

How it started

By Elena Korniakova

I walked past him on a hot summer's night. It was 10 pm and he had been working all day. He was tired but you could never tell. I admired his sculpture for several seconds before finally realizing I had to introduce myself.

He did not speak much English. He spoke to me in Russian, much to my surprise as I had been born and raised in Russia.

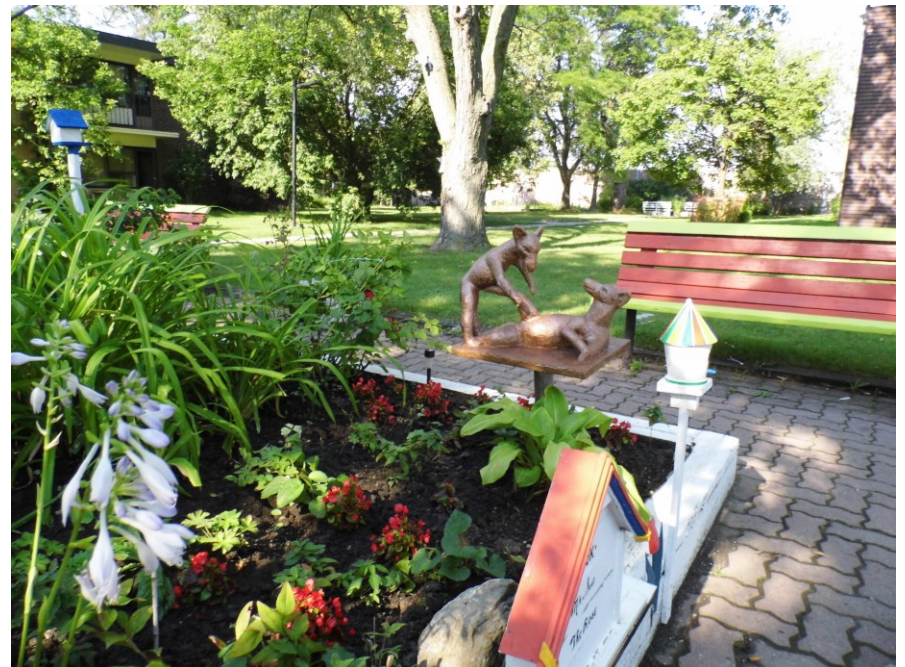
I asked him what he was doing here and he replied that he was working on two swans for the seniors' recreational area of Lawrence Heights.

We spoke about art, architecture, theatre and poetry. I realized that we had much in common. I felt as though I was meeting someone that would have an important role in my life moving forward - a Creative soul mate.



Seniors' recreational area

We sit and we smoke and we laugh and we eat here. And we tell jokes and we admire things. This may look like a poor area but it doesn't feel poor to us. We've made it rich with our conversation, we've made it rich with our art. And when people walk by they often feel it too. It makes them feel better and they want to stay for a while, they want to become our friends and then our family grows.



Yuri's outdoor workshop

This was a vacant area of the seniors' residency. And to him it seemed like a good place to work. So he set himself up and started working. When we first met he brought me here shortly thereafter and I started working on a sculpture too.

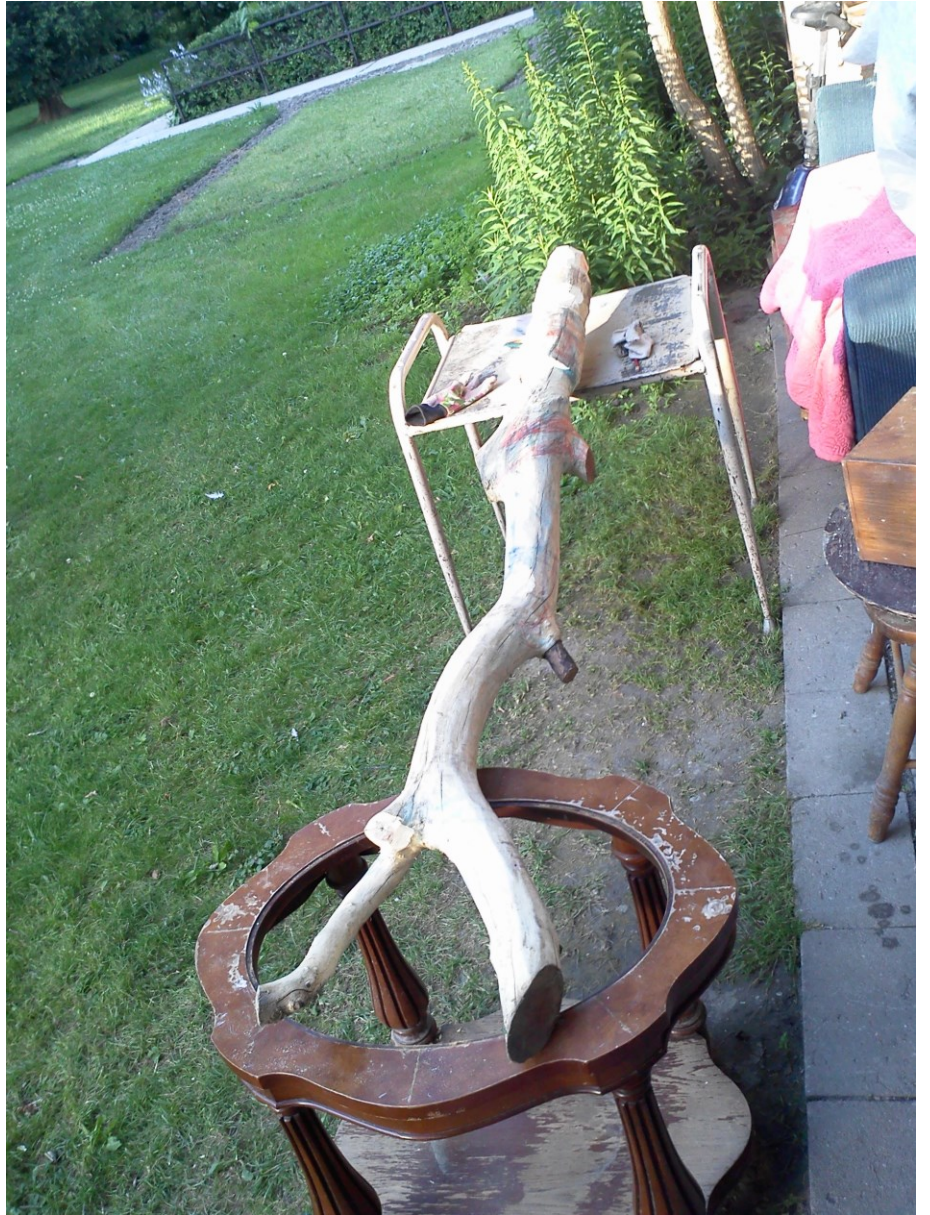






He guided me through my very first wooden sculpture. I made it all with an axe. I felt mighty with the axe in my hand.





It came out beautiful ...

And so we created Lawrence Heights Art Center - a place where Creative minds of any art form can come and freely express themselves within our community. We have exhibitions where we showcase the incredible talent that comes through the center. We have music gatherings, poetry parties, we give live performances and don't forget our famous puppetry shows.





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