

Identity Statement

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need of one another.

Our mission is to...

Make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships. Foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, while being faithful to the core values of our founding story. Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

Dear Friends,

Our community has been reflecting on our Identity and Mission as members of L'Arche so we felt it appropriate that we use that theme for this newsletter. Our Identity and Mission statements speak to who we are and what we commit to try and live each day. In some ways our mission is very simple and in other ways, quite profound. I am struck again and again, especially when we gather for prayer, that we are all so different, called by God to come from all over the world to meet in this place to share life together for a common mission.

What stands out the most for me is the phrase "mutually transforming relationships." What does it really mean to live these relationships? We ask each other to open up our hearts and enter into a trusting relationship, equally responsible and contributing to its growth. Over time we see that we have changed. You and I, through our time together and the deepening of our relationship, have changed each other. When I am at my most lonely, you see that and ask me what is wrong. You offer to be with me in my sadness as I have been with you in yours. When you laugh, because I care about you, your happiness makes me happy. When strangers see us out for a coffee together sharing stories and laughing, they see two friends, not a client with her support staff.

Maybe the stranger then, has also been changed by witnessing our relationship. Jean Vanier talks about the cry of the poor; that sometimes that cry is our own; that we are the most vulnerable, broken and poor. It is our core members who not only show us these dark places that live within our hearts but also teach us that we are still loveable, still worthy, still valued. We just need to be open to the experience.

"Our mission is revealing to others their fundamental beauty, value and importance in the universe, their capacity to love, to grow and to do beautiful things and to meet God. Our mission is transmitting to people a new inner freedom and hope; it is unlocking the doors of their being so that new energies can flow; it is taking away from their shoulders the terrible yoke of fear and guilt. To give life to people is to reveal to them that they are loved just as they are by God, with the mixture of good and evil, light and darkness that is in them: that the stone in front of their tomb in which all the dirt of their lives has been hidden, can be rolled away. They are forgiven; they can live in freedom." Jean Vanier, Community and Growth.

Let's open our hearts to the opportunity to grow through mutually transforming relationships. Let's continue to change the world, one heart at a time, with L'Arche.

Kelly Geddes, Community Leader



Friendship is Born in the Simple Moments...

If you arrive at Cana house early in the morning while everyone is still getting ready for work, you are sure to hear the well-worn refrains of Abba escaping through the walls of Andrea's room. You may even see her as she joyfully sings along, preparing for the day.

This March marks my second year as a community member of L'Arche Halifax. I may be a little tired of Abba, but, as I reflect on my experiences, I am grateful for those early mornings of enthusiastic singing. They are part of the everyday joy we live out together. They are one of the reminders to me that friendship is lived out in the ordinary moments. By simply enjoying her music in the morning, Andrea invites me to start my day joyfully as well. It is moments like this that have slowly drawn Andrea and I together in friendship.



A friendship often finds itself rooted in laughter and this is certainly true for Andrea and I. We love to joke around. Andrea has a great sense of humor and often our conversations at the end of the night find us both in fits of laughter. It has become part of our nightly ritual, alongside reading and chatting before bed. It's routine and ordinary but it is one of my favorite times of the day. We are both tired but present and happy to be together.



Andrea has taught me a lot about the importance of being present and being together. She values being with people and welcomes her friends to be comfortable with the silences they find. She will often invite me to join her on the couch while she is knitting and watching TV. We rarely talk during these times, but every time without fail Andrea turns to me and says 'Thanks for watching TV with me'. It is ordinary and yet it is time together and she reminds me that it means something.

As our friendship has deepened over the past two years, we have also learned (and continue to learn) the importance of vulnerability. Andrea is not perfect and neither am I. We have seen each other when we are grumpy, forgetful and tired. We have had to apologize and forgive each other many times and each time we do, it's hard not to feel like our friendship has deepened even a little further and that we are learning a little more from each other.



I feel, in fact, like I am always learning from Andrea. She has taught me so much about confidently offering who I am to the community. She leads by example, singing wholeheartedly and participating fully in community events. She is willing to make mistakes and keep going. Most recently she has begun taking turns at leading community prayer night. She loves to involve others in the process and creates a sense of excitement in Cana house.

Our friendship is full of fun, challenge, and the freedom to be ourselves. Andrea reminds me of that every day when I walk through the doors and hear 'Mama Mia, here we go again' echoing into the halls. I groan, set the table for breakfast and secretly wouldn't have it any other way.

Michelle Scheerer



The 7th Annual L'Arche Halifax Golf Tournament is being held on September 3, 2015.

This is our major fundraiser.

We are looking for golfers (single or team entries), sponsors, auction items,
4 prizes for each team, monetary donations and volunteers the day off.

Please contact Barry Shea at barryjsheat@hotmail.com if you wish to help in any way or for more information.

Your support will be greatly appreciated.

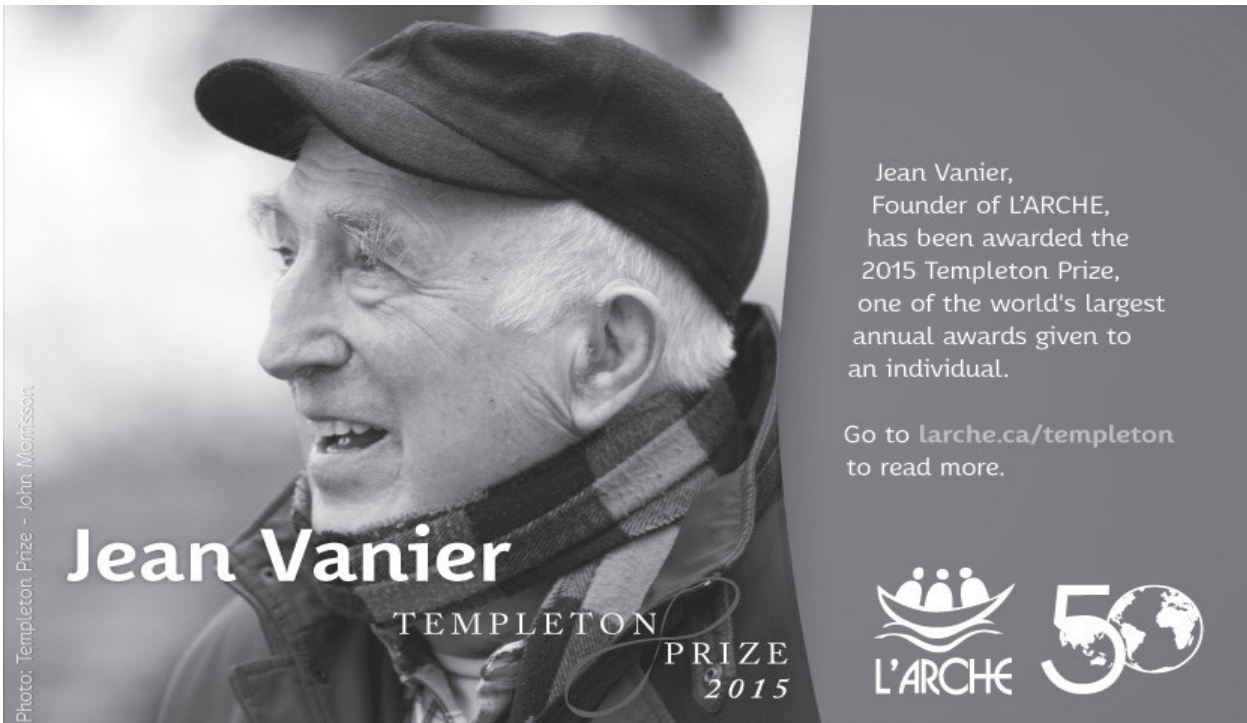


Photo: Templeton Prize - John Morrison

Jean Vanier

TEMPLETON
PRIZE
2015

Jean Vanier, Founder of L'ARCHE, has been awarded the 2015 Templeton Prize, one of the world's largest annual awards given to an individual.

Go to larche.ca/templeton to read more.



SUNDAY GATHERINGS:

The **Friends of L'Arche** and **L'Arche Halifax** invite you to join them for fellowship and fun.

Where: St. Agnes Church Hall
 Time: 1:30 pm
 Dates: June 14, September 13 and November 8, 2015

You may donate financially to L'Arche Halifax by:

1. Mail a cheque to L'Arche Halifax, 5512 Sullivan Street, Halifax, NS B3K 1X7
2. Credit card - Phone (902) 407-5512 and provide the following Information: Type of card, card number, expiry date, name on card and amount of donation or by completing the following and return it to the above address:
 Type of card: _____ Card Number: _____
 Expiry date: _____ Name on Card: _____
 Amount of Donation: _____
3. Through CanadaHelps.org – Go to website: www.canadahelps.org, search for charity and complete online information
4. United Way – Pledge through United Way and request your pledge be allocated to L'Arche Halifax
5. Monthly Giving – call Office at (902) 407-5512
6. Leave a Legacy – call Office at (902) 407-5512

Thanks for your support!

Please keep us up-to-date with changes to your information by emailing or calling us!