



## L'Arche Australia Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2020

*Thanking Vera Waldby for her role as Board Chair in L'Arche Perth and welcoming Derek Meates to the role.*



*Members of L'Arche Perth arrive at New Norcia for their Community Weekend.*



### *Welcome to the Summer edition!*

I hope this newsletter finds you and your families safe and well as we live this time of restrictions due to COVID-19.

We continue to be blessed in our efforts to live and announce the Identity and Mission of L'Arche in our lives and we feature the lives of two of our members - Kaylene Fleming and Veronica Dunphy. We are very thankful to Eileen Glass who met with Kaylene and Veronica and scribed the narrative.

L'Arche Bendigo welcomed three members into shared living – how exciting. Jim Rolfe a member shares their story with us. I hope you enjoy reading their story!

On behalf of everyone in L'Arche I would like to **THANK** you for your generous and ongoing support. We would like to wish you a very Merry Christmas and hope that 2021 will be a year of many blessings for you.

*David Treanor National Leader, Claire Lawler, Deputy National Leader, Eileen Glass Fundraising and Development Co-ordinator and Julia Walters Board Chairperson, L'Arche Australia.*



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### From the National Leader

Congratulations to L'Arche Bendigo who have welcomed three members who live with the experience of an intellectual disability into Community! We are so excited and amazed at God's grace; though COVID-19 stopped our world in so many ways we are blessed with the opportunity to welcome Matthew, Yvonne and Andrew. Thanks to the many people who work hard in Bendigo and Melbourne to make this happen.

In Perth, Project Co-ordinator/Community Leader, Greg Smith has developed good relationships with members and leads a team of people to offer hospitality. On behalf of L'Arche Perth, he has also applied to the NDIA to register L'Arche.

**NEW WEBSITE:** We have upgraded our website, launching on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020!  
Check us out: [www.larche.org.au](http://www.larche.org.au)

### The Two of Us : A Forty Year Journey

In 2020 two long term members of L'Arche Genesaret celebrated their **40 year anniversary of life in L'Arche**. Kaylene Fleming and Veronica Dunphy have been part of each other's lives through all those years. They first met in Canberra in 1982 when Kaylene was living in the house in Yarralumla and Veronica came to visit while in Australia during the two years she spent in L'Arche Daybreak, just north of Toronto in Canada. Veronica remembers Kaylene at that time as a young woman facing up to the challenge of being treated as an adult and wrestling with the growing pains of that period in her life. Veronica herself was in the process of discovering, for the first time in her life, a place where she felt accepted unconditionally. The experience of being loved as she was and knowing forgiveness in daily life deepened in her a sense that she had embarked on a journey that she was called to live for the rest of her life.

In 1986 Veronica moved to Canberra and lived at the Gladden St house with Kaylene. There she discovered Kaylene's capacity for testing new assistants – and that

when one passes the test a deeper and richer relationship unfolds.

Along with many others, Veronica would say that Kaylene is a woman who is always true to herself, whatever the situation. 'Kaylene taught me to discover the child within me', says Veronica, 'she has a wonderful capacity for celebrating through singing and dancing. She is also a great communicator, with a depth of knowledge and understanding which belies the limitations of her capacity for verbal communication. There have been many times when she has outwitted us all when we were trying to teach her new skills'.

These two wonderful women have contributed so much to L'Arche Genesaret over the past four decades and we are very proud of them.

*Eileen Glass. November 2020*

### Mission and COVID-19

We have all experienced the impact of COVID-19 in our lives and our Communities, especially in Victoria have lived an extended period of lockdown. The inability to connect with each other face-to-face has meant finding opportunities for our communities to connect, using creative ways to live during the lockdowns, which unfolded differently in each State and Territory. From Zoom Community Nights, Prayer Gatherings, Knit & Natter times, Uno & Card games between houses, Coffee Mornings across State boundaries...people made sure to keep in touch as much as possible!

The Leaders across L'Arche have met regularly to ensure the necessary health processes are in place to respond to the threat COVID-19 poses to members.

The L'Arche Australia Community & Spirituality Forum has started meeting this year. The Forum is a space of support and sharing for Communities, projects and seed groups to foster unity at the national level, nourish members, strengthen our identity and share and distribute resources.

#### L'Arche Bendigo-The Journey to a Home Based Community

L'Arche Bendigo welcomed Yvonne, Matthew and Andrew into a house-based community in October. This is a time of great joy for their families, the bigger L'Arche family and the community of Bendigo. It represents the culmination of a lot of planning and the dedicated work of many over a long period of time. The decision to adopt the L'Arche mission grew from parents continually looking beyond disability to explore ways for their children to lead fulfilling and faith filled lives.



Along the way they gained support from the Catholic Education Office, Catholic Care, and the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst. This supported initiatives such as Faith and Light and the integration of their children into mainstream schools. The prospect of L'Arche came into sharp focus as they began to explore options for their adult children. With funding support from the Maureen Considine Fund and under the direction of David Bristow and Phil Billington, L'Arche Bendigo was launched under the governance of L'Arche Melbourne in 2015.

Michelle Brett was appointed the first Coordinator followed by Margaret Segrave in 2017. A 'House of Welcome' and a community gathering space was set up. There was a strong focus on building relationships and community during the early stages. This included the extending of hospitality, Day Programs and some

short-term overnight stays. There have always been healthy levels of community support and volunteering. The dream of one day having a home-based community was always kept alive. Greater possibilities were realised as the community began to explore the complexities of NDIS funding and the acquisition of Bethany, another home, in 2018. This provided the opportunity to build relationship through increased overnight stays, and was very successful as a transition to the home-based community now in place.

L'Arche Bendigo has maintained a community focus. There are regular opportunities for core members to participate in retreats and pilgrimages, excursions and the leisure activities in Bendigo. A range of Cultural and Art activities are accessed through visits and volunteers who generously give of their time and talent. Community gatherings are always a highlight with people gathering for prayer, sharing and a meal.



The number of core members has grown to eleven. They are supported by twelve Assistants who live the L'Arche tradition of relationships, hospitality, and spirituality within an environment of fun and enjoyment. The Bendigo community is most grateful to the L'Arche family for providing the model of community it had sought for so long.

*Jim Rolfe*  
Deputy Chair, L'Arche Melbourne-Bendigo Board

**L'Arche is a worldwide federation of people, with and without intellectual disabilities, working together for a world where we all belong**

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