



# SOUNDINGS

Volume 23, Issue 3

December, 2011

## Listening to Our Heart...

by Rachel Knoke, Long Term Assistant and Development Coordinator

"Listen to your heart.  
When [H]e's calling for you.  
Listen to your heart.  
There's nothing else you can do."  
-Roxette



Seasons greetings, from L'Arche Tahoma Hope! Somehow or another we seem to have made it to one more Advent season!

It never ceases to amaze me that I never feel like I'm ready for Advent and Christmas by the time they arrive. They seem to sneak up on me year after year and as much as I want to have prepared my heart and mind to gracefully enter into this season with peace and tranquility and spaciousness of self, I've gotta say, it hasn't happened yet. Oh, some years I get closer than others, but I'm pretty certain that I've never actually been ready for Advent by the time it show ups.

I guess the good news is that this is why we have Advent. It is a season of preparation. This year in L'Arche, we're working with our theme of "Listening to our Heart", which is really just another way of saying "Listening to God". We are taking intentional time this year to ask of ourselves and our community how God is moving in and through us. As we begin the mad dash to Christmas, we as a community are looking particularly close at the idea of Advent as a time to carve out empty space in our lives to better prepare ourselves to hear and receive.

It's not easy to create an empty space in our lives and it's even harder to keep that space empty. But that is the call of Advent. In order to be gifted anything, we need to create a space where we can receive. James Leonard Taylor, Jr. has been an important teacher for me in this. For those that know James, he's probably not the first person to come to mind when you think of someone who is peaceful, calm, or at ease in the world. James can waffle from elation to despair to apathy and then back to elation, all within the span of a couple of hours. He is a man of the present moment.

But James is also extraordinarily gifted at sitting in front of empty spaces and just letting them be empty. James has felt and lived through the loss of a parent. He has sat by the side of a friend, comforting him as he passed away. He is the first to console those that suffer and his best self shines when he is able to offer this gift. James, unlike anyone I have ever seen, can sit in front of his own or someone else's empty space and not rush to try and fill it or fix it. He simply lives in it and through it.

James is a man who, in his own peculiar way, knows how to listen to his heart and calls others to do the same. I don't know if I'll be ready for Christmas by the time it gets here, but I do know that the season of Advent offers us an invitation to listen more deeply. I do know that God is moving in this world. And I do know that God deeply desires to be in conversation with all of us. May this season of Advent find all of us ready with listening spirits, a grateful heart, and empty spaces!

# L'Arche International Assembly in 2012

by Stacy Cates-Carney, Executive Director

Twice every decade, delegates from across the International Federation of L'Arche come together to share, listen and debate in order to guide the global L'Arche movement towards the future. Following gatherings in Assisi, Italy and Kolkata, India, the next International Assembly will be held in Atlanta, USA from June 1st to June 10th, 2012.

This weeklong meeting of 500 participants from about 40 countries will take place at the Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, just outside Atlanta. Each L'Arche community from across the globe will send a delegate to the Assembly. The delegate selected for L'Arche Tahoma Hope is Teresa Hershberger. Teresa is in her third year at L'Arche and is House Leader at Anawim. Leana Shiu, core member at Anawim and worker at Farm & Gardens, will be one of five people with intellectual disabilities from our region and one of 100 from across the world who will also be participating in the Assembly.



*Leana with long-time volunteer, Sr. Madeleine*

International Assemblies have always been an experience of various languages, religions and cultures, of encounter, celebration, work and discovery. Whether lived on-site at the Agnes Scott College in Decatur or at home through videos, newsletters and prayer, the week in Atlanta will strengthen the network of L'Arche communities.

The International General Assembly '12 will mark an important time of transition for the Federation: we will give thanks to the outgoing international coordinators and celebrate what has been accomplished in the past 13 years. The management of the Federation since Kolkata '08 will be reviewed. The Assembly will also adopt a new international mandate, appoint the new leadership and Board, decide on a new constitution, and determine directions for commitment and belonging.

The gathering is a possibility to extend L'Arche's values and vision to Atlanta. This week is an opportunity to learn about and from a local culture, in this case, the USA and, more specifically, the American South. From June 1st to June 3rd, delegates will get the chance to make friends with people from Atlanta. Atlantans will welcome participants into their homes and congregations for the weekend prior to their arrival at Agnes Scott College.



*Teresa with fellow community member, Carie*

On June 8th, participants will live a community day involving interaction with people and places in Atlanta, the birthplace of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Last but not least, Atlanta '12 shall be a learning experience on how women and men with and without disabilities can contribute fully to such a meeting. As such, the gathering will be a reminder to L'Arche and our societies that the disability rights movement leading towards the Americans with Disabilities Act is an ongoing call to action everywhere in the world.

Visit the L'Arche International website at [www.larche.org](http://www.larche.org) and click on box for Atlanta 2012 to learn more about and support the International General Assembly.

# L'Arche Jumps Into Local Pools

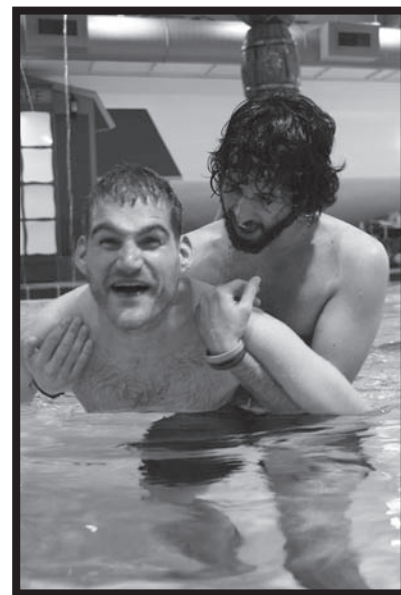
by Siri Carlson, Recreation and Day Support Assistant

Every week, two crews of swimmers from L'Arche Tahoma Hope jump into an hour or so of lap-swimming, water-treading, game-playing fun in the pools of Tacoma and Federal Way. Actually, we carefully wheel, walk, and climb the ladders into the pool, but we're diving into healthy and enjoyable play time.

On Monday evenings, Doug, Robbie, and Stacie join Adam, a volunteer, and Sharon, our intern from St. Martin's University, at Eastside Pool for open swim time. Doug and Robbie are master lap swimmers with a great competitive streak. After laps in the deep end to get their bodies moving, the guys also enjoy some game time in the shallow end, shooting hoops at the side of the pool or playing games of tag (watch out, Robbie always wins!). Stacie hits the hot tub right away, but then eases into the pool for walking, dancing, and observing the rest of us attempting semi-synchronized swimming. The Monday Night Swim Club members are an active bunch and are always making new friends at Eastside.

Bobby and Nathan constitute the Friday Swimmers, sojourning each week to the Weyerhaeuser King County Aquatic Center in Federal Way for an hour of recreational swimming. We're always in for a fun-filled time. Sharon, Jeff, our Jesuit novice, or Roland, an assistant at Anawim, joins us each week. Nathan enjoys diving for rings while Bobby walks or kicks with an assistant. Both guys enjoying moving quickly through the water, and while Nathan enjoys quietly exploring the pool perimeters and occasional splashy kicks, Bobby cannot get enough of energetic fellow swimmers making lots of noise and splashing around. Bobby's been a regular swimmer for a long time, but we're really glad that Nathan is willing to join us on Fridays now!

As always we're more than happy to welcome new members to our ranks, so let me know if you'd ever like to join us for some fun fitness in the pool. We'll be there, making a splash as always!



## Memorial Contributions

We are grateful for the donations we have received in memory of the following people. They, along with their families and friends, are in our prayers.

John Boyle  
Cindy Horner  
Laurie Johnson  
Ruth Johnson

Regina Mary Petrich  
Diana Shields  
Angie Stanley  
Don Thompson

We are also thankful for the donations we received in honor of:

Mark Drangstveit  
Jack & Bea Kingery  
Marissa Manza



L'ARCHE TAHOMA HOPE'S 18TH ANNUAL

# AUCTION

March 3rd, 2012

LANDMARK CONVENTION CENTER

Watch your mailbox for  
an invitation!\*

**At the heart of L'Arche Tahoma Hope** are the Core Members whose smiles are contagious, and whose gifts are celebrated each day. The funds raised at our auction can make a real difference in the continued life and growth of L'Arche Tahoma Hope. Mark your calendars now and come and be a part of the mission of L'Arche!

**Want to help make this year's auction our best ever?**

- Make a donation of an item, a basket, or maybe a special experience
- Contribute towards our underwriting expenses, ensuring that all proceeds from the event are able to come directly back to L'Arche.
- Help send a core member to the party, because it's really not a party at all without them there!
- The ways to get involved are endless.... Visit our website at [www.larchetahomahope.org](http://www.larchetahomahope.org).

To find out more, contact Mary or Rachel at (253) 535-3178, e-mail: [auction@larchetahomahope.org](mailto:auction@larchetahomahope.org).

\* If you've never attended our auction, but are interested in an invitation, contact Mary in our main office to be added to the invitation list.

Soundings is published three times a year, Spring, Summer and Christmas.

L'Arche Tahoma Hope is a non-profit organization.

Your donations are tax-deductible.

**Main Office**  
12303 36th Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 535-3178

**The Farmhouse**  
11716 Vickery Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 535-3171

**Anawim**  
616 East 45th St.  
Tacoma, WA 98404  
(253) 474-5618

**Ananda**  
12306 Vickery Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 537-5126

**Hopespring**  
12319 - 36th Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 537-6936

**Noah's Workshop**  
12319 - 36th Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 537-7540

**Farm & Gardens**  
11716 Vickery Ave. E.  
Tacoma, WA 98446  
(253) 537-7871

[www.larchetahomahope.org](http://www.larchetahomahope.org)

e-mail: [info@larchetahomahope.org](mailto:info@larchetahomahope.org)