

Community



It hardly seems possible that it was just over a year ago that I was introduced to L'Arche Avalon. It was April 2021 when I became the world's oldest summer student and began my position with L'Arche Avalon, developing a model for the monthly Spiritual Expressions program. In that time, I have learned much and gained many new friends. It has been a particular privilege getting to know our core members and learning to listen for how each person shares and expresses themselves. When Mitchell greets me with the sign for bird, when Mark looks at me with those twinkling brown eyes and says "No," when Paul waves his hand at my hello, when Anton looks directly at me and smiles with his winning smile and when Maureen comes right up to me to ask how I am and tell me all about her busy week I feel connected. I love watching members who have known each other for a long while as they relate to each other. Everyone enjoys each other, even when they disagree. There is so much love and laughter in this community. Last Sunday as we shared ice cream, strawberries and watermelon under the trees at Rotary Sunshine Park, I watched our circle of chairs filled with people who laughed, sang and ate together. We made more room for those who wandered by and stopped to chat. We made space for those who needed a little break. And we missed those who couldn't be with us.

This is community and this is what I experience at L'Arche Avalon every time we gather.

~Mary Anne

Connections

This is a series of articles connecting us to others who have a connection to Newfoundland and Labrador and who have been part of a L'Arche community in some way. We ask each contributor the same questions.



Our Spotlight today is on Sarah King.

We thought we would feature people who had been involved as L'Arche Assistants. Sarah is from Ontario, spent time in L'Arche Inverness (now L'Arche Highlands) in Scotland and now lives here in Newfoundland after marrying someone from the rock. She has her Developmental Services Worker diploma from Loyalist College and has been supporting individuals in various capacities for over 10 years.



Sarah currently is one of the L'Arche Avalon Board of Directors and works on the Outreach and Education committee as well as the Communications Committee. As a working mom Sarah is very busy but enthusiastic about bringing L'Arche homes to NL.

What made you decide to apply for a job – or to volunteer – as a L'Arche Assistant?

From my summers working at Christian Horizons Camp I knew a few people who had gone on to work at L'Arche communities around the world. It seemed like a great way to continue putting school on hold but to also see the world!

What was one important thing that you learned during your time as an Assistant/volunteer at a L'Arche home?

I learned that you will not get along with everyone and that you need to speak up. One of the core members and I really butted heads and if I helped her with her morning routine, we couldn't then do her daily outing together. She knew how to push my buttons and there was something about me that she didn't like, but when we did go out together during the day, we enjoyed each other's company but first we had to learn how much time we could spend together without getting frustrated.

Tell us, in a sentence, why you would (or would not) encourage a young person to become a L'Arche Assistant.

I would encourage people of all ages to join L'Arche to get a whole new perspective on persons with disabilities. It impacted how I support individuals but also how I interact with strangers in public. Young people should be encouraged to take a gap year to experience something new and learn some amazing life skills.

If you or someone you know worked as a L'Arche assistant and you would like to contribute to this series, we'd love to hear from you.

Email us: sarah.king@larcheavalon.ca

The L'Arche Avalon Music Circle!

For our June Music Circle we had a guest leader, Claire Hartlen. There was a small crowd: Christine and her caregiver Renette, Lorraine, Haley, and Sheilah and her sister Maureen. A small crowd meant that it was a leisurely, intimate session. Claire, who is from Nova Scotia, played Song for the Mira and from this province, Salt Water Joys; both songs about intense love of home and place. Maureen told us she loves Newfoundland and Irish music. Christine requested "Barbie Girl" which we sang several times. We gave our best rendition of "Country Roads" for Haley who loves country music. Renette, who is from Ghana, sang and danced to a few of her favourite Ghanaian songs. Sheilah who had taught in Ghana was delighted to connect with Renette and recall the music that she had enjoyed there. Claire could pick up anything and play it on her guitar. We were delighted to spend that time with her and hope to see her again.



Craft Mornings



Our group doesn't just make cards! Check out these awesome pieces. Craft morning will resume in the fall on Thursdays. Sign up for email updates office@larcheavalon.ca

"At Crafty Morning we don't only do crafting! We chat a lot too! Some spend the time snacking, and at times a foolish interlude makes one laugh."



L'Arche Avalon Summer Yard Sale - \$1963 Raised!

On June 26, L'Arche Avalon held its summer yard sale in the parking lot of Deluxe Dry Cleaners on Pennywell Road. The weather cooperated; faithful supporters came out to set up, man the tables, sell hotdogs, raffle a quilt, and then clean up everything at the end. Best of all, great crowds came out and left with great bargains. Our core members present were Maureen Mackinnon, Paul





Angelopoulos, and Dante Pellegrinetti. Nora Wells and Alex Noel manned the hot dog stand. Ann Marie Lane and Gloria McHugh conducted the quilt raffle. Marilyn Andrews looked after the craft and the nick-nacks table. Sheilah managed the book table and was relieved by Sister Diane. Cindy had sorted and packaged the

jewelry before the sale and then sold it, among other things that day. Michel and Eleanor were great cashiers and did yeoman work with set up and dismantling. Sisters Mabel and Doris came early with tables in tow and stayed till the bitter end. Supporters Dave and Marilyn Lythgoe came to set up and stayed to help clear everything up. Catherine Wight came with her sister-in-law, Marilyn Andrews and worked hard for the duration. Linda Holden, a supporter from Center for Life, manned a table. Michael Drover came with a truckload of donations, helped with the set up and also stayed to help dismantle tables and take away a huge vanload of the remaining goods to the epilepsy store, Previously Loved. Thank you to Jenna for accepting these things for charity even though it was not a donation day. Cindy, Dave and Heather also carted off the unsold items to pass on to someone else. For the last half hour people could fill a bag for \$5.00. Thanks for that suggestion, Heather, it cleared out a lot of items. There was great camaraderie; it was a lot of hard work but also a lot of fun. The bottom line was just a little over \$1963, which exceeded our last year's total by \$600. We're getting better all the time.



L'Arche Avalon is especially grateful to Spiro Angelopoulos and Marilyn Nickel for loading their truck on Saturday night after work and delivering it to the site in the morning. Thanks too to Spiro for allowing us the use of the Deluxe Dry Cleaners parking lot. One of our customers who was in a wheelchair said how grateful he was that the lot is completely accessible as he is very rarely

able to get to any sales like this because the sites are not accessible.

All in all, a great day of community building and fundraising.

~Lorraine

Waves of Expression



On April 24th, L'Arche Avalon and the Autism Society came together to facilitate the "Waves of Expression" event. This collaboration has welcomed the opportunity to foster new relationships, inclusive community involvement, and future partnerships.

Waves of Expression focused on different ways our core members could express themselves through art and music. Together, we all painted our own canvas while chatting with our friends, followed by a snack and a presentation from L'Arche Atlantic's regional director, Jenn Power. Jenn spoke about her experiences working with L'Arche Atlantic and how she has seen first-hand how all individuals can express themselves through art. It was a pleasure to listen to her insight, openness, and recognition in the importance of what we were doing.

Waves of Expression focused on different ways our core members could express



After, Jan Buley led a fun, exciting, stimulating, and inclusive music circle. Everyone had a great time joining in and adding their own personalities to each song. This was the perfect way to bring everyone together to conclude the afternoon.

The City of St. John's offered for all the artwork to be posted in the Foran Room at City Hall for a week. It was breathtaking and humbling to walk in and see all the amazing art on the wall for the public to see. It would bring pride to all. You will be able to view these pictures on our social media pages.

The City of St. John's



A big thank you to all who took part, to all the volunteers, the workers at City Hall, to everyone at L'Arche Avalon, and to everyone with the Autism Society who helped make our first collaboration event a success! We hope to see you all again soon!

~Erica



Volunteer Week

I was asked to represent L'Arche Avalon at a Volunteer Week Appreciation Reception at Government House on May 5th 2022. Eighty people attended the reception. We were each greeted individually in a receiving line by Lieutenant Governor Judy Foot. When I spoke with the Lieutenant Governor, I told her I was representing L'Arche Avalon. She knew about our community and said that she missed our visits to the grounds. She

spoke about how she would go outside and greet our members. She is hoping we will visit again over the summer months.

The Lieutenant Governor then spoke to the full group, thanking all the volunteers for giving their time and energy to Community Service. She spoke about all the community events that are held each week at Government House.



The grounds are open to the public from dawn to dusk. She listed several interesting attractions on site—emphasizing The Heart Garden which is in memory of the Indigenous children who were lost to the residential school system, as well as those who survived and the families of both. This garden was visited by Prince Charles and Camilla during their visit to Newfoundland.

It was a lovely afternoon, I was glad I was able to attend and represent L'Arche Avalon.

~Marilyn

Message from the Chair



Here comes the Sun
Here comes the Sun and I say
It's all right
[Beatles, Abbey Road, 1969]

After all winter with covid and snow, the spring with its wind and fog, we have finally entered the land of summer!

Whatever the season, we are very fortunate to be living in this province and in this country and within our community of friends in L'Arche. I am thankful every day for my many blessings.



Despite lockdowns, we have managed to stay connected. Our very successful Annual Auction is behind us as is our equally successful and fun filled Yard Sale when we were

working together again, side by side. Those are the most rewarding times and our thanks go out to the hundreds of people who helped us along the way.

As we all enjoy our summer break, I want to remind you that we still join each other by Quidi Vidi Lake on Thursdays for our walk and picnic – or just a picnic lunch if you prefer.



I would like at this time to thank Jan Buley for her service to the Board of Directors. Unfortunately, she has found it necessary to resign from the Board as of September 1, 2022, due to other commitments. I am very happy to report that Jan is not leaving us and will continue to be involved in the activities of L'Arche, especially the Music Circle.

When our thoughts turn to fall, don't forget to mark your calendar for each of the many events planned throughout the year. This year, take the opportunity to introduce friends to L'Arche Avalon and bring them along to any of our many events.

2022 – 2023 promises to be an exciting year as we continue to work on the building plans for the two L'Arche homes which we will be building on our land in Pleasantville. We all know that the need is great. I believe that by working together, with the support of everyone, we can take the plans off the page and make what were dreams, then goals, then actions, become a reality in concrete, wood, glass, and most of all community.



Join us in any way you can. Everyone's gifts are appreciated. There is room for everyone in the L'Arche Avalon community.

My sister, Maureen, and I wish each and every one a happy and safe summer.

~Sheilah

Board Members:

Sheilah McKinnon Drover, Lewis Andrews, Lorraine Angelopoulos, Cindy Bishop, Mary-Anne Stevens, Jan Buley, Sarah King, Peter Barnes



Thursdays in July and August

Boathouse at Quidi Vidi

Walk 11 am

Picnic 12noon – 1pm



Every Thursday during July and August, weather permitting, members of L'Arche and friends gather next to the parking lot on back of the Boathouse at Quidi Vidi for a picnic and an hour of camaraderie and fun under the trees from 12-1:00. Those who want to, come an hour early, at 11:00, for a walk around the lake before the picnic. The picnic area is accessible; as is the walk around the lake. Bring along your fold up chair (more comfortable than the wooden benches). You are welcome to join us on the next sunny Thursday.

