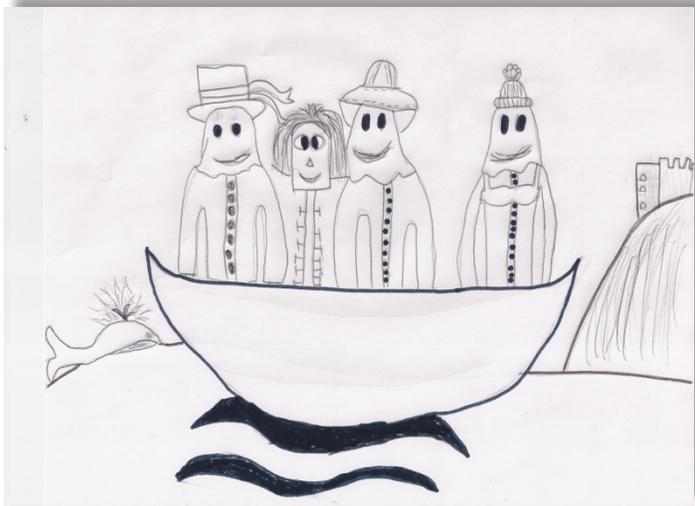




Building Block News

Building on the L'Arche model in Newfoundland and Labrador



"L'Arche in Newfoundland" by Jacqueline Rolland-Raydon

An Assistant's Journey in L'Arche By April Stapleton

My name is April Stapleton and I spent 16 months working as a L'Arche assistant in L'Arche Beloeil and L'Arche le Printemps. My house in Beloeil, called Fleur de Soleil meaning Sunflower, was composed of six core members and three assistants. My house in St-Malachie, called Les Érables or Maple, was composed of five core members and two assistants. My time at L'Arche was quite educational—so much so that my fellow assistants and I often referred to L'Arche as "The School of Life". In this article I'd like to describe some of the traditions that made up the daily fabric of our life at L'Arche.

One of our most important traditions was our weekly house meeting that took place every Sunday night. During this meeting we would discuss our agenda for the week. For example, we would write any special appointments, events, or parties for that week on the calendar. We would also choose menus for the meals that we would cook together that week.

Another tradition was our prayer night, which took place in one of the chapels of our homes. All core members, assistants, and friends of the community would gather every Tuesday evening for an interdenominational time of prayer and music. This time was open to all; if there were any suggestions or ideas about prayer night, they could forward them to the spiritual life committee, who planned and coordinated the prayer night. This was the one time a week we were all together, and everyone enjoyed greeting each other and sharing news.

A particular favorite tradition of mine was summer holidays. During L'Arche holidays we would spend one week together in a campsite on a lake, and then we would split into small vacation groups who would travel to different cities or towns in the region. To facilitate the process, we would often exchange houses with other L'Arche communities in the region.

Now that my time at L'Arche has come to an end, I have begun studying Occupational Therapy at Queen's University. Thanks to my experience at L'Arche, I envision my career centred around working with people with disabilities.

Pictured below are members of April's household at L'Arche Les Érables.



Cornerstone Events

Community Walks! By Clotilde Raydon

On Saturday February 6th, about 14 of our members put on their walking shoes for a "première" in our little community: walking on the track at The Works. Some were a little bit nervous about how our core members or our youngest participants would react to this new situation, and if everybody would even make it onto the tracks. But after patient waiting or some bribing, everyone ended up walking, toddling or being pushed alongside the white lines of the track, at different speeds and for a various number of laps. No competition here was ever thought of, but it is very encouraging to have some of our core members walking around, some four laps for a first-time. We'll keep you informed of our progress!

After this exercise, a comforting snack was taken at the tables by the track and spontaneous song-singing brought some unexpected highly enthusiastic reactions from one of our core members, which made us have a good hearty laugh! A true "L'Arche moment", I can tell you!

Now we are looking forward to walking together again next month, still on the indoor track if the weather stays wintry, and it will be a good training before outdoor round-the-pond walks hopefully in a couple of months! Of course, we welcome everybody to join in this new monthly activity that CHS is now proposing to its members and friends.

Drum Circle

On March 20, Cornerstone Members enjoyed a drum circle together at Sunshine Park. Here are some photographs from the gathering:



(pictured here are members of the Board of Cornerstone Housing Society with Ingrid Blais, Community Leader of L'Arche Homefires in Wolfville, Nova Scotia)

It was a wonderful learning experience for the members. They visited L'Arche Homefires in Wolfville and were impressed by the extent of that organization with its day programs, elder care program, residences, candle making workshop, weavery and gift shop.



They were invited to supper and to spend the evening with core members and assistants at L'Arche Halifax. They attended a meeting with other Board members from L'Arche Atlantic communities. At that meeting there were three sessions: one on the new L'Arche International publication – *The Role of the Board in L'Arche* led by Jenn Power, Regional Leader L'Arche Atlantic; one on publications and public relations initiatives led by John O'Donnell, L'Arche Canada Public Relations Outreach Coordinator, and the final one on fundraising for L'Arche led by Josie McEachern of L'Arche Cape Breton.

Community Announcements News from the Board

In January of this year there was a 3-day series of meetings and activities for board development held in Nova Scotia. The Board of Cornerstone Housing Society was invited to those sessions. Five Board members – Lewis Andrews, Lorraine Angelopoulos, David Buckley, Peter Barnes and Marilyn Bruce – were able to attend.



Congratulations!

The community extends congratulations to Ben Anderson-White, who received permanent resident status in Canada this month! Welcome Ben!



Thank you!

Thank you to **Jacqueline Rolland-Raydon** for her lovely happy birthday drawing and her sketch of a Newfoundland L'Arche Logo – both made especially for the newsletter!

Help Wanted!

If you have information or announcements you'd like to include in the newsletter, or if you'd like to help compile the newsletter, please contact Meagan, Lorraine, Peter, Marilyn, or any other member of the Community Building Committee. Contributions are always welcome!

Happy Birthday to YOU!



The following Cornerstone Members have birthdays in January, February, and March. If we've missed you – we're sorry! Please let a member of the Community Building Committee know.

Marie Rowe

David Buckley

Naomi Cousins

Elissa Gazel

Jonathan Dawe

Lorraine Angelopoulos

Sarah McMeekin

Marilyn Bruce



Upcoming Events

Our next community walk will be held on **April 9th, 2016** from 1:30-3pm. The walk will happen at the Memorial University Field House and costs \$3 per person. Bring indoor shoes and a snack for afterwards!



Our next event will be on **April 24th, 2016** – location to be determined. We hope you feel welcomed to attend and bring friends!

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