

NEWS FROM BENDIGO

April 2022



From the Editor

I was chatting recently to a friend whose brother has become disabled due to an accident some years ago. His brother, an old school friend of mine, requires relatively high levels of care. My friend has offered very generous support and care to his brother over many years. In the course of conversation he stated that the best thing that has happened for his brother and the family is the NDIS. He referred especially to the funding of carers to take his brother for outings and the provision of appropriate transport, which takes account of his physical needs. His carers are very important to him such that he wouldn't think of celebrating an upcoming milestone birthday without inviting them. His dignity has been restored, as he no longer feels that he is continuously imposing on his brother to take him places. He now enjoys a more natural and informal regime of visitation with his brother.

I found this exchange very encouraging and in contrast to conversations about the NDIS which sometimes reflect the frustrations which people experience in dealing with a large bureaucracy. I'm pleased also that our L'Arche community has erred on the side of optimism in identifying a key theme for our mandate as **"our gift the NDIS"**.

My friend's age cohort when surveyed report improvements in aspects of their life such as health and wellbeing, relationships and community and civic participation since the advent of the NDIS. Rights and advocacy, support, access to services, succession planning and health and wellbeing are all important NDIS priorities for this age group. Whilst the L'Arche community in its mandate may use slightly different language there are strong parallels in what we would wish for our members.

There were challenges in meeting the requirements of the recent NDIS audit however it is readily apparent that we are much the better for the process. Effective communities embrace their accountabilities as they strive towards improvement and increased effectiveness. Much is made possible through the NDIS and we give thanks that we live in Australia where governments see fit to provide funding support for the most vulnerable in society.

Jim Rolfe

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Reflection

I have always struggled with the redemptive value of the suffering of Jesus. How could the death on a cross of a young man achieve anything for humankind? And yet every person will experience suffering of one kind or another. Indeed, we have all experienced our own Good Fridays? It's even possible that we too have yelled 'My God, my God why have you forsaken me?' It's my belief that there is no satisfactory explanation of suffering. In my view it is not given to teach us lessons, or make us stronger. It does not exist to pay for the sins of our forefathers, and, I'm not even sure that of itself will ensure our eternal salvation. Having said this, when we observe the courage and dignity and compassion of the people of the floods in NSW and QLD, one has to marvel at their capacity to help their neighbours while maintaining their own dignity and faith in humanity. So too with the people in the Ukraine. How is it that a people who are going through the worst of humankind's behaviour manage to show us such resilience and courage? I am not sure that I know the answer to this. What I do know is that the extraordinary goodness that has been displayed by the citizens of both countries – are indeed 'resurrection' moments. They are the moments of deep joy, hope and wonder. These moments remind us that it is more than possible to live with suffering and joy at the same time. In fact, this is what our faith calls of us.

A couple of months before my husband died as a result of a brain tumour, someone said the following to him. "This is not fair, Jim. You have looked after yourself well, eaten sensibly, and exercised each day. It's just not fair". Jim replied, "It's ok mate. We are all standing in the queue. I just happened to get there a bit sooner than I wanted." How might we live our lives while we are standing in the queue?

Angela Allen
Spiritual Life Group

Board News

Board members welcomed Hannah McLean at the last meeting. Hannah has a background in banking and risk management. She spent a year recently working as part of the National Redress Scheme which was set up in response to the Institutional response to the victims of child sexual abuse. Hannah is looking forward to the sharing of her experience and background in the service of the Melbourne and Bendigo L'Arche communities. The board also farewelled Yasmin whose increasing work demands are making it difficult for her to find sufficient time to devote to the work of the board. Yasmin has been a very faithful board member who has continually shared of her time and talents and offered encouragement and support for the work of the board and the activities of the communities.

Council News

Some of the items discussed at the March meeting of the Community Council included:

- The plans for the memorial garden have been completed and the area in the back corner of Grandview Crescent has been cleared.
- The Council is looking further at the procedures and supports which are required for volunteers. L'Arche Australia is looking at the possibility of inviting companion volunteers from overseas to work and live in L'Arche communities.
- The revised mandate has been finalised as part of the process for seeking a Community Leader.

Important Information

We are most grateful to Cindy Treanor who has been supporting the L'Arche Community in so many different ways over the past sixteen months. Cindy and David returned to their home in Hobart at Easter time. There has been much achieved since Cindy and David came to support the L'Arche community of Bendigo at the beginning of last year. It was the early days for Matt, Andy and Yvonne establishing home at Bethany. We were in the middle of meeting the challenges of the pandemic. Shared Services to provide backend support were being planned by L'Arche Australia. There were a growing number of new Assistants. Cindy has offered strong support and built the capacity of the community in all of these areas. The community is in a much better place to meet the challenges of the NDIS, our commitment to shared services and the systems and preventive measures required to keep the community safe during the pandemic as a result of Cindy's generosity, wisdom and experience. More importantly Cindy and David have effectively modelled and provided insights for us about living as a truly authentic L'Arche Community. Their service and commitment to promoting and growing the L'Arche mission are extraordinary. They have selflessly given of themselves in so many ways not the least of which is the opening of their own home for hospitality. They take a special interest in the Core Members and have developed beautiful relationships with them. Cindy has worked tirelessly often as an Assistant and has developed comprehensive induction and formation procedures for us. The L'Arche Bendigo community is deeply indebted to Cindy and David and will remain forever grateful for their generous support during the period of strong growth and challenge. We wish them every blessing on their return to Hobart and we look forward to their visits in the future.

We welcomed Mary Begg who has decided to make her home with L'Arche at Hesse Avenue. This is another very important milestone for Mary and her family and the community. The prospect of seeing more of Mary is a delight for everyone, she adds greatly to the life of the community. Mary recently hosted the St. Patrick's Day sing-a-long which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Welcome also to Bhupinder Singh who has been appointed the Homes Coordinator for L'Arche Bendigo. Bhupinder brings to us the wisdom and experience of working in a similar role in Golden City Health Services. Bhupinder will be responsible for the leadership of the Assistants at both Bethany and Hesse Avenue.

The discernment process for the appointment of a community leader is well underway. Details have been circulated in the community and nominations and applications are due by Wednesday April 27th.

Prayer Points

For the Ukarian people as they continue to face an unjustified invasion and destruction of their livelihoods and for the inspiration of fortunate countries like Australia to continue to explore ways in which we can stand in solidarity with people facing persecution.

For the people of coastal New South Wales and South East Queensland who have suffered such significant loss due to the recent floods. May the support they experience from others give them the strength they need to rebuild their lives.

In thanksgiving for the care and dedication of the Assistants and Community of L'Arche Bendigo.

from the Fiddelaers Family



Praise and thanks to God for each one of you for Isaac's returning home.

Never dismiss the power of prayer. Isaac was blessed to have many people praying for him and we believe that every prayer is not only heard but bears fruit, even if sometimes that fruit is not immediate or can be unexpected.

Many thanks for YOUR prayers for Isaac. He returned home on Thursday (5/5) and although not yet working at full strength, is on the way to full recovery.

We all invoke our favourite saints for help at these times and ours included: Mary our blessed mother, St Joseph (Isaac's second name), Padre Pio (Isaac's confirmation saint). St Margaret of Costello (a powerful advocate for the disabled), Eileen O'Connor (perhaps Australia's next saint), and Professor Jerome Lejeune.

May God bless you for your charity.

The Fiddelaers family

Member Profile & News

My name is Yvonne, one of the residents at Bethany - alongside Matt and Andy. What you may not know about my background is that I was born in Bendigo, in 1980 to my parents Bert and Angeline.

Mum was originally from The Netherlands and Dad from Ouyen. They met in New Zealand and then moved to Bendigo. I have many siblings; six sisters and one brother.

One of my most treasured memories growing up was when my sister Steph took me to the zoo. In the butterfly enclosure I held the most beautiful butterfly on my hand, it was magical. On another occasion, my brother took me to the circus. He was asked on stage and played a circus clown! To this day, it's a very funny memory.

My favourite teacher growing up was Mrs Lawson, she taught me many things - reading being one of my favourite subjects. Later, at Continuing Education, I discovered a love of cooking that I still hold to this day. Chocolate mud cake being one of my all-time favourites (gluten free of course!). In my spare time, I enjoy making jewellery, drawing and writing letters. I also like reading the Saturday newspaper and chatting to people about their pets.

My closest companion is my toy, Sally. She's been with me since I was a child. I moved to Bethany in October 2020. My housemates and carers are like family to me.

It's a wonderful place to call home.



Birthdays

Many happy returns to the following who have celebrated birthdays recently:

Yvonne, Di, Ray and Paul

Our best wishes to you all.



<i>L'Arche Identity</i>	<i>Mission</i>
<i>We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in Communities belonging to an International Federation.</i>	<i>To make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities revealed through mutually transforming relationships.</i>
<i>Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together.</i>	<i>To foster an environment in Community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.</i>
<i>We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognise our need of one another.</i>	<i>To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.</i>

Donations to **L'Arche Bendigo** are tax deductible and can be made directly to the L'Arche Bendigo Bank Account. Please ensure you place your name on any deposit so we can forward a receipt.

BSB 633-000
Account Number 152536827

Life at L'Arche Bendigo



Birthdays!!
Celebrations for both
Yvonne and Ray.



Farewell to
Cindy and David



Celebrating St Patrick's Day
at Hesse Avenue



Life at L'Arche Bendigo



Washing of The Feet Ceremony
during Holy Week



Easter Vigil at Bethany

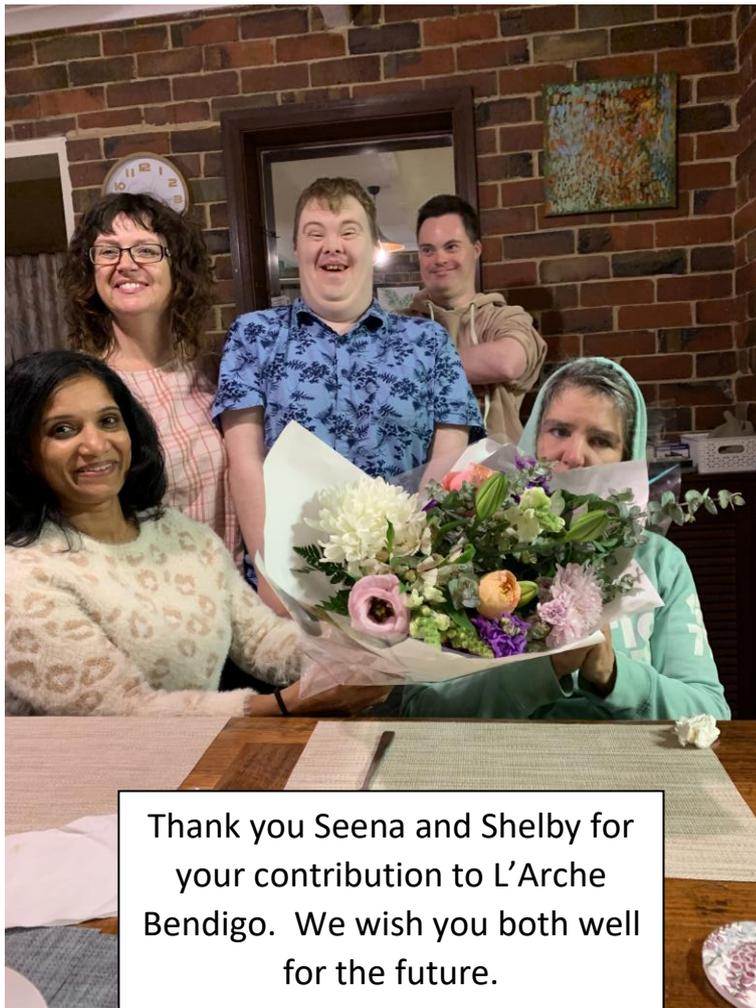


Di and Mary

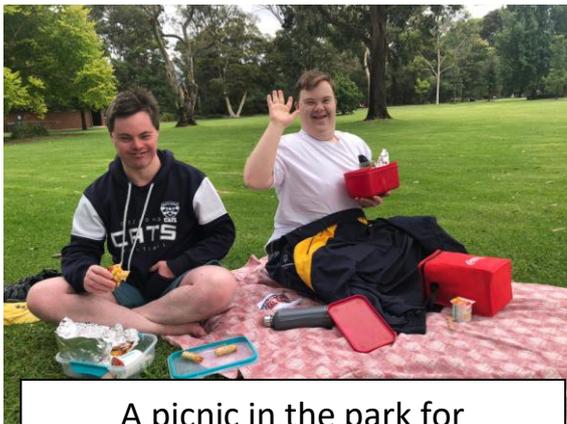


Simon out and about

Life at L'Arche Bendigo



Thank you Seena and Shelby for your contribution to L'Arche Bendigo. We wish you both well for the future.



A picnic in the park for Matt and Andy



Yvonne and Shelby