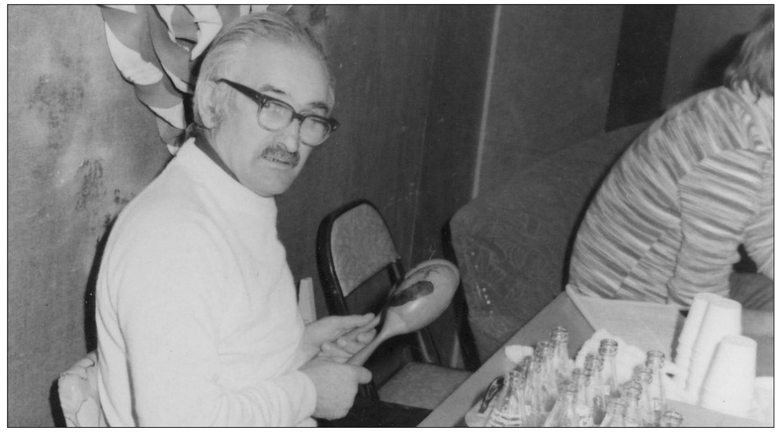
Basement Treasures

By Trish Glennon



Francis Maurice tends to the drinks while playing the spoons at a coffee house in the basement of the Big House in the 1970s.

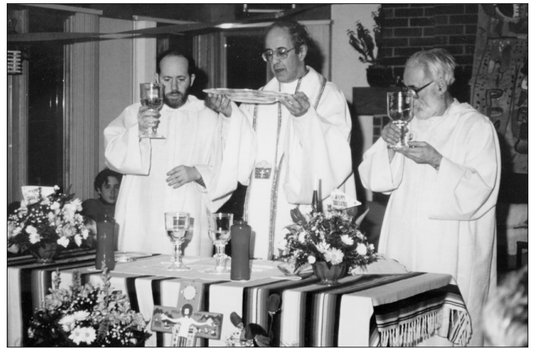
The basement of the Big House has a storied history. Standing in the basement today, it's hard to imagine those early Daybreak years when the basement was a welcoming venue for coffee houses and dance parties, and apparently, bedroom space for assistants. Over the years, the basement, like many of our own personal basements, has become a collecting ground for all sorts of things: old files, documents, equipment, and leftover remnants from events. This past year, I have found myself in the basement often as we have begun planning for new housing on our main property. There are countless files pertaining to the property dating back to the early years. From meeting notes of property committees, to master plans that never came to be. Thoughts and visions on housing and growth have existed since our beginning, and, interestingly, the reasons for all the planning and committee work are relatively the same. It is fascinating and inspiring.

This summer, undaunted by the dusty and stuffy surroundings, two archivists from the University of St. Michael's College Archives in the University of Toronto, agreed to come have a look at what still exists downstairs. There were old master plans, hand written on browned tinged poster board; files of advocacy letters to ministers from early 1970s; old t-shirts, VHS tapes from events, expense reports from the farm; a report on developing the old bakery; vacation photo albums, etc. I was surprised at their interest and enthusiasm for many of the things they found. It all seemed to have value! They returned this fall, filling an empty utility van full of material that they will carefully and thoughtfully pore through; organize, preserve, and add to Daybreak's growing archive collection that is already housed at the University.

This fall, we pulled an idea from our very recent archives, and re-established Spirit Leader triads for each of our homes, comprised of a core member, an assistant and a long-term member. Spirit Leaders are responsible for supporting the rituals and traditions of L'Arche and ensuring the values of our culture are nurtured in the home. A few weeks ago, Spirit Leader triads gathered for a formation and reflected on the ways their home celebrates, welcomes, invites, includes, and connects. As we listened and shared, our rituals and traditions today reflect years and years of meaning making — passed down, holding our culture and values together.

In the transfer of boxes to the archives, and in the transfer of ideas and sharing of the present, we are reminded of the gift of our story, of all that has shaped us, and how our rich history continues to hold us in the present, and inspire us forward.

30th Anniversary Gathering to Remember Father Henri Nouwen









The 30th Anniversary Ecumenical Graveside Gathering for Henri Nouwen was a deeply meaningful occasion that was held on September 21st, 2026, at Light on the Hill Church Cemetery, in Richmond Hill. The L'Arche Daybreak Spirit Movers Dance Troupe performed as part of the ceremony, while members of our community attended in remembrance.

Community Notes



Clara Fraschetti celebrated her 60th birthday with family and friends.

Clara Fraschetti celebrated her 60th birthday on September 13th. The community and Clara's family gathered at the meeting hall for a surprise party. We are so grateful for Clara and all that she gives to our community every day.

Zenia Kushpeta was celebrated and blessed by our community as she prepared to return to Ukraine. We shared stories and remembered the many ways Zenia has contributed to the lives of so many people at Daybreak and beyond. We sent her forth with love and prayer.

The Curtain Club invited us to their charity night on Thursday, September 17th. This night allows the Curtain Club to show appreciation and support for not-for-profit organizations in York Region.

The Barn Dance for Solidarity fundraiser took place on Friday, September 18th. This year's theme was *Hollywood*, and everyone got into the spirit with their costumes. Our very own DJ Freda, an assistant from the Corner House, was our DJ for the evening. It was a terrific night for solidarity, raising over $2,700 in support for L'Arche communities around the world.

Connecting the Community (CTC) visited Daybreak for a tour and picnic. They strolled around the pond, visited the Craft Studio and the Woodery to learn how things are made in each program, and finished with a picnic and good conversation on the Meeting Hall's back deck. CTC is a local group of individuals who meet each week, led by Marj Andre, to promote good people doing good things in and around Richmond Hill.

Jim Christie, a former board member and board president at Daybreak, died on September 18th. A celebration of life took place on October 1st at the Dayspring Chapel where his family and friends gathered to remember him.

Anne Marie Pickard was invited to cut the ceremonial ribbon for the 46th annual Terry Fox Run in Oak Ridges on Sunday, September 20th. Ann-Marie has been a faithful supporter of this event for many years.

Daybreak's Solidarity Retreat took place on Monday, September 28th at the Dayspring. Members gathered and learned about our global family. We heard about how we are the same and different from L'Arche communities around the world, and afterwards we created postcards to send to our L'Arche friends in other communities.



Jim Christie and his wife Kathy, have been friends of Daybreak for many years.

Community Wish List

Humidifier	$150
Kitchen Knives	$200
Stainless Steel Table	$300
Bannetons for Bread Proofing	$300
Vacuum	$400
Porch Swing	$450
Rocking Chair	$600
Pillows for all homes	$800
Baking Tins	$900
BBQ	$1000
End Tables and Lamps	$1000
Twin Comforters for all homes	$2000
Gazebo	$3000
Deck Extension	$16000
Wheelchair Van	$100000

For more information, please call Carol-Anne Forsythe at L'Arche Daybreak's Development Office at (905) 884-3454, ext. 285.

Tree Planting Days *A Conversation with Alex Karney*



Alex Karney organizes the annual tree planting each year at L'Arche Daybreak which brings out many community members and volunteers. (Alex is pictured here third from the right).

It could be said that Alex Karney's career began in childhood with his love of trees and forests. "Whether it was camping or just being in the woods when I was a kid — for me, it was a kind of sanctuary. When I was younger, I even had my room painted like a green tropical rainforest, and I loved looking at the National Geographic magazines with pictures of tropical trees. Initially, I wanted to pursue medicine as a career, but in grade 13 my dad suggested that forestry might be something to consider, and I haven't looked back since."

Alex has been devoting tree-planting days throughout his career as an arborist and they are some of his favourite days of the year. For more than ten years, Alex has been successful in obtaining grants through TD Friends of the Environment Foundation (TD FEF) to support renewal plantings of native species. Alex got connected to Daybreak through his wife, Sharon, a long-time assistant at Daybreak. Since their wedding day at Daybreak in 2013, Alex began to mull over the idea of a tree planting day for Daybreak to expand and enrich the natural features that run through the property. In the spring of 2019, supported by the TD FEF grant program, Alex initiated Daybreak's first tree planting day. We have planted each year since then with their support.

Alex takes great joy in watching the plantings on the L'Arche Daybreak property grow. "We know that sometimes plants don't make it for many different reasons, such as bunnies eating them, but eventually you start to see how the young forest becomes more diverse and watch how different plants interact with wildlife and insects." Over the years, with Alex's help and with funding from the TD FEF, we have planted over 1,000 trees and shrubs on the L'Arche Daybreak property.

Most of all, Alex finds great joy in the way our annual tree plantings bring everyone together, outside in the fresh air. For Alex, planting trees and doing it together offers tangible hope. "We look at the news and it is easy to get discouraged, but planting trees reminds us that there's a lot of beauty and life in the world. Each day, things are still renewing and growing if you know where to look, and I find planting days are a good antidote to cynicism. It's nice to take a step back, watch what happens, see our efforts pay off, and for the community of assistants and core members to be a part of this bigger picture."

We are grateful to Alex for his passion and his incredible generosity to our community that has helped us continue to be good and renewing stewards of our beautiful property. ⌖

Alex Karney is a consulting arborist at Urban Forest Associates Inc. and has been coordinating and overseeing the annual tree planting days at Daybreak for the past eight years with funding from the TD Friends of the Environment Foundation.

L'ARCHE DAYBREAK

The L'Arche Daybreak community is a dynamic example of how people of different intellectual capacity, social origin, religion and culture can live and learn together.

The first L'Arche community in North America, L'Arche Daybreak began in 1969 and now includes eight homes in Richmond Hill, several day programs of creative activities, and the Dayspring Spiritual Centre.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Our Community Prayer Time is held on Monday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

L'ARCHE

In a world that often sees people with intellectual disabilities as less than whole, L'Arche celebrates their creativity, transparency and great capacity for joy as important gifts to be shared. Started in France in 1964, L'Arche has become an international movement with 160 communities throughout the world.

"What makes us human is not our mind but our heart, not our ability to think but our ability to love."
—Henri Nouwen

Daybreak Newsbreak is published by
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Printing of *Daybreak Newsbreak* donated by Creative Path Digital Imaging.

Daybreak Newsbreak

A Newsletter of the L'Arche Daybreak Community *Fall 2026*

Remembering Sister Rosemarie Donovan, OLM

By Joe Egan



Community members at the Big House during the early days of Daybreak.

Sister Rosemarie died this past summer on July 1st at age 97 and in the 78th year of religious life. Several members of our two local L'Arche communities joined in the celebration of her life at her funeral mass held at Presentation Manor in Scarborough, where all the members of Our Lady's Missionaries (OLMs) now live. We came to honour the life of this extraordinary woman of faith who spent 30 years in Nigeria serving those in need. We also greatly desired to acknowledge and give thanks once more for the profound truth that her past leadership of the OLMs has had — an immeasurable impact on the birth and growth of L'Arche Daybreak and on L'Arche across Canada and around the world.

The story begins, once upon a time, in 1968 when Sr. Rosemarie, with many other religious and lay people in Toronto, participated in a retreat at Mary Lake in King, Ontario. Out of the graces of that retreat came an unexpected gift offered by Sr. Rosemarie, later unanimously confirmed by all the committed OLMs, so that the second L'Arche community in the world could start in 1969 in Richmond Hill by founders Steve and Ann Newroth. This gift included their large novitiate (aka the Big House), a barn and chicken coop on seven acres (later expanded to the current twenty acres).

The fruitfulness of that gift is an extraordinary story in itself. One that Sr. Rosemarie and the OLMs could never have imagined. Thank God they trusted in the Spirit that their generous sacrifice was the right decision, even as others counselled them otherwise. Not only has Daybreak grown and developed wonderfully over 57 years into today's present reality, but the birth or development of many other L'Arche communities, such as Toronto, Vancouver, Hamilton, Arnprior, Ukraine and Bethlehem among others, were linked back to Daybreak. It also provided, over many years, key leaders who had responsibility for the growth of L'Arche at all the levels of our Federation, now 160 communities in 37 countries where thousands of people, with and without developmental disabilities, share daily life.

On the back of the memorial card for Sr. Rosemarie, there is a quote from St. John's gospel: *"You did not choose me, no, I chose you and commissioned you to go out and bear fruit, fruit that will last."*

So, with much gratitude in our hearts, we say thank you, Sr. Rosemarie and OLMs for the fruit of that original gift that keeps giving life to so many people. ⌖

Welcome to the Corner House, Jaclyn!

Jaclyn Veres celebrated her first year at Corner House after being welcomed to our community in July, 2025. Jaclyn grew up in Markham and has had many connections to L'Arche, particularly through her involvement with Faith and Light. Jaclyn was a wonderful support to her parents as they aged, and she moved to the Corner House shortly before her dad, Timor, died

Jaclyn has natural leadership gifts which she exhibits at the Corner House and in our programs. She is part of Connections, Craft Studio, the Lively Loaf, and the Spirit Movers and takes pride in her many commitments. Jaclyn particularly loves attending the Lively Loaf since it has long been a dream of hers to become a baker.

At home, Jaclyn has discovered wonderful friendships. She loves to be active throughout the day and weekends by doing sports (swimming, skating, yoga, stationary biking, and pickleball). Jaclyn takes pride in her independence and her love for her family.

Throughout the year, Jaclyn has blossomed in community, growing in her confidence and in her contribution to building community — from performing on the stage with the Spirit Movers, to going to baking shows with the Lively Loaf and being part of the Walk with Hope committee. Welcome, Jaclyn! ⌖



Jaclyn Veres performs as a member of the Spirit Movers dance troupe.