Mission Statement

*L'Arche Saint John* belongs to an international federation of over 156 faith-based communities creating homes and day programmes with people with developmental disabilities in nearly 40 different countries.

**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:** 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, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story. Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

Jean Vanier Awarded the Prestigious Templeton Prize

My dream for this magnificent prize you have given me, and through me to *L’Arche* and *Faith & Light*, is for us to create spaces and opportunities for such meetings, meetings which transform hearts. Places where those caught up in the world of success and normality, and those who are in need, but who are also teachers of love and of simplicity, come together. Places where they can share together, eat together, laugh and celebrate together, weep and pray together; where the hearts of those who carry power in our society can be melted and rest; and where all together we may become a sign of peace.

Celebrating 10 years in Saint John!

Kristina and Partrick hosting the Fun-iversary Party
Life in the Details

Our lives in L’Arche are at their best when details of an ordinary day shine as extraordinary. I love the days when, before settling into my office, I pause in the kitchen of McKim House – perhaps for a glass of water, certainly to say good morning, and always with a curiosity to see what will be on the white board for the day. House members take turns writing up the schedule of activities, appointments, anticipated visitors, and so on – but Debbie’s are far and away the most detailed and colourful. I look to see who will be listed in the “welcome” section (or noted as being “away” or on “away days”). Amidst the predictable items such as Key Industries, team meeting, lunch, and zumba, there often lie gems that delight my sense of humour and renew my appreciation of Debbie’s wonderful way with words. The word “friends” occurs frequently.

Mondays, I am glad when I can leave the office reasonably by 4pm to join Stéphane in cooking supper for the house. This past Monday, Kristina kept us close company, smiling as she observed our work – and enjoyed the inevitable bantering. Amidst a demanding day, I found myself grateful for her kind presence. A couple of weeks ago, I returned from a weekend in Antigonish to find on my desk a “welcome back” note taped to a sandwich box holding chocolate cake from the previous evening. The cake was delicious (thank you, Maren!) but I appreciated even more the thoughtful gesture. And in our way of life such gestures abound: people looking out for each other, sharing highlights of their time together, seeking to improve each other’s day in ways small and significant.

This spring, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary as a L’Arche community – ten years since the opening of McKim House! – while the story of our founding reaches much further back, across years of New Dawn Community gatherings, fundraising, and persistent faith. In the gospel of John it is written, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.” It strikes me how much those who believe can, and do, offer this living water to others: as words of encouragement, trust in another person’s emerging gifts, forgiving friendship, and a vision of what can be possible when people come together creatively to shape a more compassionate, inclusive society. I give thanks for the many people whose active belief has shone a light on our path and continues to flow as living water in the details of the life of our L’Arche community.

Jocelyn Worster
Community Leader

Colin Hugh Smith leads a painting workshop for The Some Kind of Creative Club
Jean Vanier once said that, "Friendship can be one of the most beautiful human realities." While living in community here in L’Arche Saint John, I absolutely agree.

When I first arrived at McKim House, nearly eight months ago, I was immediately caught off guard at how incredibly open and friendly the core members were. Questions about how many brothers and sisters I had, where I was from, what my middle name was, were constantly being thrown my way. I immediately felt welcome, confident that I made the right choice in calling this place my new home.

The friendships you will make in this community are really, and truly transformative. Each of the core members has taught me something, and brought something incredibly positive to my life. Let me tell you a bit about them.

Debbie has taught me to be kind to myself and to not put myself down, even if it’s the furthest thing from my mind. Reminders from her usually snap me back to reality, and make me realize that things are never as bad as they seem. They can also usually be fixed with a nice, warm cup of tea; Deb always knows what will help.

Kristina has introduced the importance of being still, and finding moments of peace in my day. With how busy our lives are, sometimes relaxing is the furthest thing from my mind. But even taking a few minutes to sit on Kristina’s favourite couch with her, the sunlight streaming in through the window behind us, I can feel the weight of my day slip off of my shoulders. I am always grateful for these times, and how Kristina always somehow knows when I need them the most.

Krista has taught me to step outside of my comfort zone, to find the humour in (almost) every moment, and to not take myself too seriously. I had the pleasure of going on the Regional Exchange with Krista in the spring to L’Arche Homefires. The adventures, the laughter, and the time together are something I wouldn’t trade for the world.

My friendship with Patrick has taught me to go into new situations with an open mind, and how important it is sometimes to try to see the world through another’s eyes. Although basketball might not be my favourite sport to spend time watching, seeing how important it is to Patrick makes his enthusiasm absolutely infectious.

Stéphane has taught me the importance of patience, and staying positive, even when it’s difficult. Here in Saint John, we had an incredibly harsh winter, with snowstorm after snowstorm. Stéphane and I would often shovel the massive drifts of snow away from the driveway together. At the beginning of the winter, he would grumble and groan about going out into the snowy world of Saint John. But after time together, with so many snowballs thrown, and lots of laughing, he began to look forward to going outside to shovel. It became something that he was proud of; digging our poor van out of yet another blizzard. To see him grow, to be proud of what he could do for his community was truly something special.

Friendship is such an integral part of what makes L’Arche as truly wonderful as it is. I’m blessed to know these five wonderful people, and every day with them is a new adventure in friendship. And that’s what makes life in L’Arche so unique, and so incredible.

Victoria Woods, House Assistant
Why do you volunteer with L’Arche Saint John?

I was first introduced to L’Arche as a board member in April of 2013. I thought my involvement would amount to a monthly meeting, and perhaps helping out with a few events; I was completely unaware of the huge impact that McKim House would have on my life. Board meetings have long been outnumbered by movie dates, Mill Rats and Scadogs games, holiday celebrations and many cups of tea. My favorite moments with McKim House have been simply sharing laughs and stories around the dinner table.

L’Arche has changed my perspective on what it means to be a volunteer—at McKim House, volunteers are not helping.

The Joy of Community Life

While the snow fell all around us this winter, often leaving me (and my car) cooped up at home, I was given the gift of beginning to get to know the members of McKim House. While I had been involved with L’Arche many years ago as an assistant in Antigonish and elsewhere, this was the first time I met the community in Saint John. Having recently moved back to Saint John after ten years in the United States, the hospitality I received at McKim House during this long, cold winter was particularly special to me. The simple welcome I received was a gentle sign that even during this time of transition in my life that was sometimes difficult or lonely, God is present and that He was answering my need for friendship and to have a place of belonging. As I learned from Jean Vanier many years ago, these needs remain the same if we are living in a L’Arche home or not. We are all made to love and to be loved, at whatever stage of life we are in! My friendship with the house grew as I became a volunteer and began to cook supper once a week with Krista Simmons. By her warmth and sense of humor, as well as our shared passion for cooking, I quickly felt at home in the kitchen and around the boisterous dinner table.

I am really glad I become a volunteer at McKim House. It has made my return to Saint John so much richer. Nights with the guys – Pat and Stéphane – for Irish music at O’Leary’s, painting at Creative Club, and evenings at Harbour Station and the Imperial Theatre: there never seems to be a dull moment at McKim House! In this new period of my life, as I begin my career, I am grateful to experience in a new way the joy of community life that first attracted me to L’Arche.

Ellen Roderick, Volunteer

Kristina, Greer Stackhouse and Krista making art
In keeping with L’Arche tradition, the event was full of joy, laughter and fellowship. It was L’Arche networking at its best. It was great to see old friends from L’Arche, especially those from Antigonish. Best regards…
Minister Ed Doherty

Donnie’s story was a perfect way to demonstrate the determination that is in all of L’Arche’s core members. Thank you to the whole L’Arche community for an excellent evening! -Kevin Wilson

A very inspiring and positive event hearing and learning from the L’Arche community Overall a very emotional and feel good evening! Well done and congratulations on your 10th anniversary! -Colleen Baxter

The L’Arche 10th anniversary dinner was an inspirational evening for me and the genuine support of love, care for others and great respect that was shown that evening was very impactful. I love seeing the core members and the community coming together for such an important cause. Job Well Done! -Charlene Hayes

“We celebrate with you 10 years of fostering a community environment of joyful belonging and respect for our brothers and sisters who reveal the face of Love in our world!” says Sister Mary Beth McCurdy, Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity of the Immaculate Conception, Presenting Sponsor of the event.

Additional sponsorships were provided by the Diocese of Saint John, Huestis Insurance Group, Mudge Engineering Associates Inc., Saint John Canadian Lebanon Association, Duke Creative Collective, ServiceMaster, Acadia Broadcasting and UCT Jack Kidd Council No. 755,

Betty Jo Blanchard and Stéphane enjoying the evening
Recent Events

• Our *10th Anniversary Dinner* on May 22nd was a beautiful celebration and successful fundraiser. Thank you to the many volunteers who worked hard in preparing the event – and to our sponsors for their most generous support.
• Annual General Meeting took place May 30th at our Chapel of the Woods.
• Thanks to all who came to our 10th Anniversary Open House on June 7th – we were encouraged by the presence of so many friends!
• Our *Some Kind of Creative Club* held a lively session on June 26th: kite-making and tie-dying, concluding with a picnic. We will start up again in September, so stay tuned!
• *L’Arche Saint John* book club will take a break after its June meeting, but is always open to new members – please call or email the office if you would like to join in the fall.

Thank You

To the generous sponsors of our *10th Anniversary Dinner*:

• Sisters of Charity as Presenting Sponsor
• Acadia Broadcasting
• Diocese of Saint John
• Duke Creative Collective
• Huestis Insurance Group
• Mudge Engineering Associates Inc.
• Saint John Canadian Lebanon Association
• ServiceMaster
• UCT Jack Kidd Council No. 755

Rob Turgeon with Apple Hill Video for his dedicated work in producing this video for us - see [https://youtu.be/IKmcNR7xD9Y](https://youtu.be/IKmcNR7xD9Y)

Sobeys for their continued support towards the grocery needs of McKim House

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Please mail to: L’Arche Saint John, 623 Lancaster Ave, Saint John, NB E2M 2M3

*L’Arche Saint John* is a registered charity which fundraises for operating costs and special projects. We are always grateful for donations of time, money, and other resources. Thank you for your support!