

NEWS FROM BENDIGO

“Spring” - September 2023



From the Editor

The Importance of Dialogue

The values of L'Arche, servant leadership, partnership, subsidiarity, accountability, solidarity, participation and inculturation are best lived out within a spirit of dialogue. Some of the dimensions of dialogue are outlined below:

- “Where two or more are gathered”
- Our God is the God of the gathering.
- Sharing experiences.
- Allowing for discernment.
- Leading to understanding.
- Leading to sound judgement.
- Leading to good decision-making.
- Practising power with not over.
- Caring as much about questions as answers.
- Growing comfortable with ambiguity, uncertainty and paradox.
- Striving to be as much as to do.
- Caring as much about the learning of others as ourselves.
- Devoting as much energy to listening as to speaking.
- Leaving ourselves open to be changed by a conversation.

These dimensions of dialogue fit nicely with L'Arche Bendigo's commitment to build relationships and community.

Jim Rolfe

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Reflection

The Old Testament author of Ecclesiastes 3 writes “That there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens.” But surely he or she didn’t mean that there is a time for winter. I struggle with almost everything about winter, and, it doesn’t help me at all, when friends tell me how much they love rugging up, insisting to me that it is so much easier to get warm in winter than it is to cool off in summer”. On one level I wish that I had their enthusiasm for days of 10°. For all manner of reasons I do not.

Winter invites us to stay home whether we like it or not. Sometimes winter even invites us to walk in mud, get caught in pouring rain, and lose whatever control we thought we might have over the way we want to live. We are even more likely to get colds and flu in winter and pain from arthritis seems to get worse in winter. What might happen readers if you and I were more accepting of winter’s challenges? What if I said, “Angela, it is time to sit with the pain in your life and do some reflecting on what is or is not going on in your soul.” Evelyn Underhill, the great mystic described her own spirituality as “the life of my own inside”. I love her description, and I do occasionally have a look at what gives my ‘inside’ life. For me, it is listening to music, knitting, gardening, playing with children or meditating in an attempt to get in touch with God. I think, too, that winter is always a reminder that life is, and cannot be, fun all the time. Social media would tell us otherwise, but I am not convinced that we can all have the body beautiful all the time, be well all the time, have whatever material possession or holiday that we want when we want it.

This brings me back to winter – not just as a metaphor for reflection on how we want to be in the world. It brings me back to winter for its own sake. I am very privileged to be able to put on another jumper, or turn the heating on if I am cold. Every night I turn on the news or any other current affairs programme to find that tens of thousands of people in Victoria alone cannot do this. People are choosing to buy food over heating their houses. Or they are choosing to heat their houses instead of having prescriptions filled. Winter is much more difficult for many Australians than it is for me. Most of the time, I think that I am better off than the people in Syria and the Ukraine, let alone our first Nation’s peoples, or anyone living in poverty in our own country. So, let’s go back to Ecclesiastes. The author continues –

A time to be born and a time to die

A time to plant and a time to uproot

A time to kill and a time to heal,

A time to tear down and a time to build,

A time to weep and a time to laugh,

A time to mourn and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,

A time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

A time to search and a time to give up,

A time to keep and a time to throw away,

A time to tear and a time to mend,

A time to be silent and a time to speak,

A time to love and a time to hate,

A time for war and a time for peace

So folks there is a time for just about everything – even winter! I hope we can all enjoy what we can enjoy about it, and endure the rest with some semblance of grace, contemplation, good self-care and kindness to those who have many more struggles than simply getting through winter. Spring is looming, thank goodness!

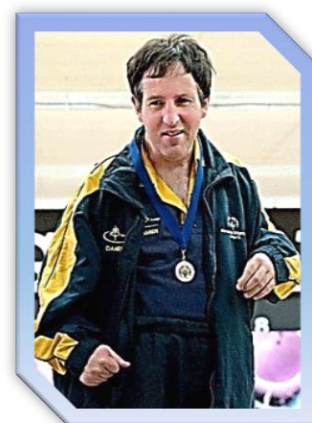
Angela Allen
Spiritual Life Group

Member Profile- Damien Haggarty

Damien was born in 1970 with a congenital heart condition. He acquired brain damage during open-heart surgery one year later.

Despite all odds, many battles, and continually pushing boundaries, Damien was cared for at home. He has now reached 50 and gone beyond and requires 24/7 supervision. His achievements are many, he has:

- played cricket on the MCG,
- received many medals for sporting activities and ignited the flame at the opening ceremony of 2011 Special Olympic Games
- a wall of art on display
- met many celebrities, and dignitaries.
- been a guest of the Governor General at Government House in Canberra where he met Dr Tim Shriver and many others.



**The Honorable Minister Shrek
Meeting with
the Hon Minister Bill Shorten
for NDIS planning**



This photo was taken from Bill Shorten's facebook page.

Damien had been to see Shrek at the Capital theatre the weekend prior to the minister's visit to Bendigo.

He would not remove his "Shrek" ears – but the meeting went ahead.

Assistant Profile



Q & A with Tayla Williams

Tayla was born in Quambatook. She grew up there with her two brothers and one sister. It was here that she developed a love of the outdoors. Tayla appreciated the wide-open spaces, riding motorbikes and enjoying nature were highlights for her. After school she worked in Woolworths Supermarket in Kerang and eventually transferred to Bendigo where she worked in the Woolworths at Golden Square. She completed study in Business and worked in Reception at Crusoe College. Moving to Bendigo has provided the opportunity to broaden her horizons and meet new friends.

Tayla has always had a fascination with the workings of the human body and decided to complete study in Nursing. She is a qualified Enrolled Nurse. It was during her Nursing studies that Tayla first experienced support work. The opportunity to engage with and support others suits her personality. She appreciates the little things in life, a nice place to live, nice food to eat and her involvement with the L'Arche community. Tayla always makes the time for a daily session of yoga and she finds swimming and reading very relaxing pastimes.

Tayla often falls back on the wisdom of her mother in always treating others the way you would like to be treated even when they are horrible to you. This remains her best lesson for life. She is grateful for the opportunities she has had for personal and professional growth. This motivates her to be there for others especially those who are not as fortunate as her. A Thai Peanut Curry should be carefully considered if you're having Tayla around for a meal. There weren't many of those available while she was growing up in Quambatook.

Board News

Lil Deverell, having moved interstate, has finished her time as a board member. Lil was also a member of Melbourne Community Council. Thanks to Lil for her very generous commitment and support. The board is working on integrating the mandates of each community, the feedback from NDIS audits and the risk assessment policy into one strategic plan. There is a need to formalise processes of recruitment and plans are well advanced in the creation of L'Arche Victoria. This will provide one governing body for all L'Arche communities in Victoria. This process has given the board the opportunity to review the constitution.

Council News

Sandy Dearthcott in view of her commitments is unable to continue as a member of the community council. Sandy will continue to be involved with us mostly especially in relation to the stewardship of the lovely gardens which are ours to look after and develop. Thanks Sandy for your work. The council continues to work towards a range of strategies to maintain and develop community connections and to announce L'Arche Bendigo in the wider community.



Bhupinda welcoming Anna
as Team Leader for
Programs

Prayer Points

We give thanks for the life of Kevin Smith and especially for his contribution to the establishment and ongoing support of L'Arche. Kevin's gentle presence and encouragement embody the spirit of L'Arche. He is remembered fondly and we take very seriously the importance of continuing his legacy.

We stand in solidarity with First Nations people in the hope that the upcoming referendum irrespective of the outcome unites Australia in recommitting to further efforts to address the injustices of life expectancy, rates of incarceration and employment opportunities.

We pray for those who are not well and those who have asked for our prayers.

We remember Irasha's father who died recently in Sri Lanka.

Words of Remembrance - Vale Kevin Smith

Our first meeting with Judith and Kevin was through "Teams of Our Lady" some 40 years ago with special memories of a beautiful home Mass to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. Our lives have been intertwined since then, especially following the birth of our Andrew. Kevin's gentle presence and support for Faith and Light and L'Arche has been outstanding.

A special part of his being was his dedication to and love and care for Anthony.

Kevin loved the land and we have fond memories of Faith and Light Gatherings at the farm at Bears Lagoon.

Kevin always enjoyed a chat with Kieran at Gatherings discussing current farm activities.

May his dear soul rest in peace

Bernadette and Kieran



Birthdays

Our very best wishes to the following Members who have celebrated a birthday since our last Newsletter:

Paul Harrington
Damien Haggarty
Mary Begg
Simon Mahlstedt
Matthew Considine
Ryan O'Shannessy
Cobie Normington



Our Assistants who have celebrated a significant birthday recently:

Trica Bamford, Annie Ainsley, Cathy Peoutagitama

And other birthday celebrations include:

Samantha Coughlin, Sampath Wickramasinghe, Philippe Bonne,
Von McDonald, Sandy Grace, Dee Reid, Di Crawford, Ray Taylor.



Important Information

Tenth Anniversary Celebrations

L'Arche Bendigo was founded on the 21st April 2013. To mark the tenth anniversary of this very important occasion there will be a community celebration at St. Kilian's Hall on **Sunday April 14th 2024 at 12 noon**. Everyone is welcome – please save the date. There will be ongoing communication with further details.



Community Gatherings

The next Community Gathering is on **Wednesday October 11th**. We will gather again on **Sunday December 10th** to celebrate the festive season. Details will be sent prior to each gathering.

Christmas Market

Sunday, 10am – 1pm

26th November

at The Good Loaf, Bendigo.

We are busy preparing lots of Christmas cakes and puddings, yo yos and slices, preserves, gift cards, beautiful gift ware and much more. The raffle will be drawn at 12.30pm.



5th Sunday

Community Meal on 5th Sunday of the month at the Botanical Hotel, White Hills. The next catchup will be on Sunday 29th October at 12noon. Bookings direct to the Botanical Hotel on 5448 3777 for the L'Arche table.

Volunteering at L'Arche

There are a variety of volunteer opportunities open to anyone who would like to share their gifts and talents to enhance the mission of L'Arche. If you would like to be involved, develop friendships and belong to a community, we would welcome you.

For more information please contact
Margaret MOB 0438 439 384



Liz and Maureen



Volunteers enjoying a catchup in the sun



Philippe and Di

National Council visit

Recently we welcomed leaders of the L'Arche Communities in Australia who met in Bendigo for their National Council meeting.



L'Arche members connecting with Community Garden volunteers at St Kilian's



Ray and Ian moving furniture

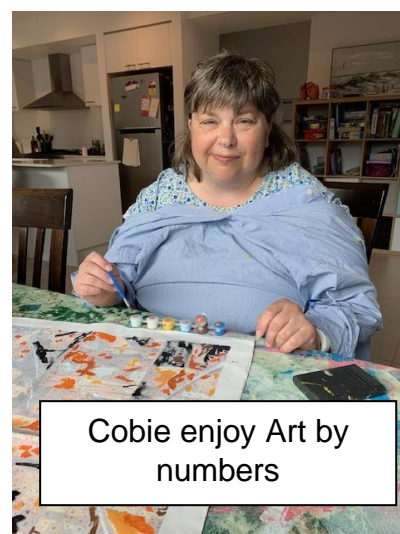
Photos from Programs/Hesse



Liz welcoming Cobie to Day Programs



Ryan



Cobie enjoy Art by numbers



Art at Hesse with Liz and Jenny



L'Arche Members visiting Paul's art exhibition.

Bethany



Happy
Birthday



Matt, Francis and Andy
'Old friends are good friends'

Matts family and friends
celebrating his birthday.

Grandview



Bhupinda welcoming Sam,
with his Dad Wayne, making
L'Arche home



Sam moving in



Mary and Sam

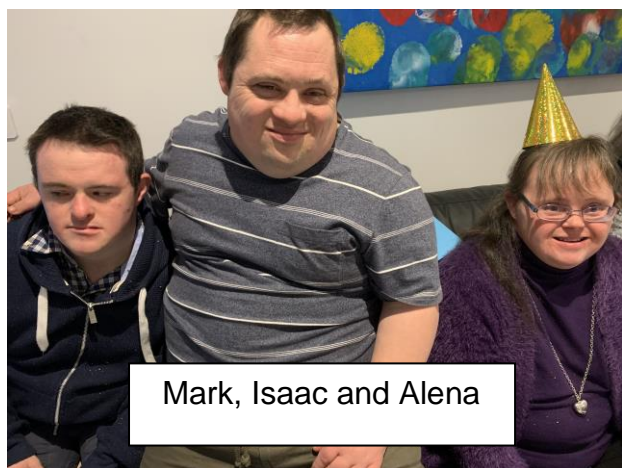


Community Photos



Celebrating Mary's 30th Birthday at Hesse with family and friends.

Mary and Lynda (Mum) on the right.



Mark, Isaac and Alena



Alena and Annie at Mary's Birthday



Mary with Trica and Lynda

L'Arche Australia Prayer Gathering

L'Arche Australia is facilitating a monthly online prayer gathering and welcomes visitors to join. The prayer gathering is held on the first Thursday of each month between 7.00pm and 7.30pm AEST. For your local time check the time zone site.

Zoom details as follows:

Meeting ID: 826 4347 1339

Password ID: prayer

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82643471339>

Donations

Donations to L'Arche are tax deductible and can be made directly to the L'Arche Bendigo Bank Account.

BSB	633-000
Account Number	152536827

The Community has long-term capital needs. Bequests to L'Arche are one means which will enable the community to work towards these. Please consider L'Arche if you are planning a bequest or make the case for L'Arche if you have friends considering this.

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