

News from Cana

Issue No. 5 - October/ 2003

Cana is a faith-based community committed to living the vision and mission of L'Arche in the multi-cultural, multi-racial urban environment of Halifax. Cana seeks to create places where people with developmental disabilities and those who wish to share life with them live, work, pray and celebrate together.

"Build me a Boat"

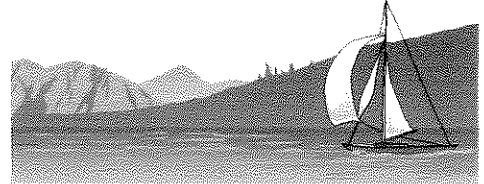
by Mary-Ellen Clancy

Since early summer we, in our family, have thought of ourselves as "homeless". In truth, we are very well-housed near a wonderful ocean beach, but we are longing for our own home to be finished and to return to our community.

From this house there is a glorious view of Mahone Bay, stretching past the Tancooks and into the Atlantic. On sunny days it is smooth, warm and clear, drawing us in and bearing us up on its salty expanse. On stormy days it is swollen and powerfully angry, warning us away from its inhospitable depths.

I've had ample time for reflection here where, as the song goes:

*"The water is wide and I cannot get o'er
And neither have I wings to fly.
Build me a boat that will carry two..."*

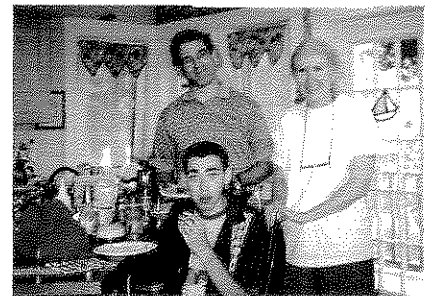


Our Cana mission is to build that boat and to carry far more than two in L'Arche, our Ark. The beautiful French word conveys the strength and purpose of the "arche" along with the gentle care for each other of those within. At the September gathering, we listened to the story of the "Ark"; a harsher word in English but one that echoes the "arc-en-ciel" the rainbow, the sign of God's promise to be with us in our every crossing of the wide waters.

We will build the "arche". We will lift each other up into that brave little boat and, together, we will journey under God's rainbow towards His promise... and we will do it in Halifax!



Fun, food and fellowship were enjoyed by all who attended the wonderful summer barbecues hosted in July by the Abernethy-Parkers and in August by the Gilberts. Is it too soon to set dates for next year?!!!



Cana

A word in your ear... "I've had a lot of trouble in my life, most of which never happened"

The People of Cana: Danny and Mary

by Lata and Jim Hall



"Shake hands with Danny Foren!" Almost everyone who has been to Cana gathering has had this invitation. The author is a youthful looking 43 year old in a wheelchair with close cut dark hair and a ready smile who is celebrating his 18th birthday at every get-together! It's worth accepting his invitation as there is a lot to Danny.

After going to several schools, finishing with a good long spell at Saint Andrew's Special Education, Danny started employment at the Prescott Workshop and, 20 years later he still works Mondays to Fridays every week. At home in the evenings he is a great TV fan, with hockey a special favourite. Danny has his special team: try "Toronto" on him and, like as not, you will have "No way! Boston Bruins!" thrown at you! He also loves "hide and seek" and will play with anyone. Then there is music, all kinds of music, his fondness developed with the help of Katy Jacobs, a well-known local music therapist. Another special friend is Alana Gillis, his instructor at Prescott, and a family friend who introduced Danny and Mary to Cana and L'Arche.

Danny's mother, is his always - present protector and encourager. Life has not been easy for Mary. She was born in the States of parents from the Annapolis Valley, who came back to Nova Scotia with 7 year old Mary in 1937. She came to Halifax in 1952 and has lived and worked here ever since. She went to night-school to become a typist, and married in 1959. Danny and his always loyal and supportive younger brother, David, arrived in quick succession, only for Mary to become a widow just a few years later. She was indomitable, however and through all the long years, she always worked at least part-time, at Simpsons, National Drugs and Chemical, Birks and then Peoples. She also managed to buy a home, to look after Danny through his many sicknesses and seizures, to volunteer for the Cerebral Palsy Association, and to help out at her church - Bayer's Road Baptist.

Danny's other advocate, David, and his wife Joan, made sure that he could fully participate in their wedding celebrations, as they do for all other family events.

We were most impressed with his duo, and encourage you to get to know them- we promise it will be a rewarding experience. It will be just right to finish in Mary's own words: "I've enjoyed our Cana meetings and look forward to the day when we reach our goal".



We give **THANKS** for the generosity of the following groups who have made significant contributions to our start-up fund campaign...

The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax	\$ 10,000.00
The Anglican Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island	\$ 10,000.00
The Flemming Foundation	\$ 20,000.00
The Sisters of Charity of Halifax	\$ 2,000.00
The Patrick Power Trust	\$ 20,000.00

♥♥♥😊😊😊**THANKS** also to everyone whose generosity will help us bring L'Arche to Halifax 😊😊😊♥♥♥♥♥

Publication of this newsletter is made possible by a grant from **KAIROS** (formerly **PLURA**). We are grateful for their support.

Bringing L'Arche to Halifax

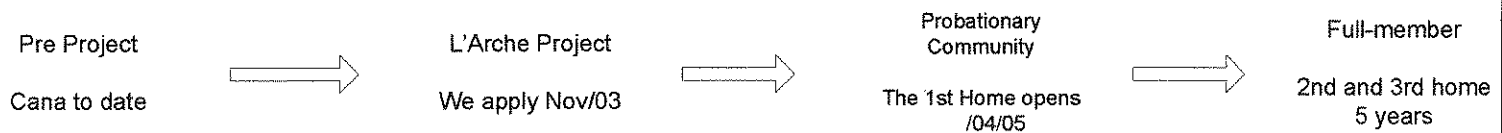
The Cana Board Members thought it was timely to give an update on progress made as we work to bring L'Arche to Halifax.

Some of you will remember the first gathering in November 2001. Since then much has happened. Our community has grown and we are feeling good about the future. Some major steps lie ahead and there is still lots to be done if we are to reach our goal.

Back in the sixties, when **Jean Vanier** had just begun L'Arche, communities often started very simply by core members being welcomed by a group of people who wished to assist and share life with them. Since then, L'Arche has become an international federation, organized into zones, regions and communities (e.g. L'Arche Cape Breton is a community of the Atlantic Region in the Zone of Canada.)

When people feel called to start L'Arche they must work with the zone and regional councils, who, based on experience, have drawn up guidelines and regulations to help communities become established. Groups like Cana have to demonstrate an ability to welcome and give ongoing support to future core-members and those who will come to assist them. It is a serious undertaking.

With guidance from our regional coordinator, and the prayerful support of the Nova Scotian communities, we have been working our way through these guidelines which cover four stages of growth.



Before becoming an official project we have to show we are building up a group of friends who will eventually be a support to a future community. The 60 people who regularly attend the Sunday gatherings are such a group. Our mailing list has grown from 75 to 280 in just one year... this indicates interest and support from the wider local area.

Other growth has been of a more practical nature. We are now a registered company with the province and have charitable status with Revenue Canada. Where finances are concerned we are required to raise funds to provide a salary for the founding director and to cover other costs for the next two years. Our goal is to reach \$100,000 and to-date we have almost \$70,000 donated or pledged. Everyone approached has been willing to support the coming of L'Arche to Halifax. Major sponsors are acknowledged in this newsletter, and we are grateful to all who have given so generously.

One task ahead is to become an official L'Arche project. The zone council meets in November and if all goes well we will know in January if we are able to use the name L'Arche. We will then start the process to find a founding director, someone who has served

in a L'Arche community for at least two years and is suitably qualified. This process will be undertaken under the guidance of the regional coordinator and in the spirit of prayer and openness to what God is calling us to begin.

Once the director assumes leadership we will then have to discern what kind of community L'Arche in Halifax will become. As with other agencies, operating costs for L'Arche homes are government-funded. During the next year we hope to begin entering into a dialogue with the appropriate provincial authorities. The extra expenses for L'Arche-related needs will come from ongoing fundraising. This is why a broad base of support is essential.

Does it seem like a lot of work? Well, every task we have undertaken seemed like a mountain impossible to climb. We have learned that with faith, prayer and our best efforts we have been able to climb each one! We are confident that, God willing and with prayerful support of all who share our dream, L'Arche will become a reality in the not too distant future!

L'Arche Links

While attending their son's graduation Steven and Nancy Gilbert were able to visit L'Arche Cork, Ireland. They met community members, toured workshops and spent time with the director. The community will hold us in prayer as we work for a home in Halifax.

Two vacationing groups from L'Arche Antigonish were welcomed by the Goulets and the Gilberts. Both visitors and hosts had a good time!

Teresa Wigle participated in a faith and sharing retreat held in Yarmouth and led by John O'Donnell. She met members of L'Arche Homefires, some of whom come to our gatherings.

While attending the Henri Nouwen Conference in Antigonish, Kathryn Porter was happy to spend time with the community and speak with director Gus Leuschner. He and his wife Debby have been with L'Arche for over 30 years!

These encounters reveal to us the spirit of L'Arche and are important to our growth both as individuals and as a community.



The gatherings are held at St. Agnes' Hall
Mumford Road, Halifax 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
For more information or to arrange drives please call

Nancy (826-7050) or Pat (477-8269)

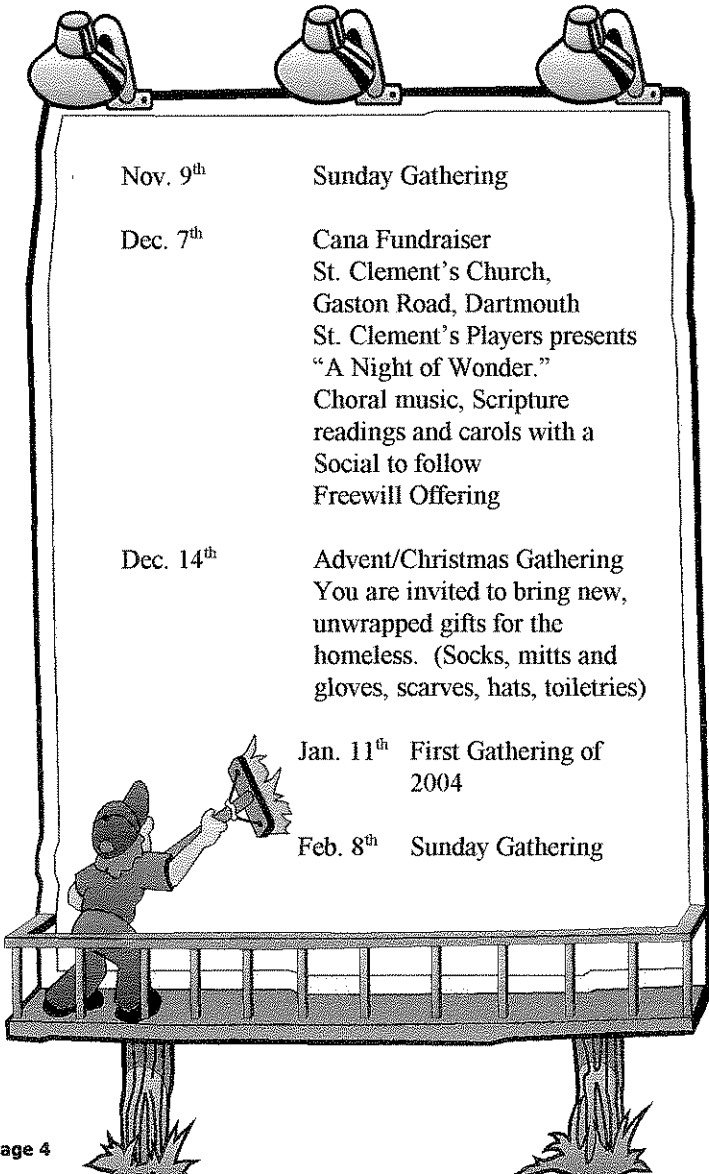
Watch for.....

Information concerning a membership plan for the Cana Community.

It will be open to all who wish to support efforts to bring L'Arche to the Halifax area.

Details at the next gathering and in a special mail-out later in the fall.

Upcoming Events

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| Nov. 9 th | Sunday Gathering |
| Dec. 7 th | Cana Fundraiser
St. Clement's Church,
Gaston Road, Dartmouth
St. Clement's Players presents
"A Night of Wonder."
Choral music, Scripture
readings and carols with a
Social to follow
Freewill Offering |
| Dec. 14 th | Advent/Christmas Gathering
You are invited to bring new,
unwrapped gifts for the
homeless. (Socks, mitts and
gloves, scarves, hats, toiletries) |
| Jan. 11 th | First Gathering of
2004 |
| Feb. 8 th | Sunday Gathering |