

L'ARCHE ADELAIDE NEWSLETTER



**The person
before us:
who do we
see?**



Twenty years ago this month I was appointed by my church to work as a Disability Chaplain. Those years have been amongst the richest of my life. What a blessing!
My first role was as a chaplain to the people of Julia Farr, a long-standing, eastern suburbs facility for people with various, major disabilities. I found the first weeks so burdensome. Everywhere I saw “problems.” People struggling with wheelchairs, some who couldn’t talk, others who walked in a laboured manner, others with aggressively degenerative impairments. As a naive pastoral practitioner what could I offer these “burdened” people?
Soon after I met with some church-based Julia Farr volunteers. I wanted to thank them for the caring work they did at JF. I then asked them a question I should’ve asked myself: “How could you do your work at JF even better? – I expected a long pause but one bloke soon uttered the most important words I’ve ever heard in my disability ministry:

“We could learn to look these people in the eye.”

What was he saying? Instead of just pushing these people in their chairs from one place to the other, instead of only seeing people with problems to be negotiated, **let’s stop ... look the other in the eye, person to person ... see them for who they truly are, a person who, just like us, is a whole human being created exquisitely “in the image of God” (Gen.1:27).**
In our life in L’Arche there are people with daily hurdles to navigate. That must be taken seriously. But, before all else, may we look to our neighbour, able-bodied or impaired, and cherish the whole human being we see. That’s when the burden starts to lift (see poem, p.2).

Rev. Dr. Trevor Whitney, Chair, L’Arche Adelaide Board

This newsletter is for the members & supporters
of L’Arche Adelaide

Editor: Lyn Whitney

larchadelaide@gmail.com
www.facebook.com/larchadelaide

Contributions to the newsletter are welcome



Recent News

- Our new Community Development Coordinator, Lara Damiani, was commissioned at our Community Weekend in January. She started her role early last December and has been busy with NDIS registration and meeting core people.
- Our Ambassador, Ass. Prof. Lorna Hallahan, spoke at our Community Weekend, and was well received. She will be speaking at our next forum on 2nd May.
- Singer / songwriter, Leigh Newton helped a group create a new L'Arche Adelaide song.
- Our application for NDIS registration has been submitted!

Happy Birthday!

Feb

Apr

May

14 Di S

7 Lisa C

5 Andrew P

21 Laura Z

10 Kelly P

6 Jill S

22 Trevor W

10 Harry W

11 Eleanor P

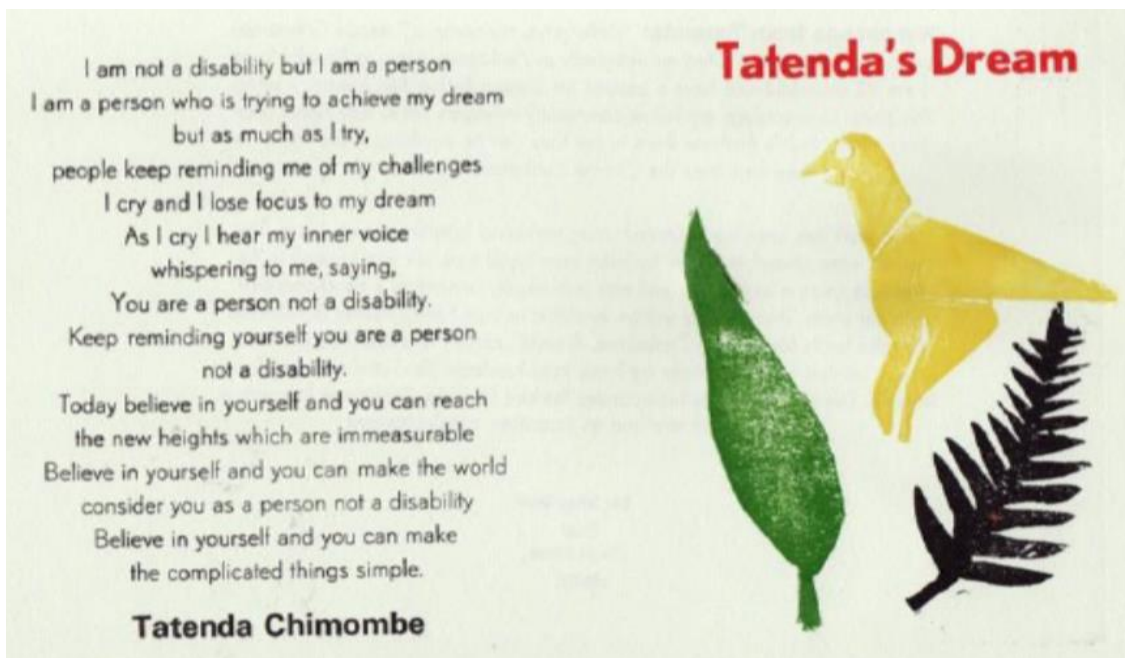
16 Ted F

24 James Z

22 Anthony P

23 Nora B

Let us know if you want to be added to our birthday list.



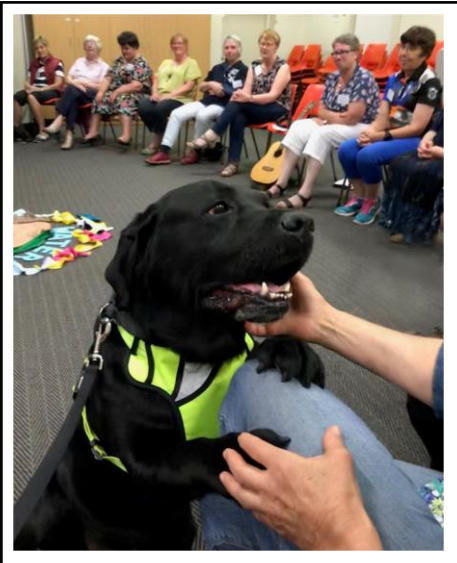
Tatenda is a member of L'Arche Zimbabwe and she has written this poem – 'I am not a disability but I am a person', which Peter Andrews, a member of L'Arche Kapiti, has handprinted using linocut and traditional letterpress techniques.

There are nine (9) copies available for sale at \$10 each. Also one (1) copy on handmade flax paper, suitable for framing, for \$25.00. Please contact Eileen at fundraising@larche.org.au or on 0413 898 013 to purchase. All proceeds go to L'Arche Zimbabwe.

Prayer Points

- We pray for Lara Damiani, our Community Development Coordinator, as she settles into her role & spends time in preparing the NDIS Registration Application. May God grant her wisdom, patience & understanding as she learns the people & processes of L'Arche.
- We pray for our International Leaders, Stephan and Stacey, and our Australian Leaders, David, Claire and Julia, that they can carry out their roles in a responsible & faithful manner.
- We pray for the recreation of Stage 2 of the L'Arche International Charter Process that is being rolled out across the Federation.
- We pray for our Board members: Trevor Whitney, Rochelle Whelan, Lyn Whitney, Shelley Cochrane, Lisa Christo, Julie Sutherland & Mel Zerner as they meet monthly to manage the governance, operations & planning of L'Arche Adelaide. Give them guidance & wisdom to make good decisions for the benefit of L'Arche, its members & friends for the future.

Raven – our 4-legged community member



In his striking high-visibility harness, contrasted beautifully with his jet-black coat, Raven the Labrador has been a regular participant of our L'Arche Adelaide gatherings for several years. To know him is to love him. He's a gentle giant and spreader of goodwill. I've affectionately called him "Wags" for the tail that can swipe a glass off a low-lying coffee table. Raven lives with my friend Dianne but spends lots of time with me when she works nights as a nurse. Over the years Raven has become a part of the L'Arche community. He loves community prayer, barbecues, cricket in the park, cakes and cuddles.

I first registered there was something very special about Raven when we attended a Sunday L'Arche service at Highgate Park's chapel several years ago. Normally he'd sit quietly by my side, but this day he pulled at the lead while

Rev Trevor was delivering an inspiring message. I tried to hold him back, but I could feel all his 40kg pulling. Trevor indicated it was ok to let him go. Raven walks up to a gentleman in a wheelchair and sits in front of him. He patiently waits while this man took half a minute to make eye contact, and they locked gazes. Ever so gently Raven puts his wet nose under the man's hand, which was curled up in a way I can only imagine was painful. Never before had I seen that gentleman light up as he did. Raven wanders casually back.

Raven is nearly 12 years of age. He's had two surgeries recently, and there'll be no more. In his twilight years we'll focus on quality rather than quantity of time. His gentle presence inspires calm. He silently communicates with his loving presence. Just as many of our L'Arche core members teach us, you don't need words to communicate.

To me he's a shining beacon of love and an example for all of us to enjoy the simple things: food with friends, quality time together, laughter, the joy in a song and dance, the smell of freshly cut grass and daytime naps. My friend calls him a "once in a generation dog". I think he's right.

Rochelle, Deputy Chairperson, L'Arche Adelaide Board

Finances

The net cash position of L'Arche Adelaide on 15 February 2021 was \$45717. We have received some generous donations over the last 3 months. THANK YOU!

We have also conducted our Community Weekend on the weekend of 16 & 17 January 2021 & received member subscriptions & meal donations which has been partly offset by meal & entertainment costs.

The financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2020 were presented to the AGM at the Community Weekend. L'Arche Adelaide made a surplus of \$2901 for the year.

We are aiming to have net assets of approx. \$80000 by September 2021 when we are expected to commence our accommodation house for people with disabilities. This would assist us to have sufficient working capital to set up the house, apply for NDIS registration & provide some buffer for unexpected expenditures or a drop in rental income.

Please consider making regular donations in the next 8 months to assist us in meeting our goal. Thank you! For further information, contact our Honorary Treasurer, Mel Zerner:

Mobile 0418 852 353; Email melz@messengerzerner.com.au

Direct deposits to: [L'Arche Adelaide Inc.](#) BSB 704942 Account No 153579

Vale: Our dearly loved friend, Helen Warmingham



Helen with Shelley and James at one of L'Arche Adelaide's community weekends

We remember the life of Helen who died on 8 February 2021 at the age of 82. She was a dear friend to us all in L'Arche Adelaide, having been a valued member since almost the beginning of our community in 2013. We pray for her family and friends as they mourn her loss, but we know that she is in a better place with her Heavenly Father.

She believed in the L'Arche ethos and held deeply to the dignifying understanding that all people, including all people with disabilities, are whole human beings created in God's image. She had an ecumenical heart, a strong faith, a natural acceptance of those around her, and a warm, fun-loving smile.

Helen's cerebral palsy meant that her early years were fraught with frustrations

and trials, however she always tackled life with determination, patience and perseverance. She never let her disability define her.

After her school years, Helen worked as an administrator at the Poliomyelitis Department of Public Health, then the Tuberculosis Branch and finally in the South Australian Health Commission Library. She was in public service for 41 years.

Helen was 18 when she became a member of the Girl Guide disabled Rangers group. After being in the Ranger group for several years she was asked to run an active Guide Company. Helen was a Guide group leader for 38 years. As a Guide Helen travelled all around Australia attending camps, conferences, jamborees and meetings, as well as attending the Commonwealth Games in London, New Zealand and Australia with other members of the Guiding fraternity.

Over the years Helen was involved as a member in the Girl Guide Movement, Craft group at Enfield U.C., L'Arche Adelaide, National Council of Women, Out & About Club, Northern Trefoil Group, Committee for Sexuality & the Disabled Person, Cursillo Movement Adelaide (Catholic-based training program), Sophia Writers Group (Pilgrim U.C.), SA Council of Churches Disability Advisory Committee, and has studied at Flinders University & Adelaide College of Divinity.

Helen received an award from the Girl Guides Association - "The Emu" in May 1979 for "her outstanding contribution to Guiding". In 1982 She was awarded the SA Anzac Award presented by the RSL for her contribution to SA Girl Guides and Poliomyelitis Services Centre during the International Year of Disabled. But it was on 11th June 2001 that Helen received her highest honour; being appointed as a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia. This was for distinguished service of a high degree to Australia or humanity at large.

We give thanks for a life well lived. As we journey on, we will hold in our collective heart the rich memories that Helen afforded us all in L'Arche Adelaide. We will miss you Helen.

"As a person with a disability I affirm that it is my abilities which are significant as they go towards influencing the person I am"

(Quote from "Well Said: Perspectives from the Who's Who of Australian Women")