

## **Turf, Trust And Collaboration**

On December 7, 2018, three members of L'Arche Avalon attended an interesting and informative interactive workshop hosted by the Community Sector Council. The workshop titled "Turf, Trust and Collaboration" focused on the core leadership competency of trust building. The session was very competently led by Liz Weaver of Tamarack Learning Services.

As we go about the process of community building in our L'Arche community, we are discovering the complexity of collaborating with people of very different personalities and ideas. We are finding the relationship between trust and time. Trust takes time. We must first learn to trust ourselves and then to build relationships of trust within and without our community. Indeed, if we are to become a fully-fledged L'Arche community, we must learn to trust the L'Arche organizational model. We have to build trust with government and with the community at large. Trust takes time and a lot of very strategic, purposeful effort. Trust takes skill and personal commitment. Trust is the foundation of everything we want to build in our L'Arche community.

This workshop suggested trust-building activities, insights into our organizational culture, methods for deepening community, and strategies on how to work with friends, allies and enemies. Indeed, building trust is bigger than tactics – it is our entire mission.



"If you want to do something fast, you work alone; if you want to do something well, you collaborate"

"We are all part of the problem and we are all part of the solution."

*Lorraine A.*

"You will discover how fragile and vulnerable your life, your body and your heart really are. You cannot do just anything. You have to look after yourself and treat yourself gently, enjoying relaxation, relationships, peace and prayer which will help you stay in the light."

~ Jean Vanier

## Sensory Friendly Concert – Atlantic String Quartet



On March 22, several members of our L'Arche Avalon community attended the second Sensory Friendly Concert put on by the Atlantic String Quartet and sponsored by Memorial University, VOCM Cares Foundation, and Renee White, music therapist.

It was a wonderful hour of music beginning with Vivaldi's "Winter" and included two pieces by Fritz Kreisler, two folk dances by Bartok, Bach's "Art of the Fugue," a selection from Bizet's "Carmen" and "Andante Cantabile" by Mozart. We were treated to two Irish jigs, an American fiddle piece called "Orange Blossom Special," Leonard Cohen's "Halleluiah" and finally the theme from "Star Wars."

Paul, who came with his mom and his caregiver, listened intently and pumped his leg along to the music. Mark who was there with his mother and his nan seemed to enjoy the concert. Anton Buckley attended with his parents. Two little girls danced along to the music. Attendees were free to move around as they wished. The lights were dim and soft. Thank you to all who planned this event. Hopefully efforts like this will continue and expand.

## What Is “Spiritual Expressions?”



In our community of L'Arche Avalon we have struggled to define and articulate our “spirituality.” Members of our community are a diverse group in many ways and not surprisingly, we are complicated and unique in the ways we express our spirituality. And so, in February 2018, we began these monthly gatherings to explore what spirituality means to us personally and to us as a group. These sessions have been well- attended. In January of this year we met to evaluate what had been happening over the past year and to see if we were any closer to a consensus on what is the spirituality of L'Arche Avalon. We agreed that it was about our being together and being present to each other in fellowship, support and respect, sharing and continually striving to accept and embrace difference. We welcome you all to come to

these sessions that usually take place on the first Sunday of the month. Come and share the diverse ways in which spirituality can be expressed.

*Lorraine A.*

### **Mark Andrews' Milestone Birthday!**



On April 2nd of this year one of our longstanding community members, Mark Andrews, celebrated his 40th birthday. The happy occasion was celebrated on March 30th at The Citadel. Mark's brother, Todd, and his family came



from Grand Falls and his Uncle Keith Wight and his wife, Joan, came from Montreal for the occasion. Mark's other brother, Brad, who lives in California, sent greetings and a generous donation to L'Arche Avalon. Keith and Joan also donated generously to our community in honor of Mark's birthday. Over 60 people attended including his parents, Marilyn and Lewis, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, caregivers and Mark's L'Arche Avalon family. The Potluck Singers came and conducted a singalong of well-known favorites. The party concluded with a lovely lunch of sandwiches, cookies and birthday cake. Happy Birthday, Mark, and many more to come!



"We may not all be called to do great things that make the headlines, but we are all called to love and be loved, wherever we may be. We are called to be open and to grow in love and thus to communicate life to others, especially to those in need."

~ Jean Vanier



## Jam Circles!



At our monthly Jam Circle we want to give especially our core members an opportunity to express themselves through sound, rhythm and music. Paul often joins in by movement. Mark visibly enjoys the sounds he creates by touching the chimes. Anton creates a rhythm on his drum, stops, clearly expects the circle to imitate what he did, then seems to cheekily wait for someone to say "again!" before he produces another inspiring

short rhythm. Mitchell's rare smile seems to express his comfort at being in the circle. Maureen patiently sits and waits for her opportunity to connect with most of us to tell a bit of her daily life.



David leads us through the Jam Circle, always starting the Circle with the Welcome song. Petra added a challenge recently: some of the words are accompanied with ASL signs. We introduce two more words every month by our fabulous ASL sign instructors Gail and Ann Marie and are made (...encouraged 😊) to practise and learn every day during the month! As a 'reward' we have snacks when we finish jamming.

Throughout the jamming period everybody is encouraged to express themselves, also to suggest an activity as well as to lead us. We have to thank Lorraine for all the imaginary pies we are being served through her's and Paul's Pie Song.





We have a large selection of instruments, acquired through a City Grant and individual donations.

Through our partnership with MUN Music School we can use the MMAP room in the ACC at no cost. In return we offer the music students an easy opportunity to volunteer with L'Arche Avalon. It is wonderful to presently have Shae-Lynn, Grace, and Naomi being part of and taking an active role in the Jam Circle. Hannah, the very L'Arche-committed high school student, joins in with a special sound here and there - her trumpet. Recently Grace created a 'L'Arche Avalon Jam Circle Guide' booklet, with song texts, activities, photos, and more.

She also posted on Facebook a few videos of 4 of our regular songs

- [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXx\\_vgxB8QX0okCru3VPe5w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXx_vgxB8QX0okCru3VPe5w). THANK YOU Grace!

Participants feel energy in our Jam Circle, and enjoy being part of it. We always have fun and look forward to it. Jam Circle takes place every month on the 4th Saturday. Everybody is welcome to join - check us out if you haven't been part of it yet.

*Petra S.*

### **April Gathering At L'Arche Avalon**



At the April monthly gathering, community members were treated to the music of the Brendan Bowen Band.

Brendan Bowen is a fourteen-year-old who plays the accordion like a pro even though he's been playing for just over four years. He and his other two band members appear regularly at local festivals. They also do a lot of volunteer work such as playing for our community gathering.

His playlist included Newfie Boogie, a Simani favorite - The Rose in her Hair, Sonny's Dream, Music and Friends, Grey Foggy Day and The Old Polina. These old favorites prompted quite a few people to get up and dance.



Brandon was very well received. Hopefully he will come back to visit us again. Live music is such a welcome addition to our gatherings.

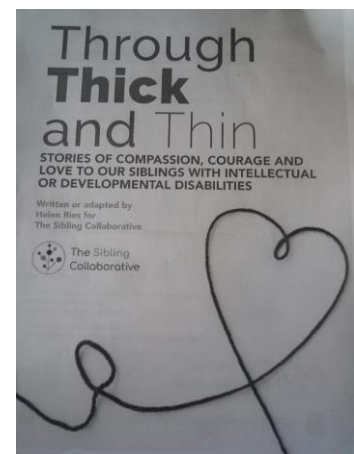
### **L'Arche Avalon Library**

As most of you know we have a small L'Arche Avalon library, where people can borrow books (and return them after reading 😊). We would like to spread the word of a recently acquired e-book:

#### **Through Thick and Thin by Helen Ries**

It contains stories written by siblings of persons with intellectual disabilities, their experiences, their feelings, their worries and their copings, happy moments and more.

In our library we now have it in print and it is available to borrow. You can also receive your own e-book by download. For this, please contact Petra at [petra@larcheavalon.ca](mailto:petra@larcheavalon.ca)



### **L'Arche Avalon AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of L'Arche Avalon will take place Sunday, June 9, 2019 at The Salvation Army Citadel, Adams Avenue, St. John's, NL beginning at 2:30 PM.

All persons who are members, friends and supporters of L'Arche Avalon are invited to attend this meeting. Those who have been members for 30 days prior to the meeting (on

or before May 10th) are entitled to be nominated to the Board, to nominate another member, and to vote at the AGM.

