

Slow Down. Take a Breath



March of 2020, two years ago. We all woke up not knowing our entire world was about to change. We woke up free to shake hands when meeting someone, free to attend large group meetings, free to hug each other, and free to do whatever we pleased. Then, it changed. The pandemic hit us and many things we took for granted each day were gone. One big thing taken from our family was the ability to travel. Having my daughter, Mitchell's sister, living in another country we never thought there would be an extended period of time where we could not see her, however, this was our reality... for two years. With Mitchell being immunocompromised, we could not risk going right away once the skies opened up so we

waited... and waited some more, and then finally the day came where I decided that we have to accept the world's "new normal" and jump on the flight. Myself, my husband, and Mitchell came to Nicaragua where my daughter is living.

As I sit here typing, I can hear the exotic birds singing, the ocean waves crashing, and the laughter of local children playing. Mitchell is sitting watching the boats in the bay - one of his favorite activities. Life is different here. The tranquility of this tiny beach town is truly magical. Yes, Covid hit this country, and hit it hard, however, it has not crossed my mind as much as it does while being back in Canada. All activities here are outdoors. We have spent time walking throughout the quiet town streets, boating, and swimming in the refreshing pool and the ocean. Mitchell's laughs while the waves crashed over him made



the stress of traveling during a pandemic so worth it. I am so glad we took the risk and came here. The sun shines here every day and we were able to escape some of our gray, slushy winter in Newfoundland. The Vitamin D is doing wonders for all of our mental health. We are recharging our drained batteries from the prolonged stress everyone has endured these past two years. I am so grateful to have this opportunity to visit such a beautiful place and feel the complete joy that has re-entered our hearts. Mitchell is loving every minute and has not been experiencing the mental or physical pain that he does at home and at school. This, to me, is everything. Seeing my son happy and thriving while experiencing new things brings me so much peace.



I recognize that not everyone can travel right now and cannot have these same experiences for many different reasons. There is, however, one important message this trip has taught me which I would like to share with you all. Slow down. Take a deep breath. Appreciate the lessons this pandemic has given us and know that our world will once again be okay. Take some time for yourself and do something to help eliminate your worries that Covid

has brought. Even if the sun is not literally hitting your face right now, remember that after all this rain the sun will shine again.

~Cindy B.



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 Rachel Lutz:

We thought we would feature people who had been involved as L'Arche Assistants; however, Rachel's experience, as seen in her answers, shows the variety of roles a person might play when involved with L'Arche.

Rachel studied at Memorial University Newfoundland and Labrador (MUN) and lived in St. John's from 2013-2017. Her grandparents lived in Gander and that's where her mom grew up. She's still connected with many of her friends from L'Arche but is not an active volunteer or community member at the moment.



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

I was never really a L'Arche assistant - I worked at Homefires (Wolfville, NS) in the summer as a data entry clerk, then volunteered with L'Arche Avalon on the outreach committee, then visited L'Arche Highland in Scotland briefly, and then most recently was the Homes Coordinator at L'Arche Cape Breton! A bit of a strange mishmash of roles.

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

Being in L'Arche is a process of constantly learning! I believe my advocacy skills improved either through learning about the folks at L'Arche (assistants and core members), and probably the ability to be in the moment and just sit with someone, and the importance of being present (again, with both assistants and Core Members!). I was

drawn to L'Arche because of folks' interest in simply being kind to one another - not just nice. So perhaps I took a little of that away also!

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

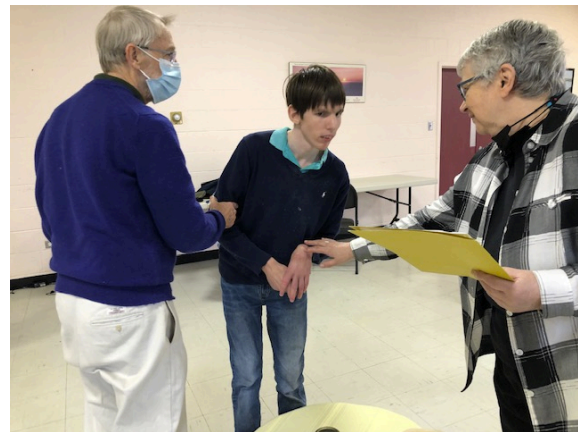
I would encourage someone to become an assistant at L'Arche if you want to experience a different part of the world or a different culture, and want to meet some really lovely people and see the world quite differently. I'm not with a L'Arche community any more, but I use my knowledge and experience gained from being in community nearly every day.

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 continues to grow!

Making music together has been a beacon of hope during this tough time, and the L'Arche Avalon Music Circle has met together once a month to do just that! Singing together—even on the screen---can boost everyone's mood. There's lots of research that supports singing and music-making in reducing stress and helping everyone forget the troubles of the world for a few moments. Singing songs can help improve your memory and at L'Arche



Avalon, singing with other people - either in person or on the screen - has helped us stay together as a community. One participant wrote this in an email to me once, "It's just terrific to see laughter and faces on the screen, Jan. I feel connected to everyone, even if it's just for a short time." When we make music together, we feel like we belong to



something great, with a bonded interest. And in the L'Arche Avalon Music Circle, there's sure to be a song that will tickle your interest.

Sometimes we have a themed Music Circle (cats or dogs or a special holiday) and other times, it's simply an opportunity to revisit the songs we love. In December, we were joined by Eric West and the Potluck Singers. We often have 20 people at our 'in person



singing, everyone!

sessions' at The Lantern, and all are welcome. In January, David Buley joined us and shared the cat lullaby with our found percussion and shaker instruments. In February, we met a brand new volunteer from L'Arche London, Charlotte Toyne, who is a theology student at Queen's College, MUN.

Watch for the monthly ZOOM links in our monthly events announcements...and keep

Jan Buley: jan.buley@gmail.com

Homemade Headbands and Scarves



This season we are focusing on knit headbands, scarves, and Trivets

We still have our lovely all occasion cards
3 for \$5 or 8 for \$10

Headbands \$5
Trivets with matching napkins \$7

Coming soon
Beautiful wall hangings

To purchase, email andrews.marilyn@gmail.com
These items will also be for sale at all our gatherings

Auction Results Are In! Over \$13,000 Raised! Thank you to all who participated.



Advertising



The Prep Team

Some of our items and models:



Students



Hi everyone! My name is Rachel Kenny and I am a third year Social Work and Indigenous Studies student at MUN. I am very passionate about the disability community here in NL and have had the pleasure to work with lots of amazing individuals and families over the past few years. I just recently returned from Toronto, where I worked at a disability school as a one on one. I enjoy volunteering, being a part of my church community (Bethesda and Mosaic church), learning about different cultures, and I love art! I am so excited for this opportunity. I am working with L' Arche Avalon as the spirituality resource person. I will be

working very closely with the spiritual expressions program, devising a recruitment plan for faith group representatives and volunteers, assisting with the development of spiritual expressions, planning and carrying out the facilitator training programs, and other related tasks. I am so excited to meet all of you and be in community with you and all the core members!

~Rachel K.

Hello. My name is Erika Farrell, and I am fortunate enough to have been accepted for the Outreach Developer position with L'Arche Avalon. My responsibilities for this position include building upon the Spiritual Expression Program, organizing and communicating collaborations with partners, researching and offering new programs with L'Arche Avalon for events, contributing to the growth of the L'Arche community, and any other related tasks that may be required throughout this process.

Currently, I am in my third year at Memorial University, completing a Major in French and a Minor in Psychology. I have applied to the Education Faculty for September 2022, in hopes of using this as a steppingstone for a Masters in Counselling Psychology. My dream is to eventually be a Guidance Counsellor for primary/elementary students. I obtain a diploma in Therapeutic Recreation and have an amazing experience working with individuals with mental health and addiction issues, children in a school setting,



individuals with disabilities, long-term care, and retirement living. I still love this work, but I also love learning new things. In my spare time, I love going on walks, hikes, doing puzzles, hanging out with my friends, and I am a member of Avalon Voices Ladies Choir in Conception Bay South.

~Ericka F.

Message from the Chair



Spring has come, both on the calendar and on the land. We have finally put the dog days of winter behind us. As with spring, so it is with L'Arche Avalon; it is a time of rebirth and new growth.

Speaking of growth, we have wonderful news to share with you. We have now acquired the land on Charter Avenue from CLC/CMHC. L'Arche Avalon is now a land owner! Our Building Project

is moving forward slowly but surely and you can rest assured that progress is being made on all fronts.

The Annual L'Arche Auction was a huge success with more than \$13,000 raised. Thank you to everyone who contributed to that monetary success by donating, helping out in any way, and by buying. Equally important was the comradery developed as we worked together to photograph items donated, bag or box them for pickup, and catch our breath before the work of sorting everything and putting people's winnings together. Special thanks to Lorraine whose living room and den were out of commission – for her - for months as they were full of auction items.



A warm welcome to Erica Farrell and Rachel Kenny, two students from MUN, who will work with us in the area of Spiritual Expressions.

We are meeting again in person at The Lantern and although mask wearing is no longer mandatory, most of us continue to wear them. We also observe safe distancing. Please join us when you feel safe to do

so. In the meantime, you can also join us via Zoom for most activities. Everyone is welcome.

L'Arche Avalon has an exciting year ahead and we hope that you will join us to be part of that.

My best wishes to everyone for good health.



~Sheilah

Reminder that membership fees (\$20 for an individual or family) must be paid by May 12, 2022, if you wish to be eligible to vote at the AGM. These can be paid at any event or by e-transfer to treasurer@larcheavalon.ca.

Building Project Update



As we move forward toward spring and spring weather, I am happy to report we are also moving forward with different aspects of our Building Project.

Paul Snow of Pilot Communications continues to develop our Business Plan and as part of his work has met for discussions with a number of officials of the Provincial Government. We eagerly await completion and presentation of the Business Plan for our consideration over the coming days.

We also continue to work with the folks at Karwood Contracting to develop to the next level the preliminary plans and drawings in relation to our two L'Arche homes. This is exciting work as we further conceptualize what the homes will look like and how they will operate when construction is completed. All community members will have opportunity to contribute to this very important aspect of the overall process in the not too distant future. Keep the faith as we continue to move forward!



~Lewis



First Sunday of each Month
Spiritual Expressions

Second Saturday of each Month
Walk

Third Sunday of each Month
Monthly Gathering

Fourth Saturday of each Month
Music Circle

Updates sent regularly. Sign up for our
emails to make sure you stay connected
office@larcheavalon.ca

