



## Making an Impact in Canadian Society

Far more than simply providing high quality homes and work, L'Arche's mission is to reveal the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities to a world that needs them. One of the ways we do that is through creative arts. Art is a place where we truly meet as equals, where we have a chance to glimpse another's soul, where we build connections, and recognize genuine accomplishments. In this issue of the Impact Bulletin, we invite you to experience some of the ways L'Arche communities across Canada are integrating creative arts into vibrant community life.

—Marianne McQuillan,  
L'Arche Canada Foundation

### In Brief...

**L'ARCHE CANADA** is pleased to announce that Her Excellency Sharon Johnston has agreed to support L'Arche as a Patron while she and her husband, Governor General of Canada David Johnston, continue in office. Mrs. Johnston has been a faithful supporter of L'Arche for a number of years, both in Ottawa and nationally.

**L'ARCHE INTERNATIONAL'S** new web series, *As I Am*, imagines the world differently. In the latest installment, *Let the Birds Loose*, L'Arche Ukraine member Bogdan Senyk responds to his country's occupation with this thought: "I am going to die one day, but not from anger. No stones in my soul."

## IMPACTING CANADIAN SOCIETY THROUGH THE ARTS

### Comox Valley's Outreach and Creative Arts Centre

L'Arche Comox Valley's Outreach and Creative Arts Centre is a one-stop community hub that produces beautiful candles, jewellery, and visual art, while building relationships and community. It includes special programming for local seniors, drawing older, isolated adults out to eat together and share stories.

The program has been forced to move several times on a quest for an elusive low-rent facility that would have enough space (think wheelchairs, art easels) and the right kind of space (think dripping wax, splattering paint). Meanwhile, the community was renting office space in another building, and running Jubilee House, the residence that was the heart of L'Arche in the Comox Valley.

It was clear the community needed a single building that could house administration, large rooms for art-making, a teaching kitchen for job training and six new residential units for adults with disabilities, putting many facets of the community under one roof. The facility would be within walking distance of Jubilee House, but also close to the downtown core, and easily accessible on public transit.

After a great deal of prayer and preparation, the I Belong! campaign was launched in 2014 and to date, has raised one million dollars. Shovels will go in the

ground this spring, with a projected opening in 2017. The I Belong! Centre will be a vibrant and creative setting for living, working and celebrating a life lived together in community.



Candle-making at the Creative Arts Program



Architect's rendering of the proposed new centre

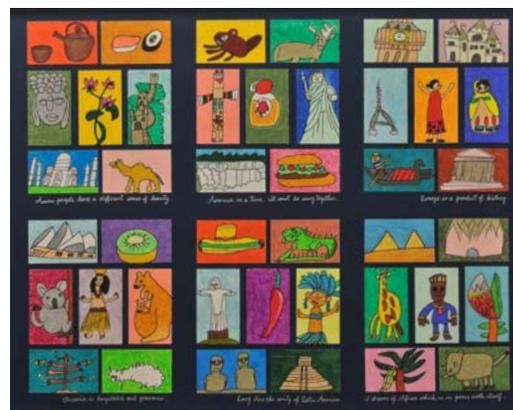
### The Beauty of Imperfection



Mari and her friend Monique at a craft fair

Originally from Japan, Mari Ando first encountered L'Arche in Montreal at a public talk by Jean Vanier in 2004. Soon she was volunteering to cook supper at the local L'Arche community once a week. From there, she became an assistant and eventually leader of the Alizé work program.

The trademark of Alizé is



collaborative art. Some people's work is careful and precise, others' is wild and abstract. Each piece is imperfect, but drawn with a free spirit. When they are mounted together and framed, it becomes true art.

"It is always astonishing when the work is complete," says Ando. "How does the imperfection become so beautiful? Their art attracts men and women, and we even gave one to the Princess Anne during her visit in 2014."

"When I see the beauty of the imperfection through their art, I become speechless for a little moment. I am fortunate to work with them to be able to live with this wonderful surprise in my daily life."

**L'ARCHE HOMEFIRES** in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, is in the home stretch of an ambitious fundraising project to renovate and repurpose a former church hall. The building will serve as a community gathering place as well as housing all three day programs, the offices, and store front. To date, the community has received over 500 individual donations, as well as funding from the provincial government and various foundations and grants. They're hoping to start the renovation in the spring.

**L'ARCHE LONDON'S MONDAY MORNING MUSIC CLUB** was named as one of three finalists for the Pillar Community Innovation Award. The music program is open and free, a weekly place of welcome and belonging which has created an extended community of friends. And soon it will have a home of its own, as the community is engaged in a capital campaign, raising money to build a gathering place and new home for the offices and day programs.

**IN THE DECEMBER 22 EDITION OF THE GLOBE AND MAIL**, feature writer Ian Brown published an [account](#) of his recent visit with Jean Vanier and the original community of L'Arche in Trosly, France. Brown found peace "in the company of people who had never imagined they could control the world or win the game."

**TWO GLEAMING NEW DODGE GRAND CARAVANS** have arrived at L'Arche Edmonton as the result of a gift from the Stollery Charitable Foundation in Edmonton and a successful collaboration with the L'Arche Canada Foundation. They replace an unwieldy bus and a 14-year-old van, which the community had been relying on to transport people in their day program to outings and activities.

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**Songs of the Heart Art Show Tours Ontario**

*Congratulations to those members of L'Arche who have done these beautiful paintings. As you look at the paintings look at the people through the paintings. Remember that painting is the song of the heart. What is important is that we contemplate and give thanks for the hearts of these men and women who have beautiful gifts. As we welcome the gifts, we are welcoming those people who have done them.*

—Jean Vanier

[An International Art Show](#) celebrating inclusion, disability, and the arts is currently touring the province of Ontario. The show features works by artists with disabilities who belong to L'Arche communities from Africa to France, from Canada to India.

The traveling art show reveals the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, as well as the impact



Peter Ogradnik, artist and member of L'Arche London, points out his work, *Sky*.

of art on our society. Visual art knows no boundaries. It is a place of inclusion, a universal language, which reaches beyond frontiers of class, of social milieu, of labels, of ability and disability. Art touches the heart of the viewer and speaks on its own, building a relationship between the artist and the viewer.

Thousands of people will have the chance to experience this show as it tours art galleries and libraries throughout the province. It will help to raise the profile of artists with disabilities, revealing their gifts and adding hope and beauty to our broken world.

**Using Arts to Build Community**

This past Christmas, the community of L'Arche Antigonish continued its tradition of performing a Christmas play at the Bauer Theatre, at Saint Francis Xavier University. "Christmas Memories: Keeping the Spirit of Christmas in Your Heart" was a huge success which drew many members of the public to its two performances. The theatre was full of laughter, singing voices, and even a few tears.

Leading up to the performance weekend, everyone was buzzing with frequent rehearsals, set and costume prep, and pre-performance excitement. The play involved the whole community in set up, costume design, make up, music, and of course, stage performance. An incredibly dedicated team of volunteers helped to support those who performed.

The Christmas play is always a highlight of the year for L'Arche Antigonish and its surrounding



community, as people get into the spirit of Christmas together.

This drama program is only one facet of a comprehensive creative arts program known as Hearts & Hands, where people from L'Arche and the wider community come together to discover their creative potential through visual arts, music, dance and drama. "We believe this allows us to reveal our creative gifts to those who surround our community," says co-ordinator



The cast and crew received amazing feedback from those who attended the show.

Natalie Cameron. "We are grateful that drama is one of the many media that we use to foster these connections."