



H(ARK)!

A Sign of Hope in a Broken World

Volume 3 Number 1

Winter 2007/2008

PLEASE JOIN US

APRIL 5TH

for the first

**Friends of L'Arche Atlanta
Inclusive Coffee House
and Open Mike at 7 p.m.
at Oakhurst Presbyterian
Church**

Music, diverse talent, fun, coffee and desserts will be on the menu. If you have a talent or if you like watching people who have a talent, we hope you will join us as different acts take the stage during this coffee house fundraiser. We will also share a short slide show and presentation about L'Arche. For more information, contact Talley Wells at 404-627-6756 or talleywells@alumni.duke.edu. Our second coffee house will be in May at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Grant Park.



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The Mystery We Call L'Arche

Bob Berlon
Board President

L'Arche is both predictable and totally mysterious at the same time. What we know for sure is that L'Arche will always be that place where people with and without intellectual disabilities will live together in a spirit of friendship and hospitality. It is a place where community is grown organically and its members develop their gifts of presence and vulnerability. I recall a community in Akron, Ohio where one of its core members had lived in the basement of his parents' home for 55 years. He had never left his personal prison until his parents died and he was admitted to an institution before he came to the community. As he grew in this community, he developed his most significant gift – he assumed responsibility for emptying the home's wastepaper baskets. His pride and his awareness that he was contributing an important effort made him a valuable member of the community. In L'Arche, each member blesses and serves every other member. It's a human endeavor that struggles to find meaning and relationships in the midst of our daily lives.

As familiar as L'Arche is in



our common experiences, its mystery is almost impossible to grasp or to understand. The mystery of love and forgiveness eludes our analysis of what our expectations would make us believe. We are hard-pressed to tell others what L'Arche is all about. We can only appreciate its richness and its value through the unknown gifts of our hearts. It's when we enter the silence of our own spirits do we discover both the meaning of our relationships and the mystery of God. In ten years in a Faith & Light Community in Dayton, this discovery surpassed any period of my life in terms of growth and appreciation. Every one of us has experienced falling in love

for the first time. It is a feeling no words can convey. It is this unknowable yet essential experience of our lives that determines who we are and how we seek to live out our lives. In the same way, L'Arche is a life-giving experience that grows in wonder and grace. So, when you hear us inviting you to participate in this journey of L'Arche Atlanta, we hope you will appreciate that L'Arche is no different from your own experiences of family and community yet is a place that exemplifies how the mystery of God embraces each one of us. Yes, we are zealous about the work we must do. We need your gifts to make L'Arche a reality in Atlanta.

Meet Our Board

Each newsletter, we are going to highlight a couple of members of our Board of Directors. We want you to learn a little about who they are and what they are bringing to our community.

Isaac Baroi, Chaplain of the Board of Directors, is a well-known writer and journalist who resided in Bengal and India prior to relocating to the United States. Isaac is the author of 32 books in Bengali. Isaac also lived for ten years in the Taizé monastery in France as a monk. Brother Roger, the founder of the Taizé community, dedicated his book *The Wonder of a Love* to Isaac's parents. During this time Isaac read Jean Vanier's book *Be Not Afraid* and fell in love with "doing kindness." In addition, Isaac and another Taizé Brother were invited by Mother Teresa to pray and work for reconciliation and peace in Calcutta, India. Isaac went and spent three years, from 1982-1985, living in India in the slums, with farmers in villages, and with orphan children. He worked with lepers, tuberculosis patients, HIV patients, and the disabled people of the Asha-Niketan community, one of the first communities of L'Arche in India. As a result he got to know well Mother Teresa of Calcutta. He currently works as a writer and freelance journalist, teaches at the International School, and continues his work as a peace educator and international human rights activist. He is married to Monica and has two children, Patricia (Gitanjali) and Patrick (Mon). He adopted a disabled Muslim boy named Muhammad Siraj as his son. Siraj's legs were amputated as a result of a train accident at the age of 7 years. Siraj is now 26 years old. Isaac has been working with the Friends of L'Arche Atlanta group since its inception in 2003 and is currently the Chaplain of the Board of Directors.



Susan Koziol was a L'Arche assistant for 18 months in Cleveland, OH ('80-'81) before she left for Washington, DC in June of '81 to help start the L'Arche community there. She was on the founding board of the DC community for ten years. Susan has been in Atlanta for four years. She was thrilled about finding out about the group that wanted to start L'Arche here in Atlanta and that was what clinched the deal in choosing to move here. Susan works for an accounting firm that provides technical support.



A Word on Fundraising...

Talley Wells
Fundraising Chairperson

As this year draws to a close, all of us on the board and the different committees of Friends of L'Arche Atlanta, Inc. want to thank everyone who has contributed to helping make L'Arche a reality in Atlanta. We have been thrilled with the support in our community and beyond as we have spread the word about our plans.

The fundraising team will be moving into high gear as we work to raise up to \$500,000 in the coming two years to open a home. We will be making personal appeals to individuals, churches, and community groups. We will also be writing grant applications and holding events. We are planning to have some fun informal "coffee house" gatherings at churches to spread the word about what we are doing and planning. We also will have a big event this coming fall. Stay tuned for details!

This is an exciting time for Friends of L'Arche Atlanta, Inc. We hope you will thoughtfully and prayerfully consider making a donation to help us create a L'Arche home in Atlanta.

Report from Marathon Man!

Judy and I had a wonderful time in Portland and I managed to finish the marathon in the time I had projected of 7 hours and 30 minutes. Judy took the picture shown here of me as I was about to round the corner to the finish line—hallelujah! While I was hiking around the Portland area, Judy went to the local L'Arche community and spent time visiting with them. It is always something to experience the welcome you get when you go to a L'Arche home. Portland's L'Arche Nehalem community was true to form and Judy had a wonderful time thanks to Tamara, the community leader, and the four Core members. An assistant and a board member also came by to say hello and wish us well in our efforts to open a home here in Atlanta. I truly appreciate all who supported me in my endeavor to raise funds for our L'Arche Atlanta project and they are acknowledged on page 3. I hope to repeat this feat in Dublin, Ireland this coming October and Judy and I plan to visit the L'Arche community in Cork while we are on the Emerald Isle. There are L'Arche communities of grace all around the world and we look forward to having one here in Atlanta!

Gratefully, Chuck Miller



Chuck rounding the corner as he completes the Marathon in Portland!

Our Journey to Atlanta

Micah Friddle

Harbor House Assistant

On behalf of Robert, Katrina, Jean, and myself, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to spend a couple of days in celebration with your community. Robert was thrilled to have so many new faces smiling at him; Katrina was elated to have the chance to offer her perspective, and Jean and I were amazed and encouraged by the dedication, optimism, and openness that we encountered in the people that we met.

As we began the journey back home from Atlanta, and I had time to reflect on what we had seen, I became confident that what we gained from our time there far outweighed anything that we were able to offer. I had previously heard it said that one important dimension of L'Arche is the connection that all the communities within the federation have with each other. L'Arche is more than just a bunch of individual communities who have things in common; we are all bound together in one spirit, called to one life, given one purpose.

And yet, such unity is hard to keep in mind



Board member, Rev. Catherine Boothe hangs out with Robert, a Harbor House core member at Moe's Southwest Grill in the Virginia Highlands.

when our perspective is limited only to experience within one individual community. Our time celebrating with the Atlanta pre-project, then, was an opportunity for us to live out that part of our mission which calls us into communion with those outside of our own house, our own town. We were given an opportunity to remember that we are a part of something much bigger than ourselves, and bigger than the 40 or so members of our com-

munity in Jacksonville. By spending that time with the board members and friends of L'Arche Atlanta, our vision of L'Arche grew that much larger, our understanding of our calling grew that much clearer, and our confidence in the mission of L'Arche grew that much stronger.

The fun-raising event showed that, even as a pre-project, L'Arche Atlanta has already gotten one crucial thing down—celebrating! Nothing says “community” like a bunch of people packed in a small room with lots of food and even more smiles. We were all deeply honored to be a part of your celebration, and we are confident that the members of your community have what it takes to see the project

through. We are holding your efforts in our prayers regularly, and we also extend an invitation to any who would like to spend a few days in our community.

(This article by Micah refers to the attendance by himself, another assistant and two core members from L'Arche Jacksonville at our October get together at the Gathering Grounds coffeeshouse.)

We give thanks to and pray for our recent donors:

Isaac Baroi
Maro Cooper
Timothy & Marilyn Hanlon
David & Laveta Hilton

In Memory of:

Karen S. Miller
Infants Caleb & Emmanuel Schaefer

Pledges towards Chuck Miller's Marathon:

Bob Berlon
Don & Jane Blankers
Evelyn Cannon
Tom & Charlene Courtney
Steve & Nancy Hamlet
Tom Kuipers
Cynthia & Franck Launay-Fallasse
Bernie & Meg May
Andrew & Amy Miller

James & Mary Laubenthal
Jim & Marilyn Michaud
Chuck & Judy Miller
Tom & Alexandra Roddy

Given by:

Susanna Miller
Brian & Joslyn Ogden Schaefer
Jared & Judy Ogden

Msgr. Alan Nagai
Debbie Parker
Peg Petersen
JoAnn & Gene Reinold
Brian & Mary Beth Stickney
Linda Miller & Phil Strom
Gerard & Betty Sweeney
Ching-Wen & Carl Taylor
St. Clare's Catholic Women's Circle
Talley & Laura Magistro Wells
Jane Whisler

In celebration of Judy Miller's 60th birthday:

Michael & Carol Clair
Stephanie Eiden
Steve & Nancy Hamlet
David & Gwen Hammond
Bob & Joanne Manka
David & Barbara McClanahan
Andrew & Amy Miller
Gene & JoAnn Reinold
David & Kathy Stenbridge
Brian & Mary Beth Stickney
Pat & Joanne Tobin
Rick & Anne Van Galder
John & Pat Van House
Tom & Cindy Wichser
Alex & Susan Williams

A Big Thank You!!

Thank you to Susannah Davis and Susan Anderson for the use of Gathering Grounds coffee shop for our Gathering-Gaining-Giving event on October 25, 2007.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOB BERLON, PRESIDENT

LAURA MAGISTRO WELLS, VICE-PRESIDENT & SECRETARY

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KEVIN YORK-SIMMONS

Coming Soon to a Computer Near You...

(H)ARK! will be available in electronic format. In order to be good stewards of our resources we would like to email you the newsletter or newsletter link. Please send us your email address to info@larcheatlanta.org.

IDENTITY OF L'ARCHE

We are people, with and without developmental disabilities, sharing life in communities of faith. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together. We seek to build a world that recognizes the unique value of every person and our need of one another.

The MISSION OF L'ARCHE is

To make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships;

To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society;

To foster community that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and responds to the changing needs of our members.



A sign of hope in a broken world...

PO Box 923451

Norcross, GA 30010-3451

404.725.2689

info@larcheatlanta.org

www.larcheatlanta.org

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