

Life on the Lane



Spring 2009

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From the Executive Director

Welcome to the spring edition of Life On The Lane. In this edition we remember the life of Stanley Smith New Leaf's founder, visionary and leader. Stanley passed away on February 10, 2009.

On the farm property, across from the farm house where in 1983 Stanley Smith with six young men from Thistle-town took up residence, there stands a gazebo. Beside the gazebo is an old apple tree that in 1983 did not bloom. The tree appeared dead and ready to be cut down. The following year though, to everyone's surprise there appeared one solitary branch and that branch was in full bloom. It bloomed all year, and it became the symbol and inspiration for the agency name, New Leaf.

Sitting in this gazebo and looking out over the pastoral countryside one feels a connectedness with the land, with nature, and with the community that is New Leaf. This humble structure was the only

recognition that Stan would accept, but Stan Smith's legacy extends far beyond the humble farm house he first occupied 26 years ago. Today New Leaf has grown to where we serve 88 residents in 13 homes across the region. New Leaf operates an active Day Support program where the people we support and the people from the surrounding community can participate in woodworking, expressive arts therapy, greenhouse and aquatics programs, and of course farming. New Leaf operates a state of the art pool and recreation centre, a second therapeutic pool and two Snoezelen rooms. Today New Leaf offers gainful employment to 200 full and part time staff and has become a major employer in East Gwillimbury. This is the legacy of Stanley H. Smith, a man of deep commitment and enormous vision, and a man who has literally changed for better the lives of countless individuals.

I only met Stanley two years ago when I was given the privilege to join the New Leaf team, but over this short time I grew to

value his intellect, his insight and his gentle guidance. I fondly recall that during one of our many discussions on philosophy, ethics and values that he shared with me a quote from Michel de Montaigne. That quote is now inscribed on a plaque for Stan's gazebo, and it reads:

Ideals are like the stars.

We may never reach them,

But like the ancient mariners upon the sea

We use their light to chart our course.

Stanley Smith came closer than most of us ever will to reaching those stars. He will be missed, but not forgotten.

*Ron McCauley,
Executive Director*

Events Calendar

June—Baseball Season opens
 July 11—Sailing Day
 August 6—Boat Cruise
 August 22—Family Day /
 Corn Roast
 September—Baseball Tournament



“ ... on behalf of those at New Leaf who are unable to speak and express their feelings I would like to say; “Thank you Stan. If it wasn't for you, we wouldn't be here” Shine on”.

Submitted by Lucy Grandy

Tributes to Stan

At a time in my life, when I lacked focus and security, New Leaf came into my life. And through New Leaf, Stan Smith. This man was so intimidating at the time, I'd be shaking every time I tried talking to him. My first impression of him was the amount of confidence he displayed, which could have been mistaken for arrogance. Stan always told you like it was, shot from the hip, and didn't mess around with words. He opened my eyes to his vision of the future for those we support. With his guidance, we have been able to better the lives of so many people, which in turn, has enriched our own lives. We will continue to fulfill your mission statement made so many years ago, Stan. Rest in Peace. ...Bob Creighton

What can I say about Stan Smith that hasn't been said and won't be said by many who knew him. A humble man with a vision which he shared with me in the seventies, and whose vision grew into a reality that many could share. A man whom I considered a friend and a friend to those who would be friends. A man whose personal trials seemed to bring out compassion and hope rather than cynicism or defeat. Here was someone who could leave us while secure in the knowledge that he has made a positive contribution to the world and had, in a meaningful way, changed the life of others.

There are a multitude of anecdotes about Stan, but none that are not told with a sense of caring and loving. Stan was more than a pragmatic dreamer. Stan could be quirky and playful. He could be stern and at times even irascible. Nothing would or could stand against him achieving his goals.

My memories of Stan will help me to sustain his loss and look for the positives in the future.

... Rath M. Bray

You're Still Here

*At the finest level of our being, you're still with us.
We still look at each other, at the level beyond sight.
We talk and laugh with each other, in a place beyond words.
We still touch each other, on a level beyond touch.
We share time together in a place where time stands still.
We are still together on a level called compassion and caring.
But we cry alone for you in a place called reality.*

... Beth Feasby

"He has achieved success who has lived well, laughed often and loved much; who has gained the respect of intelligent men and the love of little children; who has filled his niche and accomplished his task; who has left the world better than he found it, whether by an improved poppy, a perfect poem, or a rescued soul; who has never lacked appreciation of earth's beauty or failed to express it; who has always looked for the best in others and given them the best he had; whose life was an inspiration; whose memory a benediction." ...Bessie Stanley

... submitted by Vladka Dabecova

Tributes to Stan

“ I love him so much and I miss him ... he was a hardworking man”Lyn B.

“ I miss him...” Wendy M.

“ He always brought me food to eat... pickled herrings, rye bread, butter and pickles” Edna K.

“ He took me on a truck at the Santa Clause parade” Jon W.

“ When I was playing baseball Stan would say to me- Don't show off because we all love you”
Lisa C.

“ He was a good person”Michael D.

“ Nice guy... enjoyed joking around. Showed me how to work things, always fixed locks” ...Chris K.

“ He used to let me play ball at the Field of Dreams and used to come to all Christmas parties.” ...
Susan F.

“ I went to get corn for the Corn Roast with Stan... I liked him”Violet G.

“ He was my Gilligan” Linda C.

“ He cooked breakfast for me—bacon, toast, sausage and he always said Hi to me” ... Sharon O.

“ He always gave me pop at the main office and asked me not to tell anyone—I have never betrayed
him”. ...Brien O.

“ Stan built this place for us, he cooked for us, he joked with us ... he was a lovely man”...Gina C.

“He was a great man—who else would have taken me. He opened this place for all of us”.. Paul K.

Stan and Friends



Tributes to Stan

IF TEARS COULD...

If tears could build a stairway
And memories were a lane,
We'd walk right up to heaven
To bring you home again.

No fare well words were spoken.
No time to say good-bye.
You were gone before we knew it,
And only he knows why.

Our hearts still ache in sadness
And secret tears still flow.
What it meant to lose you,
No one will ever know.

Bill and Star Wheeler

Stan was a man of vision, always moving forward with the good ship New Leaf. I first met Stan in 1989 when I applied to New Leaf. At that time the Farm House, the Cedars and the Birches were the only houses that made up New Leaf. Stan was totally dedicated to the dream. Look at New Leaf today—it is still growing.

I remember many times the countless weekends and evenings he would spend fixing this, wiring that, helping here and there. He would often purchase the latest tool on the market and surprise me with it. His peameal bacon on a bun was always a big favourite the morning of the annual Corn Roast. Stan loved people and was a torch bearer, an advocate, a voice for the voiceless. May we be the ones to carry his dream to this generation!

... submitted by Dan Antonio

With Stan now gone, I am left with a couple of cherished items and books that he gave me and I am left with endless respect for an incredible man. I am left with a changed philosophy and world view and an incredible social work tool case. I am left with the feeling of pride I felt the first time he referred to me as his friend.

We are left with New Leaf and the duty to pick up a stone as we walk down the path and the hope that others who follow us will continue Stan's dream and perpetually ease the journey for others as they too walk down the path.

Submitted by Carson Lutz

Tributes to Stan

Dear Stan:

I realize that this letter is a little late, but I felt that I wanted to write it anyway. I just wanted to thank you for a number of things that you did for me over the past twenty years or so, I guess since I first applied to New Leaf in the Spring of '86.

I didn't have a very good work record then, having spent most of my work years moving from one place to the other all over Canada and for that matter a lot of the world. I never had a serious job, since leaving university (without graduating) 20 years before, not great stuff for a resume. It didn't help that I had just spent the last 6 months in several Buddhist monasteries in India. I put that down as my work experience in the business that New Leaf was hiring for. For some reason you saw something in all that and you hired me. Thank you for seeing some value in my application and including me into your dream.

My first job was to accompany a staff and a group of residents on a holiday to Niagara Falls. On that trip I met quite a few residents and staff members, many of whom are still my best friends today. Best of all I met Barb Reed who has become my life time companion. If you hadn't hired me I would have missed those wonderful people so thank you for that.

Barb had a daughter named Jeni who was 9 or 10 years old and soon we had a son who we named Matt. I became disgruntled and had a falling out with New Leaf and I quit soon after that. With bank borrowed money we built a large extension on our little house but after a year we were in debt, had a family to raise, and I had no job. I reapplied at New Leaf and you were good enough to hire me again despite our past problems. Thank you for that kindness and understanding.

With my new job, and a large house, we were able to not only have room for everybody, but now there was room for my daughter Jumna and later for another daughter Harmony. All I had to do now was stay employed, which was not one of my strong points. Again you came through for me and gave me a very interesting job supervising a large greenhouse, which I was very happy to do right up to retirement. Thank you for your trust.

My only regret is that I didn't send you this letter before you died. Rest in peace. I shall not forget you.

Moe.



Resident's Advocacy Council Update

The Residents' Advocacy Council has been busy in recent months. This group has formally drafted Terms of Reference that have been adopted and put into practice. The client complaint policy has been translated into a plain language document and the members are actively sharing this information with their peers.

Perhaps the most significant accomplishment thus far has been the completion of the guidelines related to Residents' Rights and Responsibilities. This has been an onerous but highly rewarding process to go through as the council had to differentiate between, needs, wants and true rights. Additionally, the council also took seriously the realization that with each right comes responsibility and as a result, council created a guideline that not only speaks to their rights but also to their responsibilities in a detailed way. The next phase of this project is to create a pictorial version of the written document to ensure the information reaches the largest audience possible at New Leaf.

Two of our council members will be attending a workshop on rights, responsibilities and self advocacy. They will learn about the journey of other self advocates and will network with others as well as enjoying the wisdom of Dave Hingsburger. The day will end with some inspirational words and music from Justin Hines who has moved well beyond being recognized as a person with a disability and is gaining recognition simply as the talented musician that he is.

On behalf of the council,

Carson Latz

Director: Day Supports and Respite Services; Quality Assurance

A New Era

Submitted by Dan Antonio

This morning is the first of a new era in Ontario. After a long, painful battle, the government of Ontario has, with its community partners, accomplished a major feat; the closing of all institutions in the province.

We need to celebrate, but not be complacent. This is a time to look to our own actions and encourage one another to de-institutionalize our thinking.

Let's make this the year of demolishing the institutional bricks and mortar in our heads. Let's make this the year of not turning a blind eye or deaf ear when we hear or see something said or done that diminishes another person in any way. Let's expect the same for every human being as we expect for ourselves and be tireless and brave in the battle. It isn't over just because the doors closed yesterday.



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**New Leaf is a proud member of:
*M.A.R.C., *O.A.S.I.S., *O.A.D.D.**

Mission Statement

We propose to cease the endless pursuit of “rehabilitation” in an urban environment for multi problem, hard to service, developmentally disabled clients. We will provide a rural setting where the emphasis is on cooperation and family-type relationships of unlimited duration.

Our approach will be to emphasize decision-making skills rather than simply obeying rules and regulations. The staff will act as advisors and facilitators rather than therapeutic workers. The difference will be somewhere between the unavoidable regimented atmosphere of a group home and the comfortable ambiance of a home in the country.

In pursuit of this mission we will endeavor to guarantee and protect the human rights of all those who will look to New Leaf for services without regards to ethno-racial characteristics, social background or other discriminatory practices, prejudices or bias.

YES! I would like to support the wonderful services provided at New Leaf: Living and Learning Together Inc.

Enclosed is my donation of: _____ \$250 _____ \$ 100 _____ \$ 50 _____ \$ 25 Other \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone Number(s): _____

Email: _____

Thank you for helping make a difference.

Tax receipts will be automatically issued for donations of \$20 or more.