



In 1964, touched by the loneliness of people with intellectual disabilities abandoned in large institutions, Jean Vanier invited two men from an institution to live with him in a house in the French village of Trosly-Breuil. They called the house L'Arche, after Noah's Ark. Jean, his new housemates Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux, and a bevy of friends set about fixing up the house and garden and creating community. L'Arche spread rapidly. The first community outside France was founded in Canada in 1969.

## SPECIAL ISSUE

### *Celebrating L'Arche's Jubilee Year*

Last year we announced a hiatus for *A Human Future* as we focused on celebrating L'Arche's 50th anniversary. L'Arche regions and communities across Canada held many special events, ranging from a symposium at Dalhousie University on "Vulnerability and Society," to a festive three-day gathering in Trois Rivières, to a summer picnic in Nanaimo. In this special first issue of *A Human Future* for 2015, we offer some glimpses of our national and international celebrations. Expect three more issues in the coming year, once again featuring interviews with Canadian thinkers on topics of concern. – *Beth Porter, ed.*

## Marking L'Arche's 50th on the National Stage

A series of national events celebrating L'Arche's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary with representatives from L'Arche across Canada and the L'Arche Canada Foundation took place in the Ottawa-Gatineau area on November 9 to 11, 2014. When Her Royal Highness Princess Anne was planning her visit to Canada she requested to meet with members of L'Arche to help us celebrate L'Arche's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. (She is familiar with L'Arche in the U.K. and has a special connection with L'Arche Edinburgh.) L'Arche representatives from each region across Canada came to visit with Princess Anne at Rideau Hall and tell her about current undertakings in their communities and regions. Jules Paris of L'Arche Ottawa (front right in photo) escorted the princess around the room as she met with the various groupings of L'Arche people.



Stephane Bastarache of L'Arche Saint John shows photos of his community to Princess Anne. Left: John O'Donnell of L'Arche



Her Excellency Sharon Johnston (front centre) hosted the Rideau Hall gathering.

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**We organized three other events to coincide with the Rideau Hall reception...**



Members of L'Arche (above) carry doves on poles miming roles in the story of the founding of the first community in Trosly, France, while others narrate the story. In the mime, Leonard Stocker (right) of L'Arche Winnipeg holds the dove representing Jean Vanier.

A gathering was held in the Centre Block of Parliament, hosted by the 42nd Speaker of the Senate, The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella, during which we told the story of the Founding of L'Arche through narrative and mime and pictorial panels. The gathering culminated with a reading of the L'Arche Jubilee Prayer, led by chaplains of various faiths.



(left) The Honourable Noël A. Kinsella and Hollee Card, National Leader for L'Arche Canada

In a theatre of the National Gallery of Canada, we held the première of the new Vision TV (Norflicks production) film “Love and Belonging: Jean Vanier at L'Arche,” and also the screening of the new French film “Pareil pas pareil” (Alike, But Not Alike), created by L'Arche communities in Quebec in collaboration with L'Arche Canada. [Click here to view “Pareil pas pareil.”](#) Click cc for English subtitles.



(l to r) Army Command Chaplain LCol Leslie Dawson, Leeland Haslam of L'Arche Sudbury, Imam Samy Metwally of the Ottawa Muslim Association, and Alice Ngendakumana of L'Arche Edmonton in front of a panel showing the first L'Arche home in Trosly.



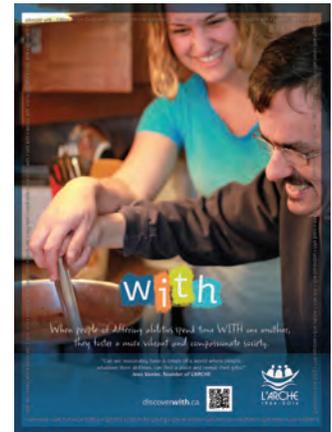
Jean Dansereau

A reception in Gatineau honoured long-time L'Arche member Jean Dansereau who had recently received the Governor General's “Caring Canadian Award.”

**Visit [discoverwith.ca/larche](http://discoverwith.ca/larche) to find out more about the story of the founding of L'Arche and to view the five large panels that were displayed in the Centre Block of Parliament.**

## Spreading the message of “With”

L’Arche works to shift society’s perception of people who have an intellectual disability. One way we do this is to present positive images of people enjoying the kind of genuine friendship that can develop between people of differing abilities when they come truly to know one another. With a generous donation of magazine advertising space, we placed “With” ads in *Canadian Family*, *Toronto Life*, *Ottawa Magazine*, *Fashion*, and *The Walrus* throughout 2014. Financial contributions from a few Toronto-area citizens allowed us also to run the ads on city buses and subway trains. As well, a feature article by Leslie Scrivener in the *Toronto Star*, entitled “The Power of ‘With,’” drew attention to our message. She quotes John O’Donnell, who initiated the “With” campaign: “Many believe the work of L’Arche is charity... Instead, it’s about justice; about living with and doing things with people of differing ability... It’s about living in joy with one another” and “genuinely including people.”



“With” advertisements (above). L’Arche Canada created a new entry point to its website to emphasize “With” (below). Visit [www.discoverwith.ca](http://www.discoverwith.ca).



## 24 Hours for World Peace



For this year’s Peace poster we adapted this “With” photo of two young L’Arche members toasting their friendship.

As the new year 2015 began, L’Arche participated in the second annual “24 Hours for World Peace” vigil, during which people around the world posted messages and stories of peace. In 2014, Jean Vanier provided an inaugural video for this event and we prepared a poster titled “Peace begins with understanding.” This year’s poster, “Peace begins with a smile,” reads: *As people of good will everywhere prepare to welcome the New Year, yearning for God’s peace on earth, let us remember that “it is always the most fragile among us who are the closest to their humanity, to their suffering, and to their need to be loved. It is they who show the rest of us the way to live in truth and in love.” (Jean Vanier)*

## The International Jubilee Celebration in France

L'Arche International invited the oldest community in each of the 35 countries where L'Arche exists to send two delegates to a celebration with Jean Vanier in France in the fall of 2014. Agnieszka Mlynarczyk, a homes coordinator and Kim Lageer, a member of one of the L'Arche Daybreak homes and an artist in the craft studio were chosen for this honour. They both loved the trip and this first opportunity for each of them to experience L'Arche at the International level and to spend time with Jean. They were with L'Arche Paris for the first week and joined them in preparing for a large L'Arche France parade where they were joined by many members of the public. The parade wound its way through the streets of Paris to Place de la République, where Jean Vanier spoke. The second week they stayed in Compiègne, near the original community in Trosly, where a three-day celebration was held with the delegates from around the world. Since their return to Canada they have reported back to the Canadian communities and shared their experiences

through photographs. In speaking of the trip, Agnieszka emphasizes Jean's message: "...L'Arche brings people together from around the world to work in peace—people with different gifts, abilities, faith, culture, and skills. We are all responsible to be messengers of peace. We are artisans of peace."

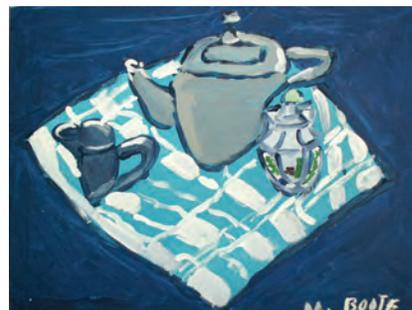


Agnieszka, Jean, and Kim (right) at the L'Arche celebration in Trosly, France. (Above) 50th anniversary parade in Paris.



## L'Arche Artists from Around the World

The Online International Art Exhibition was launched to coincide with the International Day for Persons with Disabilities, December 3, 2014. Artworks have been chosen from artists with disabilities in L'Arche communities around the world. Jacquie Boughner, a Canadian artist and L'Arche member, curated this juried exhibition which brought together art critics from several countries. The Exhibit may be viewed at [art.larche.org](http://art.larche.org).



"Tea on a Blanket"  
by Melina Boote, 2014  
Acrylic on canvas  
30cm x 40cm  
L'Arche Vancouver

[www.larche.ca/en/inspiration](http://www.larche.ca/en/inspiration)



The L'Arche movement was founded by Jean Vanier, in France in 1964. Today there are 147 communities of L'Arche on six continents, 29 in Canada. In L'Arche, people with intellectual disabilities and those who come to assist them share life together.

*A Human Future* is offered as a contribution to the Canadian conversation about values and the fostering of a society where everyone belongs and can make a contribution.