



L'ARCHE®  
london

# Connection

Spring 2021



## Mission Statement

*"We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in community... we celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need of one another. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together."*

# COMMUNITY LEADER/BOARD PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

*By Katie and Marietta*



**Katie Mennill**  
Board Chair



**Marietta Drost**  
Community Leader

There is something beautiful that happens when we gather, each person with their particular gifts, to build community. It is interesting to note that this is possible even in a time when we cannot be together physically.

We experienced this in early May during Education Week, when technology supported the online Art Show “Energy”, an artistic collaboration between St. Rose of Lima Elementary School and L’Arche London.

We felt joy as Mike, Catherine, Jim and Laurel – Musical Mentors all – shared music with high school students online, January through to April.

Precious volunteers connected from the driveway of our homes starting March 2020 to the present. These volunteers, Tim, Elma, Sarah, Barry, Stephanie, Jenn and Brenda shopped for and delivered groceries weekly,

to ensure safety and wellness of the people of Jubilee, Cana and Bethany.

Recently at the online Coffee House, we celebrated John’s 85th Birthday. John was a member of our Board for 12+ years, only recently completing his service to our community. Our friendship has remained strong as John and Clare have been joining us weekly at Coffee House, sharing songs and encouragement.

It is a joy to feature Garry Dodman in this newsletter as we celebrate 20 years of Garry’s service on the L’Arche London Board this June. Even in the pandemic, our Board has met faithfully via Zoom every month to see to the Governance of L’Arche London. These monthly meetings build and strengthen our community in a time of the pressure of pandemic.

Due to the pandemic, we will not be able to host our June Walk-a-thon fundraising event – “Walking with Each Other”. We hope

to meet again in the Spring of 2022 for this wonderful Annual gathering. The generosity of our donors is sustaining the rich programs and classes available currently online, as well as the daily life in our homes. The attached donation form provides an opportunity to donate to L’Arche London if you are able to do so at this time.

As we celebrate various milestones, 2022 marks a very special year in the history of L’Arche London - OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY! Exciting activities and events are being planned - look for details in the upcoming months.

While we long to be together face to face, the joy of a phone call, a note in our email or mailbox, a hello from the driveway or a zoom call gathering – has functioned well to keep us connected during this time of pandemic. Our hearts ignite with gratitude as we continue to meet with old friends, and experience new friendships forming, even online!

## GATHERING PLACE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

*By Marietta Drost*



**Mel Quevillon**  
Program Coordinator

We have been happy to welcome Mel Quevillon to the role of Program Coordinator at the Gathering Place. The work that Mel is engaging in our community is supporting Program Development and Outreach. The work facilitates the ongoing development of rich and meaningful programs and classes, and promotes access to people seeking to engage opportunities with L’Arche London. Currently an important focus of Mel’s work is to facilitate meaningful links to our community for people isolated during this COVID time.

You will read about Musical Mentors in this newsletter. Mel’s work with Jim, Catherine, Mike and Laurel is at the heart of developing this wonderful new connection with our local high schools. We desire to be a community

responsive to the needs and dreams of Londoners – Mel’s role as Program Coordinator will support this intention in our community.

One of the ways that we have come to work with Mel is through her role as Co-Instructor of the Integrated Learning Class through the Disability Studies Program and King’s University College. Through this course, students of all abilities come together to learn from one another and study at King’s University. The course is based on the principle of mutuality – that every person has a gift to give. It is a rich learning environment – one which we will continue to bridge to, into the future with Mel’s support.

Mel and her husband Luke live in London with their three children, Ollie, Gabby and Alice. Welcome Mel! It is such a gift for all of us at L’Arche London that you are here!

***Thank you to the City of London for their support through the London Community Grants Multi-Year Stream***



# TILING TOGETHER WITH L'ARCHE

By Linda Lustins



In the monotonous “rinse and repeat” rhythm of life during COVID, last autumn’s six-week class learning how to create mosaic tiled trays was a welcome change.

Our instructor, Karina, patiently encouraged seniors and L’Arche members to explore our artistic side through weekly Zoom classes. As we got to know each other, we could see some approach the project with gusto and others with trepidation, daring

themselves to believe they could create art. I challenged myself to produce an original design, putting for hours between classes to develop and tweak my ideas. At the end we had a virtual art show and participants bubbled with excitement, applauding each other’s efforts and peppering Karina on how they could sign up for more.

Many thanks go to L’Arche for providing this experience and connecting me with new friends. My mosaic tray is now a treasured reminder that, with a little support, I can find the artist within me.

## PETER’S PASSION

By Alex Reid

Recently I asked Peter, “Peter what is it that you love about trains?”

Peter shared that “Trains blow their horns when they come to a railroad crossing and trains carry people. There were Ukrainian ladies on the train when I was on my way back from Halifax.”

Peter is a man who loves to travel. In recent times he has travelled to Sudbury and Creighton Mines via Greyhound, Halifax and Antigonish, Nova Scotia by train, and a trip to a friend’s wedding in Ireland by air! Peter’s Ukrainian roots make meet-ups with folks from Ukraine especially wonderful – travel makes these encounters possible.

## GROCERY HEROES

By Roksoliana Khoma

When the virus started to emerge last Spring, we realized that going into a grocery store would risk additional COVID exposure for our Assistants and Core Members. We wanted to keep our community safe and decided to reach out for support.

Tim and Elma - amazing, generous, thoughtful friends of our community - stepped up to help Jubilee. Thanks to these two wonderful people who agreed to purchase and delivery groceries to our home for over a year now, all of us in Jubilee were able to stay safe and live our best possible life in the current reality.

Through all this uncertainty, changes in the restrictions and regulations, we know one thing for sure – groceries will arrive on

Monday! Elma and Tim take the challenges in stride, they would always go an extra mile to make sure to purchase everything that is on the list and sometimes that means they need to stay in long lines outside the store or to go to a couple of stores.

We are incredibly thankful to both Elma and Tim, the heroes who stepped up to demonstrate the spirit of our community. It really goes to show that even in dark and uncertain times, the best qualities in people shine through.

In Jubilee, we believe that together we can fight COVID and continue to live our L’Arche values and mission.

L’Arche London

## THE ART OF WISDOM

FREE ONLINE ART CLASSES FOR SENIORS (65+)

Acrylics: August 26-September 30, 2021  
Quilling: November 4-December 9, 2021  
Bath: February 17-March 24, 2022

All abilities are welcome.  
Each 6-week session runs on Thursdays from 1:00-2:30 pm.

SPACE IS LIMITED

TO REGISTER, CONTACT MEL  
MEL@L'ARCHELONDON.ORG



This project is funded by the Government of Canada.

Canada

L’Arche London Presents



Artist: Rita Winkler

## Online Art Classes

Visual Art: Tuesdays - 1:30-2:30 pm  
Paper Art: Wednesdays - 1:30-2:30 pm  
Clay Art: Fridays - 1:30-2:30 pm



DROP-IN  
FREE OF CHARGE  
ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Contact: karina@larchelondon.org



L’Arche London Presents



Artist: Jim McCeeough

## Sharing Music Online

Monday Morning Music Club  
Mondays - 10:00-11:00 am

Open Mic  
Wednesdays - 7:00-9:00 pm



DROP-IN  
FREE OF CHARGE  
ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Contact: laurel@larchelondon.org



# GARRY'S TRIBUTE

By Marietta Drost



Garry Dodman has been a L'Arche London Board member since 2001. Garry has served with dedication, friendship and love throughout this time. This year will mark 20 years Garry's dedicated service to L'Arche London.

It started with a knock on the front door of our first community home – Cana House. Garry had been walking his daughters to school daily – and noticed the life emerging from our home on Whisperwood Ave. One day he walked up to the house, knocked on the door, and shared that he would love to get involved.

Since this day, Garry has been serving L'Arche London and contributing to the growth of this community. He has served on the Board as a key leader consistently throughout these years, bringing considerable expertise with regards to Finance, IT, Website Construction, Design and Maintenance, Fundraising, and Leadership. These gifts were indispensable

to our growth as a Non-profit Agency that relies on Volunteers. Garry supported our growth and outreach bringing his significant skills to bear at critical times in our growth as a community.

As a member of the Board Garry engaged the role of Chair of our Capital Campaign for the Gathering Place in 2013. Garry's determination and belief in this Project was key to achieving our goal of raising \$2.5 M. dollars. In September 2017 we opened the doors of the Gathering Place – a Community Hub that, even in COVID times is touching the lives of in excess of 180 people per week.

Since the opening of the Gathering Place, Garry has taken on new responsibilities on our 'Green Team' a team of volunteers that works weekly – Saturday mornings – caring for the gardens and properties at our 4 community sites. His love for nature, our beautiful world, and our community of L'Arche London shines forth as he tends and nurtures the gardens of our community.

What sums up Garry's contribution as a volunteer to L'Arche London? Garry has always engaged his work as a loving and concerned friend. He is a friend with all members of our community – Core Members, Assistants, Leadership, our circle of Friends and Donors and our Board. He and his wife and partner Nancy have held our community through the years. Garry is the volunteer that is there at 7:00 in the morning on Walk-a-thon Day – setting up tents, hauling tables – with his wheel barrow and hammer – as he always has the right tools to get the job done. He loves welcoming each and every person to be part of the process – newcomers and long term friends alike. We as a community are, and have been so deeply blessed by Garry's service. We have been equipped, through his care, to continually widen our impact to people in our greater community, people with and without intellectual disabilities – excited to build community here together in London, Ontario.

## ABE DRENNAN – SINGER – SONGWRITER

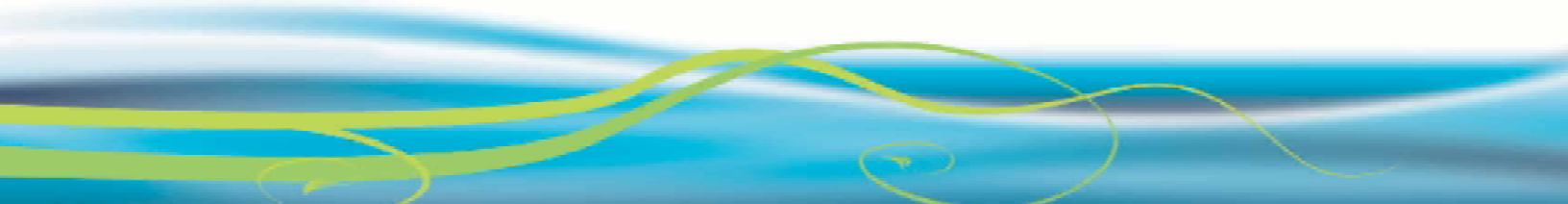
By Ann Ramundo

We are very grateful to Abe Drennan who performed during the night of our Gala. Since our Gala, we have been asked many questions about Abe, so we thought we would give you more information about this very talented singer/songwriter.

Located in a small town above the Arctic Circle, Abe Drennan writes pensive, inspiring folk songs that give a sense of hope. His newest project, a folk album titled, *The Iglu Sessions* was released on August 1st, 2019. Recorded in the historic Iglu Church in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, the album was produced by Los Angeles based singer/songwriter/producer, Jason Manns. His songs contain personal accounts and stories of living in the North on

the traditional lands of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people. However, they are also stories of loss, hope and healing for the future.

This spring/summer, it is exciting to hear that he is introducing a new single called the "Unknown Road." For more information about Abe and his wonderful music, please visit his website at [www.abedrennan.com](http://www.abedrennan.com) or through Facebook at [abedrennanmusic](https://www.facebook.com/abedrennanmusic). His music may be purchased through Apple music, iTunes and Spotify. If anyone would like to order merchandise or a signed copy of "The Iglu Sessions" album, just email Abe at his address: [abedrennan@gmail.com](mailto:abedrennan@gmail.com).



# MUSICAL MENTORS 2021

By *Laurel Martin*

The Musical Mentors program came to life early in 2021! Partnering with the London District Catholic School Board's School to Community Pathways classrooms and Western University's Music Education Program. Three of our own 'Musical Mentors', Jim, Catherine and Mike have had the opportunity to share their musical skills in virtual classrooms in and around London.



Jim M



Catherine C



Mike H



Seth S



LDCSB



Laurel M

Jim M who has had years of experience in community-based music enjoyed the opportunity to share his songs in several high school classes. Leading the students in musical exercises and seeing the them respond to his leadership has been valuable for both Jim and the students. One class even wrote a song for him on his last day and made a personalized card thanking him for his encouraging presence in their classroom this year. Jim says "It was fun teaching music to students! We couldn't go into the classrooms because of COVID, but it worked online. It was my first time helping in a high school class. I didn't know what it

would be like – I'd never done that before, but I did it! I felt proud."

Catherine is another one of our Musical Mentors. She said "I just LOVE being a musical mentor. Seeing the students play along with me while I sing, and being a mentor at schools where my friends have gone has been meaningful for me." Catherine, who plays the recorder and sings, took the time to learn the students' names and interests which made them feel really good about themselves. They in turn, looked forward to Catherine leading them each week, so a beautiful mutuality was created.

Mike also shone as a Musical Mentor this year. He prepared a meaningful introduction where he shared about growing up in a musical family. Being a musical mentor came naturally to Mike as both his mom and dad were music teachers, but he also worked hard, preparing some new songs on the piano and learning how to lead lessons over the internet. The students look up to Mike as they see him playing piano and leading rhythm games. Mike shows a lot of pride in his role as a Musical Mentor.

Seth is a student of Music Education at Western University. He joined the Musical Mentors program as a part of the Student Integrated Experience Program, and has continued on with us even now that his semester has ended. Seth's commitment and contribution to the program has been very much appreciated. Seth said "the

Musical Mentors program has been such an amazing experience. Watching the way that Mentors interact with the students has been incredible and has taught me so much about what it means to teach music"

For my part, it has been so exciting to see this program come to life. It is clearly having a positive impact on everyone involved. The high school students in the School to Community Pathways Program have been very engaged in the sessions and are glad to make the connection with our Mentors. One of the teachers named how important the program has been especially during this difficult season when they don't have access to too much outside the school. I have really enjoyed watching the Mentors meet the challenges of this virtual program. The connections that are being made are lovely to witness. I am grateful for the Ontario Trillium Foundation and their belief in our programs. I am also thankful for Mel, our new program coordinator. She supported the program from day one and was instrumental in connecting us with LDCSB and supporting so many of the details. It's wonderful to think what will be possible when we are able to use our building again, but in the meantime, it is rewarding to know that our Mentors have a way to reveal their gifts in the community. We are planning on running two, one week long virtual programs for young people using the Musical Mentors model this summer as well! Exciting times!

## LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE

By *Dominique Hand*

Recently our world marked the solemn one-year anniversary of the pandemic. Amidst reflecting on all the changes and loss, our community came together for an evening Joke Night – via Zoom! Boy, is there a reason they say laughter is the best medicine! It felt so good to share some smiles and laugh together, and to remember the joy we can all share.



# BETTER TOGETHER GALA 2021

By Ann Ramundo

Thank you to everyone who supported our Better Together Gala this year. As we reflect on the wonderful night, we remember the inspiration of the many people who came together to share their gifts, testimonials, and hard work, making our night truly special. Our community of family and friends was made stronger by everyone's support and care.

Our goal for the evening was to extend a warm welcome to all of our friends and family and invite others that may not have had the opportunity to share in our annual get together. We were delighted to discover

that over 500 people viewed our Gala that night, and since then we have reached over 800 people. If you didn't get a chance to watch our Gala on February 27th, you can still watch it on our YouTube channel at <https://bit.ly/BetterTogetherGala2021>.

We are also very excited to announce that we raised just over the \$30, 000 for our Bonjour Café. We are thrilled to know that the café can be re-opened again with the necessary funding, which could not have been reached without all of your kindness and generosity. Thank you!



Help us design the future of YOUR Gathering Place

SIGN UP to receive a Feedback Package in the mail and...

Receive a FREE DRINK and a chance to win a GIFT CARD to the Bonjour Café!



*Families, partners, neighbours, and friends of L'Arche,*

*As we look to build the future of The Gathering Place, we want to hear from our community; those who visit, support, work at, pass by, or live near our space.*

*Please take 15-20 minutes of your time to fill out a Feedback Survey here: <http://bit.ly/LarcheLondon> or scan the QR code to access the survey.*

*We appreciate and value your voices and thank you for helping us build the future of your Gathering Place.*



capital colour

*L'Arche London extends its 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.**

### Please direct my funds to:

Gathering Place  Operations/Homes  Day Programming

Please make the receipt to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Country: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you for your generosity**

Please mail this form to our office or contact us online at [office@larchelondon.org](mailto:office@larchelondon.org)

I want to do more! **Please enroll me as a Friend of L'Arche London with a monthly gift of:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_/month.

### Please send information on:

- Becoming a Volunteer
- Attending a worship service

4448 Colonel Talbot Rd.  
London, ON N6P 1B6

phone: 519-652-9778

email: [office@larchelondon.org](mailto:office@larchelondon.org)

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