

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of L'Arche Halifax I would like to extend greetings and best wishes to the wider L'Arche family. The past year has been an exciting one full of challenges and hope.

The community continued to face significant challenges related to COVID even as the province lifted restriction and day-to-day life in Nova Scotia began to return to what was once considered normal. That "normal" however was not experienced fully in L'Arche Halifax given the inherent vulnerability of the community. As a result core members and assistants continued to live with the inconvenience and isolation often caused by public health measures. Hope did spring however with the easing of restrictions and the return of some of our traditional activities.

Of particular note both the golf tournament and the art show were very successful after a two year hiatus. Everyone is looking forward however to a time when we can do more together in person and be more engaged with our neighbours in the North End.

The year has not been without sadness. In March Sean O'Regan passed away unexpectedly. Sean was the chair of the original capital campaign that helped found L'Arche Halifax 12 years ago. In recognition of his outstanding contributions to the community L'Arche Halifax has created the Sean O'Regan Volunteer of the Year Award that will be announced annually in conjunction with the AGM. The inaugural award recipient is Mr. J.P McNeil.

On an administrative note, I would like to highlight the fact that we adopted a new, centralized L'Arche Canada payroll system this year. The transition from old to new placed a significant burden on the community leadership team. Further, the departure of our in-house bookkeeper and the on-boarding of a third party service provider delayed our annual audit, our AGM and this report. The team worked through these issues with their hallmark professionalism and good humour.

In closing I would like to thank everyone for their continued support. L'Arche Halifax is a special place filled with amazing people. The joy and spirit of the core members and assistants is inspiring. I am constantly amazed by their enthusiasm, compassion and resilience.

Warm regards;
Wayne



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADER

Dear friends,

September is the start of a new year in L'Arche, so it's fitting to look back as I write this report. Covid remains very present in our everyday lives although we have many more freedoms, which we are thankful for. Despite our best efforts, we have had a few outbreaks and the required isolation periods were hard on everyone. I want to say a special thank you to the family and board members who took care of us during those times. It meant a lot and brightened our spirits in addition to filling our bellies.

I also want to recognize our wonderful assistants. These last couple of years have put an incredible amount of additional stress on them, both physically and mentally, yet they have stayed the course. I watched them work together, creatively finding ways to support the community when 17 core members and assistants were hit with Covid at the same time. It was both heartbreaking and amazing. Throughout all of this, a few of our members were struggling and we don't always have the answers. It's emotionally hard to support the people we care about while they are experiencing pain or distress. Our assistants were there each day, often coming in early and staying longer to cover gaps in the schedule. It's true that community is a body with many parts, all of which are needed. I wanted to take this opportunity to publicly thank each and every one of our assistants for all that they do and just as importantly, the way in which they do it.

With summer holidays fresh in our minds, we had so much fun together! Summer started a little early for Shawn who travelled to Newfoundland for a family wedding. Anna and Tricia spent some time in Sudbury. Allister and Gordie hung out at an Air BNB in Cape Breton doing lots of swimming which is one of their favorite things to do. Andrea and May headed off to Antigonish for a hotel stay with an accessible pool. There were visits with the communities in our region, a quick trip to PEI to

Kelly Geddes | Community Leader



take in an Anne play among other things, time at the arcade, day trips, a community red carpet event, take out and lots of other fun stuff. We are learning more with each year what our members like to do and trying to make sure everyone has the opportunity for things that they enjoy.

On a national level, we have members participating on two national groups this year: May and Sherry are participating in the Youth Leadership Training program and Anna has been a member on the MAP (Mission and Action Plan) Committee, supported by Tricia. Anna travelled to Montreal for in person meetings and May will go to L'Arche DayBreak in Ontario at the end of October.

We welcomed Sarah Cushing as our new Assistant Coordinator, and she is just who we needed! Sarah comes from the US and has lots of L'Arche experience. Thank you, Sarah, for taking a chance on us. The third member of our Leadership Team is Sherry Kavumkal whom all of you know. Sherry does so much to keep our boat afloat and is a real support and sounding board for me. Thank you both for your commitment to L'Arche and our community. Your faithfulness is such a gift and we are blessed to have you.

We celebrated many birthdays and anniversaries; one I want to note is that Anna celebrated her first year in her apartment. Wow! Way to go, Anna!

In closing, I'm hopeful that the coming year will bring new assistants to complete our teams, a renewed sense of the spirit of L'Arche and a deepening in the mission.

From one of our favorite songs, "We are companions on the journey, breaking bread and sharing life; and in the love we bear is the hope we share for we believe in the love of our God, we believe in the love of our God."



THE SEAN O'REGAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Sean O'Regan L'Arche Halifax Volunteer of the Year award was established in 2022 in recognition of his many contributions to L'Arche Halifax. As the Chair of the Capital Campaign which founded L'Arche Halifax and a long-time volunteer with the community for years afterward Sean's hard work and unwavering support helped make L'Arche Halifax what it is today.

The Sean O'Regan Volunteer of the Year Award is presented annually to the volunteer who most embodies the spirit of servant leadership and the values of L'Arche.

This year's recipient is J.P. McNeil "the Music Man" who has been bringing joy through his musical talents to our community gatherings for years. Congratulations J.P.!

JP began coming to L'Arche Halifax to lead music nights with the community in 2014. He shares his loves of music with his daughter, Erin, who often joins him, and it's been an added blessing being able watch her grow up.

JP can often be found playing along at the traditional music sessions around NS. He is a big fan of Irish and Cape Breton Traditional music; but also loves acoustic and songs of any kind.

JP volunteers at music festivals such as Stanfest and Celtic Colours. Really, JP will play any chance he gets!

JP invited many musician friends to join him at L'Arche over the years, an old and favourite regular was Erin Dempsey. There was always a crowded living room when Erin came.

JP The Music Man as he was very quickly nicknamed, came as a volunteer to share his love and gift of music and very quickly became a dear friend. Thanks for the music, JP, and here's to many more years to come!



GROWTH PROJECT

Our goal of creating a community gathering space supported by a modest number of affordable, accessible apartments is slowly taking shape. We want to create ways for more people to find their place of belonging with L'Arche in addition to the traditional model while at the same time, addressing the increasing issues of isolation and loneliness across all populations. The outcome of these conversations has brought us here. Work continues on our growth project.

This past year Deloitte Canada worked with our project committee on a pro-bono basis to provide consulting service as we continue to formalize our project plans. We also entered into a formal arrangement with the OSO Planning and Design (www.osoplan.com). OSO has extensive experience in community development and urban planning and is helping us with execute our outreach program. The end result will be a documented, formalized vision that incorporates feedback from a wide range of L'Arche Halifax stakeholders. This will help us clearly communicate what we are trying to achieve to the government and potential donors as part of our forthcoming capital campaign.

We remain hopeful but the road ahead is long and winding. Much more to follow.



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