



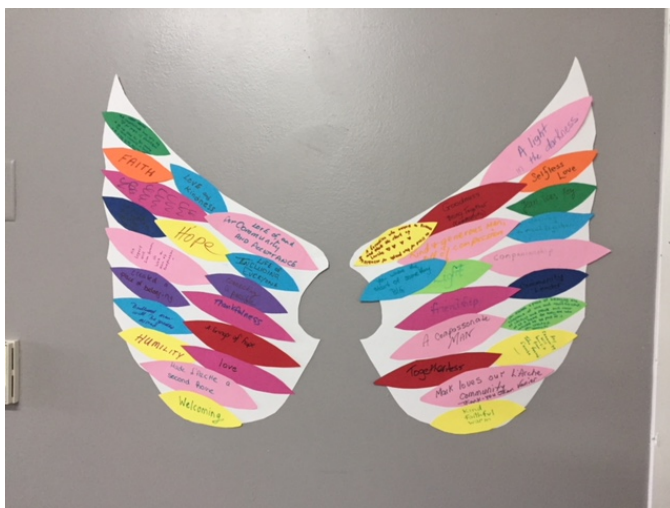
In Memoriam for Jean Vanier

Many people know the founding story of L'Arche: that Jean Vanier, after visiting a mental asylum in France in the 1960's was horrified at the depravity of the conditions he found there. The desperation and loneliness of the patients touched and broke his heart. As a result, he invited two men from the asylum, Raphael and Phillippe, to share a home with him. Their home and soon a community formed around friendship, common chores, common celebrations and a common faith. They had no idea what they were starting. But from that humble beginning grew the worldwide mission of L'Arche based on the belief in the intrinsic dignity of all persons, irrespective of intellectual ability, race or gender, irrespective of religious traditions and cultures. Jean Vanier welcomed all those who are often rejected and cast aside to be his brothers and sisters in L'Arche. He believed that every life should be celebrated, that each person deserved respect, and that we all have gifts to share. He encouraged his followers not to climb the social ladder but to climb down to find the light in the hearts of the poor, the displaced, and the suffering. His funeral service on Thursday, May 16, 2019 was a testament to his life: not held in a huge historic cathedral but in the simple chapel of his L'Arche community; no fine satin-lined casket, but a simple wooden coffin made by L'Arche Brittany; no world

leaders present, just members of his family and his L'Arche family and friends; the ceremony presided over by members of various faiths, male and female, a blind priest reading braille. The Indian Namaste was said: "Namaste" being a form of greeting and exchanging of peace. The service included a prayer for peace for our Muslim brothers and sisters. There was a chant in Japanese. Parts of the ceremony were signed. Most importantly core members from Trosly Breuil and some from L'Arche Communities around the world participated actively in the service. Jean Vanier will be remembered as a man of compassion, peace and inclusion and a man of deep spiritual insight. May he rest in peace.

United through friendship and community, we, members of L'Arche Avalon, are grateful to be a part of the international family of L'Arche. We give thanks for the light that Jean Vanier shone in the world through his life and his mission. We stand on his shoulders as we try to carry his light and his mission forward into our province.

~ Delivered by Lorraine A. at the Memorial for Jean Vanier



"I am deeply peaceful and trustful. I'm not sure what the future will be but God is good and whatever happens it will be the best. I am happy and give thanks for everything. My deepest love to each one of you."

~Jean Vanier – Final Message



Fun Times at L'arche Gatherings

At the May gathering this year we held our own community memorial in honor of Jean Vanier. We began by lighting candles which members placed on a table surrounding Jean Vanier's portrait. We then sang "Children of the Light." Lorraine said a few words about our founder and the legacy he has left (see above). Sheilah and Hannah, with the idea that Jean Vanier had just been given his wings, posted a pair of wings on the wall and gave everyone feathers on which



each person had to write a remembrance or a thought about Jean Vanier. The feathers were then attached to the wings. For fun everyone took a few photos in front of the wings.



Lewis and Alex manned the BBQ and served up delicious hamburgers and hot dogs which all enjoyed with a variety of salads and some lovely desserts.

Maureen got everyone to sign the book. Mark enjoyed his Coke. Paul ate his BBQ supper with great relish. A new family joined us to check out what L'Arche has to offer.

We had two visitors, Eva and Reyseil, from L'Arche Antigonish. They shared some information about their community and their own personal journeys with L'Arche.



It was a good way to celebrate the first long weekend of the summer.

"In the end, the most important thing is not to do things for people who are poor and in distress, but to enter into relationship with them, to be with them and help them find confidence in themselves and discover their own gifts."

~ Jean Vanier

"An interdenominational community does not want to become another church with its own services. No, an interdenominational community is called to bring people together and, through them, their churches. Its role is to help people discover each other more deeply, their beliefs and their beauty, and to help people discover that the things that unite are far deeper than the things that divide."

~ Jean Vanier

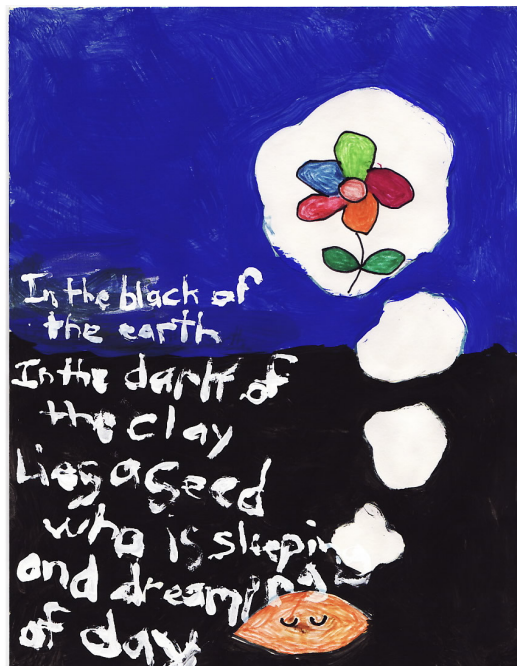
Stephen and Dougie – A Beautiful Friendship



My name is Stephen and this is a picture of me with my friend Dougie. It was taken when we started volunteering together. We do lots of things together. We paint together, write together, garden together, go to church together, shop together, and visit friends together. We have become the best of friends.

Fourteen years ago, I started volunteering at the Hoyles Home where Dougie lived. He introduced himself to me, and I read him a poem I had written. He had such joy in his eyes and in his voice, and he insisted that we read my poem to all his friends. I guess we are still reading that poem. It was written sixteen years ago during a time in my life when I remember needing those words. They became for me a prayer.

I believe we are all of us reaching out for friendship, and though some of us may now be alone, we will not always be. To be certain, there are times of darkness, but this darkness cannot last. There is waiting for us a new day. There is waiting for us a friend. For me, there was Dougie. He has helped that part of me that was broken. With his patience and his kindness, he has given me his understanding. He has placed his hand in mine, and because of that, I can give you this...



Dream in Colour

In the black of the earth, in the dark of the clay
lies a seed who is sleeping and dreaming of day.
As she starts to wake up she looks all around,
but all she can see is the dark underground.
She struggles some more to look for a light
that she never has seen but believes she just might.
She looks up above and follows her heart,
as she looks for the brilliance that is her new start.
And just when her fate seems impossibly black,
the day overhead appears through a crack.
So she sends up her stem into the day of the sun,
and unfurls a leaf as a sign that she's won.
And when she is up there's a sight to be seen -
it's the colour of her and she'll call it green!

~ Stephen Quinn