



News Release

L'Arche Winnipeg, Inc.

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L'Arche Celebrates Opening of New Home

It was a celebration of thanks and it marked the official opening of *Dayspring*, L'Arche Winnipeg's new wheelchair accessible home and soon to be completed community-gathering place at 525 Day Street. The event was held to thank and recognize the many committee volunteers and major donors of L'Arche Winnipeg's "Join our Journey" Campaign.

"The many supporters of this campaign have enabled L'Arche to keep a promise of providing a lifetime home for four members with a developmental disability, who are aging and becoming more physically infirm," explained Dennis Butcher, Leader of the L'Arche Winnipeg community. "This home will ensure they will have a safe haven and accessible place to live for the rest of their lives and that they will never be isolated or abandoned."

L'Arche Winnipeg's "Join Our Journey" Campaign was launched on September 9th 2002, but the Board's vision for meeting the changing needs of aging members with disabilities started in 1997. The campaign raised \$664,000 towards land and construction, and an additional \$136,000 was announced October 15, 2003 under the tri-level Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative (WHHI).

Over 900 donors contributed including 122 major donations of \$500 or more, coming from government, foundations, service clubs, religious organizations, businesses and individuals.

During the luncheon, a gift of a framed photo was presented to all campaign committee volunteers and major donors. The event also included the unveiling of a 4' x 5' donors' wall quilt, prepared by Mrs. Elizabeth Beazley. Bearing the names of all major donors, the quilt was designed using the campaign logo, originally created by Réal Bérard. The heart shaped butterfly under a house roof symbolizes the transformation of hearts in L'Arche and the prayers, love and support of contributors to L'Arche's "Join Our Journey" Campaign.

Additional individuals recognized for their gifts towards the campaign include:

- Two benefit concerts, one by Robert Lebel of Quebec at the St. Boniface Cathedral and one by local Christian musician and singer Jon Buller at The Meeting Place.
- Eleven framed works of art, painted by Arnold Ross.
- Stained glass windows set between the den and the livingroom, by Joy Bamford.

The home was designed by Vic Giesbrecht of Nejmark Architect, and construction was managed by John Froese of Jilmark Construction. Tours of the home were available during the afternoon. It has eight bedrooms, four for members and four for their assistants. Butcher expects to have the home set up and people moved in by the end of November.

Butcher noted that while this is a day to give thanks, L'Arche still needs help in meeting a shortage of funds and live-in assistants. He explained that the plans call for the construction of a community-gathering place with kitchen and two washrooms in the basement. "With construction costs higher than expected, we'll have to wait until we can raise the additional \$50,000 required to complete the basement." He also stressed the need for more live-in assistants. "We are still short six live-in assistants. With the shortage, the opening of the new home will mean the closure of a rented home on Munroe Avenue as well as the reorganization and relocation of various members and assistants."

L'Arche, established in 1964 by Jean Vanier, is now an international organization with 130 communities in 29 countries. It creates homes where people with developmental disabilities and their assistants live, work, and share their lives together. L'Arche started in 1973 in Winnipeg and today operates six homes and two independent living apartments, supporting 28 people with disabilities and their volunteer assistants.

To learn more about L'Arche Winnipeg or how you can help, please visit www.mts.net/~larchwpg or call (204) 237-0300.

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