

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Another wonderful year at L'Arche Halifax. A year filled with joy, some sadness, hope and a renewed sense of community. Part of the sadness stems from the unexpected passing of Steve Estey, one of our Board members and a life-long advocate for inclusion and accessibility. Steve was internationally known for his work on the UN Charter for the rights of persons with disabilities and many other significant contributions. His wife Ann and son Esay continue his incredible work. We cherished the time we had with Steve.

Closer to home, over the fall we completed a comprehensive community review process led by Jenn Power from L'Arche Canada. All core members, assistants, staff and Board members were given the opportunity to provide confidential feedback on all aspects of L'Arche Halifax community life. The majority of the responses were positive, some were not; all were taken very seriously. The results of this review were briefed to the Community Leader and the Board Chair (me) and will provide the foundation for our soon to be released Mission in Action Plan. On the corporate front, we managed to successfully renegotiate our funding arrangement with the Department of Community Services. Although there are still several outstanding issues, our overall level of financial support from the province has improved. On a related note, our auditors from Baker Tilley just gave L'Arche Halifax a clean report. Although there are always a few items to tidy up, they have assured us that our community is in good shape financially.

Missing from this year's routine was our annual golf tournament, which was scheduled for September 2023. Unfortunately, mother nature had a different plan and hurricane damage to the course resulted in the cancellation of the tournament. Fortunately, almost all of the teams paid the registration fee in return for golf passes to be used at a later date. In addition, our on-line auction allowed us to reach our fund raising goals. Despite the overall satisfactory financial results, we did lose some of our connection with our long-standing sponsors. We hope to recapture that spirit at this year's tournament scheduled for 16 September 2024.

As always, thanks to all of our wonderful assistants, volunteers and the leadership team. You make it all work and do it with a smile.

Wayne DiPersio
Board Chair



MESSAGE FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADER

Dear Friends,

As I write this report, May & Sherry are attending and presenting at the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York City. May gave a powerful presentation calling for leadership from people with intellectual and developmental disabilities at all stages of humanitarian work. If you haven't seen it yet, you really should. It's on our Facebook page.

May and Sherry were chosen as representatives for L'Arche International because of their previous work with L'Arche Canada's Youth Leadership-Developing Future Leaders program. May has really stepped forward as a self-advocate and ally for disability rights and we are so proud of the work she has done. We know this is just the beginning of the work May will contribute as her advocacy journey continues. I want to say a special Thank You to Sherry for all of the time and energy that went into helping May prepare for the United Nations meetings & accompanying her to New York.

Our community has worked on various aspects of our current mandate and will soon be continuing the work of our next mandate which we now call a Mission in Action Plan (MAP) as modelled by L'Arche Canada. We have focused on outreach and broadening our reach as well as building new connections. Community members have participated in things like job fairs and services available for people with disabilities. We are building partnerships with the Nova Scotia Non Profit Housing Association, the Disability Partnership and other groups. Strengthening these connections will be essential as we move forward with our growth project.

Some important milestones have occurred: Anna who is our only ILS member so far, has been happily living in her own apartment with L'Arche assistants spending time with her on most days and still has regular visits to the homes. And Michelle, our newest core member, just celebrated her first anniversary of life at Journey House. Anniversaries and birthdays are celebrated often and are a time of valuing and appreciating each individual.

We are in process of hiring an Assistant Coordinator/HR person. We are hopeful that adding another full-time member to our Leadership Team will allow us to focus more time, energy and passion into building our community life and further enriching the lives of our core members, assistants, family members, volunteers and friends.

In closing, I'm thankful for the care and kindness I see daily in our community.

I'm thankful for the dedication and commitment of our assistants who support our core members to live their best lives. I'm thankful for our Leadership Team, for their openness to growth and change, always trying to live from a place of our core values. I'm thankful for our Board members, for their hard work and faithfulness to the mission of L'Arche.

It's a hopeful time to be a member of L'Arche Halifax and I'm excited about what the future will bring.

In gratitude,
Kelly Geddes | Community Leader



L'ARCHE HALIFAX COMMUNITY SPACE AND HOUSING PROJECT

The L'Arche Halifax growth project continues to make slow and steady progress. This year we met with many stakeholders in the disability community, including the Disability Rights Coalition, Inclusion Nova Scotia and our good friends at Prescott. We also sat down with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Association and the Provincial Government. Everyone we met was extremely positive & optimistic that your vision for a gathering space supported by affordable, accessible housing would come to fruition.

We are currently working with the Community Housing Transformation Centre, a federal agency that promotes project like ours, to apply for a substantial development grant. This is an extremely promising and critically important step. We should hear if the next few months if our application is approved. More information on our growth project can be found at LArcheHalifax.org



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 of the Sean O'Regan Volunteer of the Year Award is Felicitas Scholz! Felicitas is from Munich, Germany and started volunteering at L'Arche Halifax in October 2023 as part of a one-year volunteer abroad program. She has been a wonderful addition to the L'Arche Halifax community, and we are so grateful to have her. She is always willing to help and treats everyone with respect and kindness. Thank you, Felicitas, for everything that you do!





**L'ARCHE®
Halifax**

5512 Sullivan Street
Halifax, NS
Tel: 902.407.5512
www.larchehalifax.org