return from exile to Jerusalem, they will be able to follow the signs on the way back—the way by which they came.

Francis and the work of his fellow artists in L'Arche, are the signs that show us the way back—the way by which we came from God. Their artwork are the signs for the world—pointing to the New Jerusalem. That is their particular vocation that is expressed in their art.

I have enormous gratitude for these core members—for their invitation to the journey, for their being our companions and guides,



Francis Maurice knows that art is important. He invites everyone to share their talents.

for writing their visions clearly on their tablets—so that as pilgrims together, we can see the way to the "new thing", the new life that is being created in L'Arche. †

Jacquie Boughner is a professional artist who lives in Richmond Hill. She is Vice-President of the L'Arche Daybreak Board of Directors.

Making Art Upstairs at the Big House *By Serena Nudel*

Core members head over to the Big House and up to the second floor each week for art therapy. What are they doing up there?

The core members come to see me in a little office filled with art supplies that inspire great creativity. In a typical session, we sit together and the core member shares how things are going in his or her life. When they are ready, and in the mood, I will offer the opportunity to create something, using whatever art materials interest them. They could use paint, markers, collage, plaster or they could write letters that express their feelings to the people who they care about. They usually have an idea of what they want to create.

I encourage them to turn their ideas into pieces of artwork. I challenge them to expand on their ideas, and help them to use the art materials to make their ideas come to life.

Artwork can be used as a means of communication. It can be a helpful way to express thoughts and feelings that are difficult to describe verbally. The quality of relationship between the art therapist and the core member is forged over time. This kind of relationship can be particularly helpful for people when they are experiencing a difficult period in their lives or going through a transition. The artwork gives them a safe place to reflect and make sense of challenging ideas and emotions through the use of representational and symbolic images.

There are several goals that I work towards as an art therapist. I try to provide an opportunity for one-on-one connection in a safe environment—an experience that is so important to everyone. Through discussion and self-expression, I hope to encourage each person to appreciate their unique perspective as well as their creative abilities. I try to help people express their ideas and improve their self-confidence. Finally, I hope that the process of creating art will be relaxing and enjoyable. †

Serena Nudel is an art therapist who works with several core members at L'Arche Daybreak.

My Life Together

By Carl MacMillan

My Life Together is our theme for the year at L'Arche Daybreak. In terms of the English language, the words may not hang together perfectly, but after all, this is L'Arche, and perfection is not really what we're about. The words capture something that has great meaning for us. Over the next year we will weave the theme into community gatherings, retreats, songs, prayer and reflection. This theme seems right for us now.

The phrase did not originate with us, but it did spring from L'Arche. *My Life Together* is the title of a book by Hilary Wilson of L'Arche Liverpool (England). Hilary credits Ian Watkinson, a core member from L'Arche Liverpool, with coining the phrase "my life together." The individual journey of each person is integral to the L'Arche experience, yet that personal experience happens only in the context of relationship with others — in community. The human experience of personhood — the powerful revelation that *my life* matters, and that it is good — can happen only *together* with others. Ian's words "my life together" are really profound. We will need the year to explore all that they represent.

In many L'Arche communities in the western world, our "community year" begins at the end of August or the begin-



New Assistants, Front Row: Alexandre Tirot, Tiago Ciccone, Sharon Mair, Stephanie Langsch, Anna MacLean, Sven Meise and Jeff Doucette. Back Row: Toni Urbanski, Regiane Costa, Felix Albers, Sara Birch and Trish Glennon.

ning of September. At Daybreak, every year we welcome fifteen to twenty new assistants to live and work in our homes. Most make a commitment for a full year — although many (like me!) have stayed much longer. So, there is an annual cycle of change and renewal in L'Arche community life: At the end of the summer we are sending forth a group of assistants whom we have come to know well and, at the same time, we are opening our arms to welcome a new group.

People often comment on how hard it must be to endure this continual cycle of change — and they are right, it is hard! Yet, like many things that are challenging, there is also a wonderful goodness in it. Every year we have the privilege of welcoming an energetic and inspiring group

of people, most of them young adults. Some are from Canada and the United States but many are from cultures very different than ours. These young people have much to offer our community, but they also have much to learn. Our most seasoned core members know it is their role to "form" assistants — to give them the opportunity to be known in a very human way. In this sense, our assistants have much to receive.

In her book *My Life Together* Hilary Wilson writes about what she calls a modified version of the "three R's of prayer" — Relate, Relinquish, Receive — as a path to unity. The words aptly describe passages that we make in L'Arche, yet they are central to the human journey that we all share. ✦

Community Notes



Members of L'Arche Daybreak and L'Arche Toronto joined Colleen Lynch and Steffen Muller for their wedding day.

A Barn Dance for Solidarity took place this September to raise funds for our L'Arche "sister" community in Honduras. Over 100 friends and community members filled the barn to overflowing, singing and dancing to a "Tropical Fiesta" theme.

Light Through the Crack is Sue Mosteller's third book which combines personal memoirs and the inspirational stories of people from community life. The book is available at *Daybreak Books & Media*.

Joe Lobko, the architect who designed the Dayspring, received the *Local Hero Award* from the Canadian Urban Institute. The award is bestowed upon individuals who have a profound impact on the quality of life in their neighbourhoods.

John Smeltzer joined Natalie MacMaster

A Meditation by Henri Nouwen
**Behold the Beauty
of the Lord**

Acting, speaking and even reflective thinking may at times be too demanding, but we are forever seeing. When we dream, we see. When we stare in front of us, we see. When we close our eyes to rest, we see. We see trees, houses, roads and cars, seas and mountains, animals and people, places and faces, shapes and colours. We see clearly or vaguely, but always we find something to see.

But what do we really choose to see? It makes a great difference whether we see a flower or a snake, a gentle smile or menacing teeth, a dancing couple or a hostile crowd. We do have a choice. Just as we are responsible for what we eat, so we are responsible for what we see. It is easy to become a victim of the vast array of visual stimuli surrounding us. The "powers and principalities" control many of our daily images. Posters, billboards, television, videocassettes, movies, and store windows continuously assault our eyes and inscribe their images upon our memories.

Still we do not have to be passive victims of a world that wants to entertain and distract us. We can make some decisions and choices. A spiritual life in the midst of our energy-draining society requires us to take conscious steps to safeguard that inner space where we can keep our eyes fixed on the beauty of the Lord. ✠



Bill Van Buren creates wonderfully happy people.



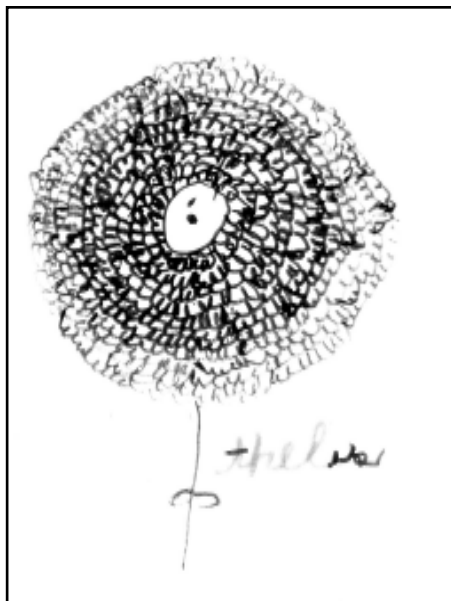
On July 31, 2006, Bill Clarke celebrated, in Guelph, his 50th Anniversary as a Jesuit and the 40th Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. From left: Marie Paradis, Sue Mosteller, Bill Clarke, David Harmon, Carl MacMillan, Beth Porter, Mary Bastedo. The Daybreak community had a special celebration with Bill on October 13 at Dayspring.

on stage at a concert for over 3,000 people in Peterborough. John played spoons and had the entire audience clapping along with him.

Beth Porter marked 25 years at L'Arche Daybreak at the 2006 Silver Anniversary Tea.

Paula Kilcoyne and Nathan Ball welcomed Timothy, their fourth child, in August. Sisters Emma and Anna Claire and brother Brendan are happy to have a new brother.

Wedding bells rang this summer for three couples who met at Daybreak. In June, Maria Laura Palermo and Guilherme Mascarenhas were married in Brazil. In August, Christiane Ferner and Mike Crawford were married in Germany. In September, Colleen Lynch and Steffen Muller were married in Nebraska.

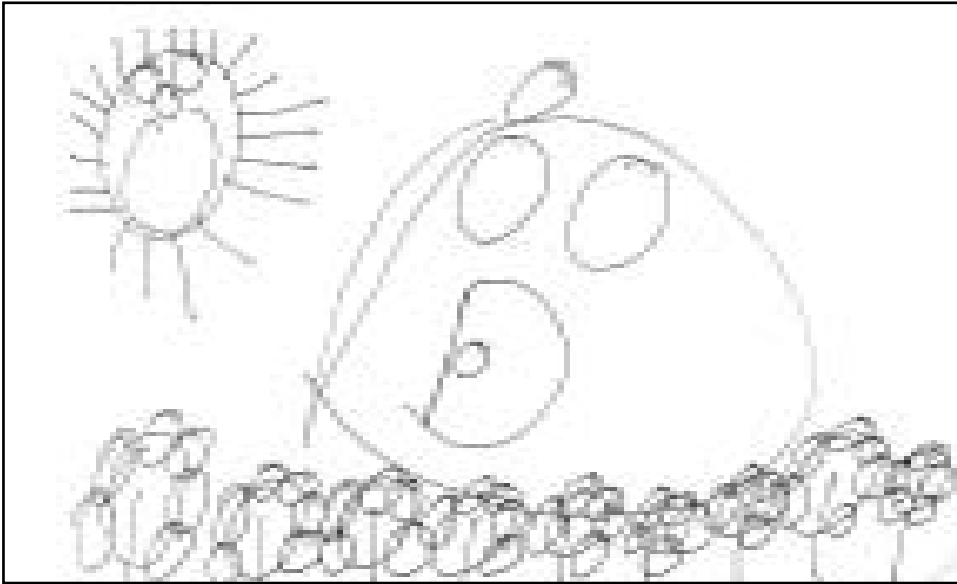


Thelus George draws a wonderful sunflower.

Community Wish List

New bath towels.....	\$50
Dishes.....	\$50
Shelves.....	\$200
Tree.....	\$250
Electric snow shovel.....	\$250
Microwave oven.....	\$300
Vacuum cleaner.....	\$450
Rug.....	\$1,000
Tree Shredder.....	\$2,000
Grounds equipment.....	\$10,000
New windows.....	\$14,000
Automobile.....	\$25,000

For more information please call Brenda Aburto at L'Arche Daybreak's Development Office (905) 884-3454, ext. 230.



Caroline York loves to draw the sun and flowers.

Tax Change Benefits Donors

The Canada Revenue Agency recently eliminated capital gains tax on gifts of publicly traded securities. This means that donors no longer have to pay capital gains tax when they give shares to a registered charity.

As an example, under the new taxation rules, if a person donates stock that was originally purchased for \$400 and now has a fair market value of \$1000, they will receive a tax receipt for \$1000 and will not have to pay any tax on the gain.

This is great news for donors who not

only receive the tax break but also receive a tax receipt for the fair market value of the securities — not to mention the satisfaction donors have from supporting a favourite charity.

For information about donating gifts of stocks or securities please contact Brenda Aburto at L'Arche Daybreak's Development office at (baburto@larchedaybreak.com or 905 - 884-3454 ext. 230). Donors can also make arrangements to bequest gifts of negotiable securities through their will. †



Darryl Dickson enjoys building a colourful castle.

L'ARCHE MISSION STATEMENT

- To make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- To engage in our diverse culture, working together towards a more human society.
- To foster an environment in communities that is inspired by the core values of our founding story, and that responds to changing needs of our members.

L'ARCHE

L'Arche is an international federation of over 100 communities where people with developmental disabilities and those who care for them live, work and share life together. Canadian Jean Vanier founded L'Arche in France in 1964.

L'ARCHE DAYBREAK

The first and largest L'Arche Community in North America, L'Arche Daybreak began in 1969 and now includes eight homes in Richmond Hill, as well as *The Woodery* wood-working shop, *The Craft Studio*, *Daybreak Books & Media* bookstore, and *Dayspring* spiritual centre. L'Arche Daybreak's community of over 100 people is a dynamic example of how people of different intellectual capacity, social origin, religion, and culture can live together.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at 8:30 at Dayspring.

Friday evenings at 7:30 at Dayspring.



Daybreak Newsbreak

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