



L'ARCHE®  
london

# Connection

Spring 2019



*His death is a great loss to his family, to the members of L'Arche and Faith and Light around the world, and to people everywhere touched by his vision of a more human society.*

**Jean Vanier – L'Arche Founder**

September 10, 1928 – May 7, 2019

# ROB AND LAUREL ONE SONG AT A TIME

**Laurel Martin**  
Music Educator

Wednesday evenings, the L'Arche London Coffee House serves up coffee and desserts along with open mic entertainment. One person who has been attending is Rob Castrogiovanni.

Speaking of his experience after performing at the open mic one Wednesday evening, Rob said "I feel appreciated there, so that's why I go every week. Finally, I have a place where I'm appreciated, a platform to do what I love... I love that this is not your typical open mic, that everyone is unique, and we all have something to offer one another. I finally found the open mic where I fit in."

Rob sings, plays guitar, and piano. He plays popular songs along with those he has written himself. After tasting our "Wake Up Brownies", Rob wrote a song about them which he sang the following week to the delight of those attending! Some who do not play an instrument ask Rob to accompany them which he is happy to do.

Rob is an example of the impact our Coffee House has in building community: one song and one brownie at a time.

# MARTHA'S JOURNEY OF BELONGING IN HER CHURCH

**Marie Antoinette Parisio**  
A dear friend of Martha's.



– Martha & Peter –

On March 29, 2019 Martha received her 1<sup>st</sup> communion and confirmation in her parish community of St. George's where she has been a member since 1998. Martha is a very sensitive woman who does not speak. In her family, soon after birth, Martha received baptism. And then, as was the custom in those days for many friends who had an intellectual disability, she received no other sacraments.

Martha is a woman of prayer. Elsie is a friend with whom Martha loves to attend concerts at St. Paul's Cathedral, and worship services, and quiet times together at Martha's home, Cana House. Elsie and Martha have been there for each other in joyful moments and in critical times at hospital. Many friends have come to ask Martha to pray when they have carried something heavy or were sick or waiting for medical reports. Martha prays daily in her home and co-leads spiritual retreats with her good friend Anne. Martha is a full member of the CWL group at the church, and she let us know through the interview with the parish minister that she wanted to embrace the next step of confirmation. With her housemate Jennie, friend Elsie, and the team members who supported her, she joined the journey of the parish community with another 25 people, to discern and to prepare for the welcoming of the sacraments.

Affirmed by the knowledge of her gifts – gifts of prayer and presence, the gift of silence, the gift of being with and walking with others, rooted in prayers and confirmed by the community, Martha received the sacraments at St. George's and has already scheduled a retreat to share her gifts. With her friend Anne, she led the retreat "Hold My Hand" on May 11 at the L'Arche Gathering Place. Like Mary, mother of Jesus, Martha is present, she ponders things in her heart, and is very in tune with the movements of the Spirit of Love in the world – Martha is a witness of hope in her community.

## Sharing Friendships at the 2019 Annual Dinner and Auction



# PAUL AND NATALIE, & HEALING THROUGH THE ARTS

**Natalie Rosedale**  
House Leader – Bethany

Healing through the Arts is a partnership between Participation House, Hutton House, L'Arche London and the London Arts Council. The aim is "to celebrate the resiliency and spirit of people returning home to their communities after years of living in institutions. Through six-week "open studios" the project encourages participants from diverse backgrounds to build meaningful relationships and to celebrate each other's gifts through arts activities that draw on their stories, experiences, stories and ideas." (to join a Studio for the next session in the series, go to [www.londonarts.ca/healing-through-the-arts](http://www.londonarts.ca/healing-through-the-arts) All are welcome!)

I had the privilege of attending the dance studio with Paul, led by Ruth Douthwright.

The first session was kind of awkward, we didn't really know what to expect, but we embraced the awkwardness together. The community members were friendly, Ruth was an incredible facilitator and I think Paul and I both felt that this was going to a worthwhile experience.

For the first few sessions Paul stayed in his chair, we moved together, around the



other dancers & with them, creating circles, zig-zags and using ribbons, in an attempt to match the rhythm of different songs. Then with the suggestion of Ruth, we ventured from Paul's chair and onto the mats. Anyone who knows Paul knows that mats are his jam. Lying on the floor, he broke into



a belly laugh, so much more comfortable, completely engaged in the music and the movement. I got to watch over the next few weeks as Paul showed us how to move with him with the music on the floor, how Ruth creatively collaborated in Paul's movements with him – adding an exercise ball, a ribbon, or a roll alongside him. It was special to witness the joy Paul found from this experience. It will be a privilege to stand beside Paul as he continues to create and collaborate with Healing through the Arts over their summer session.



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Pictured is a sample of the new refreshed logo for L'Arche. This will provide a professional and consistent look for all 29 L'Arche communities across Canada.

## THE ARTS EDUCATOR'S VIEW

**Karina Viovy**  
Arts Educator



– Gloria Lynn Cripps –

Blooming buds in May are not only visible outside of The Gathering Place but inside as well!

The Day Program Team has been an incredible support to the new Visual Arts Program; made possible by the Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant. In the short time that the program has been in place, since Nov 2018, we are seeing fabulous pieces of art being created by our core members as well as new members that have shown an interest to join us in the creative fun.

Seeing the creative process of each participant as the weeks pass, is truly an unforgettable sight as well as the feelings of peacefulness and true joy! The experience of creating collaborative art pieces is my most preferred. Simply because we find yet another reason for us all to gather around a table and engage in conversation, storytelling, laughter, building new friendships and strengthening old ones. The art rooms are resembling our beautiful outside gardens with vibrant colours and 'budding' artists. It is truly a happy place!



### **Dominique Hand**

Bonjour Café Coordinator

Wednesdays are the only day of the week that I don't need my morning coffee. If you've ever met Sebastian, who is part of the Bonjour Café's Wednesday morning baking group, you would know exactly why. The moment he walks through the door at 9:30am, the energy in the room is amplified a hundred-fold. Full of jokes, stories, and strategic flattery, he makes it his mission to ensure that the time you spend with him is the highlight of your week.

Despite all this, the thing that I appreciate the most about Sebastian is how respectful he is to the needs of others. If they need a quiet tone, he will lower his. If they need space, he will give it. If they are shy, he will make introductions around the room. It's amazing to see the gentle side of this remarkable bombshell of a man. I'm glad I get to see all sides of him and to call him my friend.

Sebastian will be at the Walkathon this June. If you're there too, I'm certain he will introduce himself to you.

## REMEMBERING WITH LOVE...

**Elizabeth Ann and Jeremy Ikerd**

Parents of Eva Louise Ikerd

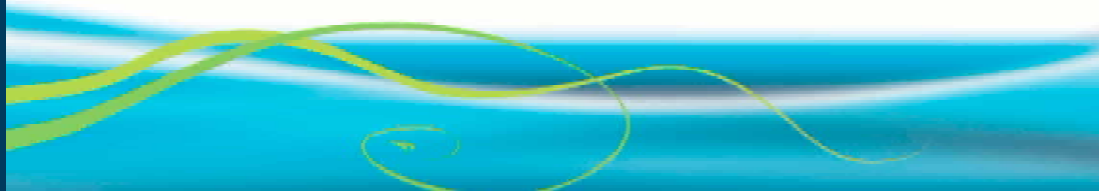
Eva Louise Ikerd was born September 11, 2015. She weighed 1 lb 8 oz and was 13.5 inches long. Eva Louise was diagnosed with Wiedemann-Rautenstrauch syndrome (WRS). WRS is a very rare genetic disorder. It is so rare that Eva Louise was only the 35th diagnosed case in the world. She lived 7 ½ months before she went to Heaven. So much was learned about WRS through her life. The doctors documented her journey and she has 2 medical journals written about her.

Eva was a very bright light that shone into the world to reflect the love of Jesus. Brighter than we have ever seen. She was full of determination and spunk. She was quickly known as having the biggest personality of



any baby that anyone had come across. This was incredible for such a tiny baby. Everyone that met her fell instantly in love with her. She was bestowed with the nick name of Houdini due to surprising the doctors by being able to do impossible things. Eva was a complete miracle from the very beginning and through her life's journey. We were told so many times that Eva was so lucky to have us as parents. But we were truly the ones that were so lucky and blessed to have been chosen by God to have our precious Eva. She is a beautiful Child of God and we are so thankful for having Eva Louise Ikerd as our daughter.

*Mr. and Mrs Michael and Cecilia Foltz, the grandparents of Eva Louise, named the Community Leadership Room in the Gathering Place in memory of their precious granddaughter Eva Louise.*



# BUILDING COMMUNITY TOGETHER



**Pauline Trudell**  
Board President



**Marietta Drost**  
Community Leader

Jim and Gerald met 25 years ago at Leads Employment Services. Jim was a recent high school grad exploring employment options, and Gerald was an Employment Support Worker. Since this time, they have been connected through common work in community building. Gerald joined the local Ministry of Community and Social Services Program Office, and eventually became the Program Supervisor of the community that Jim and his parents helped to build – L'Arche London. Their connection continued when Jim became a volunteer at the MCSS Office, where he still volunteers today on a weekly basis. Jim is a dedicated community builder here at L'Arche where he is currently a member of the Bonjour Café Team and leads in Music at our Monday Morning Music Club and numerous other community events. Gerald has been L'Arche London's Program Supervisor at the Ministry of Community and Social Services for 14 years, dedicated to the well-being and sustainability of L'Arche London and many other local communities. Gerald knows the people of our community and has dedicated his career to ensuring that people have places to thrive in our community of London. These two men share common qualities of caring dedication, tenacity and commitment which countless people in our city have benefited from.

This Spring, Gerald Martin is retiring from the Ministry. Jim and all of us will miss him, and desire to express our deep gratitude for his service. Their particular story illustrates the inter-connectness of people in community – working hard to make a difference, building community together.

**We are also deeply grateful for 3 members of our Board** who have completed their service and remain connected to our community through deep bonds of friendship. Thank you to **Charles Spina, Joe Naus and John Wells**, who have collectively served our community with a total of 32 years on our Board! Joe, Charles, John, our lives are interwoven and our stories continue, even as your dedicated service to our community as Board members is complete.

This Spring Newsletter is about the stories that have been emerging in our community in the last year. Our L'Arche London story is profoundly connected with our beloved founder Jean Vanier. His passing in May touches us deeply with both grief and gratitude.



Jean Vanier died peacefully on Tuesday, May 7, surrounded by members of his family. He was 90 years old. His death is a great loss to his family, to the members of L'Arche and Faith and Light around the world. His funeral will be held in Paris on May 16. This week, the Daily Thoughts will focus on recent writings from the founder of L'Arche

### **From Jean's letter of October 2018**

“I know that new weaknesses, new forms of poverty and new losses are waiting for me. It will be the descent into what is essential, that which is most hidden in me, deeper than all the parts of success and shadow inside me. That will be all that remains when all the rest is gone. My naked person, a primal innocence which is awaiting its encounter with God. Thank you for your prayers which accompany me in the descent into this treasure, the deepest part of my being.”

*For Additional Information Visit:*  
**[www.larche.ca](http://www.larche.ca)**



## ONTARIO TRILLIUM FOUNDATION GRANT

We are very excited to share that we have received a three year Ontario Trillium Foundation Grant that will help us to expand and enrich our Arts and Music programs. Through this grant we have begun new classes in pottery, visual arts, and traditional arts like papermaking, candle and soap making. The grant also supports a musical program that includes the Music Club, Coffee house, Drumming Circle, Karaoke class, Drama and Music Makers. For more information on these classes and programs, please call 519-652-9778 ext 225.

# THANK YOU TO OUR 2019 BANQUET SPONSORS



## RENTAL OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE AT THE GATHERING PLACE

The Gathering Place is now available to accommodate your specific rental needs. From large groups to small, the Gathering Place provides kitchen facilities, meeting rooms, and a large community hall suitable for that special large function. For additional information or to set up a time for a facility tour, please contact.

[rentals@larchelondon.org](mailto:rentals@larchelondon.org)  
**519-652-9778** x225



*Please Visit Our Website For Upcoming Events*  
[www.larchelondon.ca](http://www.larchelondon.ca)



capital colour

*L'Arche London extends it's sincere appreciation to our friends at Capital Colour for the overall production of this newsletter.*

### L'Arche London Needs YOU!

I would like to help the L'Arche London Community build a stronger future by making a tax-deductible gift. Charitable registration #89183 5241 RR0001

My personal cheque is enclosed for

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

or donating online at [www.larchelondon.ca](http://www.larchelondon.ca) with a credit card.

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