When you first fully embrace L’Arche, you’re met with questions. These are questions that expose you: as a vulnerable, and raw, human being. As I have learned in these short few months, there is little time to hide who you are because who you are is also immediately exposed to the true and honest members of our community. This is an amazing and overwhelming feeling of trust: the Courage to Be.

As the new leader of Creative Connections, and newly exposed to community at L’Arche, it was quickly made known that this would be unlike any of my other experiences working with people with intellectual disabilities. Elsewhere in the work place, I have been discouraged from sharing my personal self: I have been taught to keep my life separate from the “clients” I worked with. The core members at L’Arche, however, wanted to know everything about me and, at L’Arche, the building of friendship is encouraged and necessary. At L’Arche, you quickly learn that you have joined a family.

When I sat in the living room of McKim House on my first day, there was an immediate unfamiliarity, yet invitation, when I was faced by the drill of personal questions by Krista. It was apparent that if I was going to be in relationship with her, she wanted to know everything about me and did not allow for the opportunity to be shy - she did not want to work with someone she did not know and, of course, this is the way it should be. Her questions reminded me how important it is to be your honest self: the real person you are. The courage to be myself and to honestly answer came from her raw expression of who she was right from the moment I met her.

"There is a sense of self-discovery that comes with the freedom to be artists who can create without judgement, instead celebrating the differences each of us bring."

Gray, Stéphane, Patrick, Kristina, Debbie, Alisha, Anne, Kathryn, Krista, and Kevin announce Creative Connections!

Changing the world, one heart at a time.
Courage to Be cont’d...

Since then, I have been witness to the amazing testimony - in the art that people do every day at Creative Connections - of the Courage to Be. This courage comes from people who are not afraid to express themselves through the art that they create and who recognize that there are no boundaries in creating. It is here that everyone supports each other’s creativity and finds ways to embrace the diversity of perspective and style. There is a courage to explore and to express the true version of self. There is a sense of self-discovery that comes with the freedom to be artists who can create without judgement, instead celebrating the differences each of us bring.

The model of courage, then, which I have been exposed to at L’Arche, fills me with a sense of awe and appreciation: unmatched in any other place that I have been. Thank you to all my fellow artists and friends for the invitation to be... me.

Alisha Badeau

Courage to Grow

To be L’Arche in New Brunswick demands so much faith. I’m in awe, this fall especially, at the hard work by countless people that is poured into this project of being community. I see it in the core members’ earnest welcome of a new assistant to share life at McKim House; the tremendous flexibility and inventiveness of the team and participants at Creative Connections: taking an empty space and coaxing it to brim with life and colour – then reaching out to the neighborhood and beyond with an invitation to meet us; the enthusiasm of Board members whose teams brought such spirit to the John Pike Memorial Bowling Extravaganza; our dear friends who spent hours cooking and serving food so that our recent Community Retreat Day could be, for the rest of us, a time of rest and renewal; and so many moments, hidden yet underpinning our days, when a choice is made for generosity, for kindness, for forgiveness, for trying again.

It takes great courage to be L’Arche in New Brunswick. Our growth over the past decade has been careful and incremental, advancing one friendship at a time, one fundraiser at a time, and by paying attention to the invitations to reach out, to share of our mission, and to welcome people in. Every grant and donation, we receive with gratitude and at times keen relief – such support from the wider community is as essential as the air that we breathe.

And yet, our experience, consistently, is one of Providence: new volunteers arriving to fill a need; members whose gifts are perfectly complementary; and discreet, committed supporters who contribute at precisely the right moment.

Our community has a vital message to share, arising from a lived experience of transforming friendships between people with and without intellectual disabilities – friendships that uncover gifts on both sides. These gifts – of creativity, faith, determination, tenderness, and more – matter intensely to our society as a whole. The financial reality for us in New Brunswick is challenging, and the related fundraising struggles are ongoing. Nevertheless, our community this fall has taken a great step of growth: we are not only McKim House and its circle of friends, but also Creative Connections, a full-time collaborative arts space in uptown Saint John. In the heart of the City, with enormous street-level windows, Creative Connections offers our members a remarkable platform from which to share their creative and interpersonal gifts. Through Open Houses, collaborative art projects, Community Art Afternoons, art shows, and gallery evenings, the potential for us to positively impact our City has only begun.

Jocelyn Worster, Community Leader

Communities are truly communities when they are open to others, when they remain vulnerable and humble: when the members are growing in love, in compassion and in humility.””

- Jean Vanier, Community & Growth
While the quote by Jean Vanier on the previous page may inspire us to more deeply engage in relationship with others, we must first truly examine ourselves, acknowledging our own faults and failings... this doesn’t quite seem as exciting as what Vanier describes. Why is it so easy to recognize the imperfections of others? Why is it so difficult to accept that we are just as broken as those around us? Why do we feel we need to prove to others how good we truly are? Why can’t we just be?

While I’m not perfect at being, I continue to learn, grow and be inspired. I am challenged to become the person whom God has created me to be. When I glance back to three years ago, I see myself entering McKim House with a lack of awareness of the importance of just being to one another. Though I didn’t have a strict agenda, I wanted to prove my worthiness. I wanted to succeed at whatever I took on but I quickly understood that I had a lot to learn and that was okay. My understanding of vulnerability, trust, forgiveness and friendship was dramatically altered. I learned humility. I learned to ask for help. I learned that it is okay to ask for help.

These changes didn’t occur overnight but friendships blossomed with their substance and authenticity. I instantly am brought back to when I first met Krista. On my second visit, McKim House was in the midst of preparations for Krista’s birthday. The kitchen was an explosion of activity, people preparing food and decorating. I had never met Krista; the only details I was able to gather were that she loved healthy foods and the TV show Heartland. I met her during the celebration and over the next few weeks and months I got to spend time with her. I recall the first time we cooked together. I was extremely stressed about the idea of cooking for 10 people and Krista had ideas about supper that at the time, my weak skill-set could not match. These events transpired around a time when I was reading a number of articles about L’Arche. I was devouring the L’Arche concepts but I wasn’t so quick at putting them into practice.

It is hard to open up and to be changed but it is worth it! Krista has supported me a great deal in not only my cooking abilities but in the pursuit of new things. Through mutual encouragement, we have stepped out of our respective comfort zones whether this means singing Karaoke while in Halifax or square dancing at a church “hoedown.” We learn to be vulnerable around each other and work towards achieving our own potential. Sometimes we laugh. Sometimes we have disagreements. I have learned to admit when I am wrong and ask Krista for forgiveness. When we have an argument, she does not let me leave the house without first reconciling. I am grateful that she is in my life and we can journey together: learning, laughing and being, without fear.

Brandon Lanteigne
During the summer, many of us hit the road to vacation in Cape Breton and Grand Manan, wrapping it all up with a community-wide whale watching exploration on the Bay of Fundy. The beauty that exists and surrounds us can often be lost in the busyness of our days: taking the time to renew ourselves, as we do with vacations, is an important step in maintaining our well-being and reminding us of the importance of rest.

In August, you may have seen a glimpse of Hawaii along Crown Street as we, dressed in our swimsuits and leis, passed out some refreshments to some of Saint John’s athletes during the annual Marathon by the Sea.

In September, our Creative Club became Creative Connections in our new and beautiful Uptown location on Prince William Street, and expanded to five days per week in October! We extend our extreme gratitude to each of you who have helped to make this milestone in our community possible: to all those who contributed your time and energy in focus groups and committees; to all those who donated during our furnishing campaign, including the picture frames from the Saint John Arts Centre and the shelving from NBCC; and to our faithful friends and supporters who have held us in prayers and supported us in so many ways along this journey.

In celebration of this tremendous milestone, on Oct. 5th our community was joined by our Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable Jocelyne Roy-Vienneau, and Shirley McAlary (Deputy Mayor of Saint John), for our ribbon cutting; our open house on Oct. 6th saw over 70 people visit the new space including Dorothy Shephard (MLA)! I hope you join us in our excitement as we discover what Creative Connections will become for our community and for Saint John!
NBCS students came together to help crack fill and prepare our rooms for painting along with several other maintenance and repair tasks!

Members of T4G came together at McKim House for their annual Charity Day painting several of our rooms!

David Meinert, one of our many bowlers at the John Pike Memorial Bowling Extravaganza, dressed in style for our Country theme!

Gray Gillies gathers everyone to announce the winners of our many prizes at this year’s bowling extravaganza!

Halloween Bridge: Volunteers from this year’s Halloween Bridge gather with Jocelyn, Debbie, and Patrick! Together these ladies helped raise over $2000!

Upcoming Events!

- Creative Connections is on the Crosby’s Gingerbread Trail! Nov. 25-Dec. 23 – stop by to view our creation!
- Friday Dec. 2 – Creative Connections is joining in Uptown Sparkle! This is a wonderful opportunity to purchase unique, locally-created Christmas gifts.
- Sat. Dec. 3 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities – stop by the L’Arche Saint John coffee house at Fairville Blvd. Starbucks, 2-4pm
- Friday Dec. 16 at 7pm – L’Arche Saint John Christmas Carol Sing at Creative Connections
Thank You!

- **L’Arche Canada**: For choosing L’Arche Saint John as a recipient of funding for the Growth Grant Initiative!
- **Lawtons Drugs & Tim Hortons**: For your sponsorship of the John Pike Memorial Bowling Extravaganza
- **T4G & NBCC**: For your help in some much needed maintenance work around McKim House!
- **Saint John Arts Centre & NBCC**: For your faithful support and contributions of materials to Creative Connections
- **Marie-Helene**: For writing a beautiful article about L’Arche and our growth in the Telegraph Journal
- **Donna & Janet**: For your friendship; for organizing the Halloween Bridge fundraising event

**Wishlist**: A loom, paper towels, card stock, bristol board, multi-purpose paper, mid weight paper 32lbs, gently used craft supplies, a teapot

**Volunteers Needed**: A lawyer to join our Board of Directors, a maintenance support person, artists to lead sessions, friends

---

**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 intellectual 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.

---

**I WANT TO HELP L’ARCHE SAINT JOHN**

Name: __________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

Postal Code: __________  Phone: __________  Email: __________

I would like to make a contribution. I am sending a cheque for:

[ ] $25  [ ] $100  [ ] $250  [ ] other

Or donate online at www.larchesaintjohn.org/donate

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!