



Making an Impact in Canadian Society

Almost 50 years ago Jean Vanier welcomed two men with an intellectual disability to live with him as friends in a small home. His new friends became his partners and L'Arche was born. This act of welcome has been replicated thousands of times around the world and continues today. Each person's story is unique, but all share the need for a place to belong where they experience love and care and respect, and all desire to let the light of their life shine. Is this not the same for every one of us?

- Nathan Ball, Executive Director

In Brief...

VANIER SPEAKS TO "WE DAY"

A short powerful video message from Jean Vanier opened this year's popular "WE Day"—gatherings of thousands of high school students in major Canadian cities, organized by Mark and Craig Kielburger, founders of "Free the Children" and "Me to We." Vanier's message calls youth to work together to create a more just and equitable world. Go to www.larche.ca

L'ARCHE ONTARIO RECOGNIZED AS A TOP EMPLOYER

Every year, L'Arche communities in Ontario welcome several University of Waterloo students as short-term live-in assistants. Our experience is that they almost always bring good enthusiasm and caring to their L'Arche homes, and in turn their lives are ...continued

FINDING A PLACE TO BELONG

At the heart of L'Arche are the stories of women and men who have found a place to belong in one of L'Arche's many communities across Canada. Most move into L'Arche homes, some come into L'Arche day programs. Here are several stories of people who have recently come to L'Arche, each one's life sacred and beautiful.

An Opportunity to Learn Together

Alya'a Al-Waznee joined L'Arche Vancouver's Emmaus day program in January. Alya'a and her family are Sunni Muslims from Iraq who were sponsored by a local United Church to come to Canada. Even though ours is clearly a Christian community, her parents were adamant when they visited that this is where they wanted their daughter to be. Her father exclaimed, "When we pray, we pray to the same God!" It has been a rich time of growth for all of us. There are the usual joys and uncertainties of welcoming someone new, and in addition, of supporting someone with a disability who is acclimatizing to our Canadian culture, language and traditions. Alya'a is a delightful young



Alya'a is learning the English alphabet on an ipad.

woman. She is outgoing and welcoming despite the language barrier. She is also a keen artist and a good dancer. Dedicated local Arabic-speaking volunteers have been instrumental in helping us, Alya'a, and her parents lay the foundations for a rewarding relationship. Alya'a seems to thoroughly enjoy her time in Emmaus. Every day, before Alya'a leaves, she says with a big smile and in a loud, confident voice for all to hear, "I'll be back!"

- Peter McKinley, Day Programs Director,
L'Arche Greater Vancouver

A Very Sociable Man and a Good Leader



Matthieu creates a spirit of fun.

I would like to introduce you to Matthieu Charbonneau. He is 32 years old and he arrived in our community less than two years ago. It was Matthieu who asked to come to L'Arche. After a visit he made to L'Arche in France several years ago he expressed the desire to live in L'Arche someday. Having always lived with his parents, Matthieu was able to adapt quickly to community life in L'Arche Mauricie. He is a very sociable

and playful man who loves to create a spirit of fun at parties. He has quickly become a ray of light in his L'Arche home and in his community, and a leader whose positive attitude is a good example for all.

- Patrice Paradis, Community Leader,
L'Arche Mauricie

Philip Describes his Experience

My name is Philip Beauchamp and I live in a home which is run by an agency in our city. Last year I joined L'Arche Hamilton's Day Program. I attend five days a week. I come to community nights and I enjoy dinner invitations to L'Arche homes. Things have been good for me since coming to L'Arche. I've learned a lot of stuff such as making candles, pottery and



Philip with Charlotte, one of his Day Program friends.

other crafts. I am a volunteer and I deliver Meals on Wheels. We make lunch together. I have learned about healthy choices, plus planning, shopping and cooking skills. I enjoy technology and I helped fix things like the music system in the relaxation room. The gym and waterfit are fun ways for us to stay in shape. L'Arche Hamilton is a place to try new things and to belong. I have made good friends here.

- Philip Beauchamp, Member of L'Arche Hamilton's Day Program

touched and shaped by their experience of living in L'Arche. This year, L'Arche Ontario was named one of the Top 100 Employers by the University of Waterloo Co-op Program because of its commitment and support to co-op students over the years.

DIPLOMA PROGRAM RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD The Diploma in Intellectual Disability Studies, developed by St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, Nova Scotia with significant L'Arche Canada involvement, was recognized by the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education (CAUCE) at its annual conference. CAUCE's Awards Committee said that they were "deeply impressed by how the Program enriches the lives of those with intellectual disabilities, and the Program's community partnership approach."

DIAMOND JUBILEE AWARD In July, Ingrid Blais, community leader of L'Arche Homefires in Wolfville, NS, was awarded a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for her contribution to society through working with people with intellectual disabilities over the past 34 years. "To receive an honour for doing the ordinary things one does and loves doing is a blessing," says Ingrid.

MILESTONE ANNIVERSARIES L'Arche Edmonton and L'Arche Ottawa celebrated their 40th anniversary and L'Arche Montreal its 35th anniversary this year.

At Home in L'Arche Calgary

When Hilde Arndt came to our L'Arche Calgary family two years ago she didn't know what to expect but she was excited to 'leave the nest,' she says with a laugh. Coming to L'Arche has been a transformative experience for Hilde. Adjusting to life in a group setting was a little difficult, but Hilde has emerged as one of the leaders in her home and in her volunteer program. Hilde lists hanging out with her new friends,

going for coffee and watching movies as favourite things to do. Saturdays, Hilde takes command of the kitchen helping make nutritious meals that she serves to her housemates with pride. Hilde has also become a spokesperson for L'Arche Calgary, attending volunteer meetings and handing out awards at the 2012 Run for L'Arche.

- Nichole McKenzie, Communications Coordinator, L'Arche Calgary



Hilde with Marise, an assistant in Hilde's L'Arche home

Heather—Bringing Gifts of Strength and Care

In October 2011, shortly after opening two new homes and welcoming eight new core members, L'Arche Antigonish had an urgent request to welcome Heather. She had expected to come to L'Arche one day, but her situation became more pressing after the sudden death of her mother. We created an additional bedroom and Heather moved in.

Heather's outgoing personality made the adjustment easier for everyone, especially Miriam, who was happy to welcome another woman into the house (another redhead, as they both reminded us)! Heather quickly immersed herself in community life, joining the gym, rehearsing for the community play, and introducing us to her family, who were often invited for visits.

Soon after Heather's arrival, Miriam, who suffered a chronic illness, began to weaken rapidly. Heather's presence buoyed her spirits and helped us all deal with the journey ahead. Unfortunately,



Group picture before last Christmas (Heather far left; Miriam seated.)

that journey ended for Miriam on December 17th, when she passed away peacefully at home in Hope House. Heather and her family were a source of strength for everyone in the house. Heather's arrival seemed almost providential as we were able to help each other through the difficult times ahead.

- Carl MacDonald, House Leader, L'Arche Antigonish

Félix... what a man!

Félix Lussier arrived in L'Arche Joliette 7 months ago, at age 30. He is the incarnation of sweetness and gentleness. He says almost nothing, and he loves to be surrounded by his friends. Félix had long shown a desire to live in L'Arche and this was quickly borne out: When with his parents he would sleep in very late and they had difficulty getting him up for work. Since moving to L'Arche, Felix gets himself up with the others in his home and is always

on time for work.

Félix loves it when the house lights up with life and laughter and craziness. When we have special meals, Felix can take hours to eat because he likes to watch each person and he laughs just to see other people laughing. Welcoming Félix has been a real gift for us. He is one of the most limited people in the community, but little by little he has become our quiet strength. We have all been touched to see that words are not the only way



Félix at a fair with L'Arche friends.

to be understood. As we tune ourselves to Félix's heart, we can see clearly his profound desire to share in our community life.

- Elisabeth Richard, Community Leader, L'Arche Joliette

Published by

L'ARCHE CANADA FOUNDATION

10271 Yonge Street, Suite 300
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3B5

Tel: 1.800.571.0212 or 1.905.770.7696

Fax: 905.884.4819

Email: foundation@larche.ca

Charitable Number: 889909719RR0001

www.larchefoundation.ca

L'Arche™ is a trademark owned by L'Arche Canada Inc. and

used under license.

Printed on FSC certified paper
50% Recycled Fibre 25% Post Consumers