After two years of working as the summer assistant at McKim House, I was ecstatic to get the position of program leader at Creative Connections in September of this year! Each day has not only been a learning experience, but also an exciting, fun adventure. I have been lucky enough to continue to build my relationships with each core member and new participants at Creative Connections! I am so grateful to have the opportunity to work with such incredible people everyday.

From September 25 to November 1, we celebrated friendship and creativity with, *A Year of Joy*, an art show at the Saint John Free Public Library.

On October 13, we had our opening, where we welcomed over 70 visitors, many who left kind comments about the work: *Wonderful work... beautiful and inspiring!* and *Utterly fantastic!*

The art show was a great way to show the skill and creative development of each artist. At the beginning of Creative Connections Patrick would barely touch a paint brush, now his work covers the walls of Creative Connections. As time goes on, each artist develops new skills and continues to create colourful and unique work! Drop by sometime and see what we’ve created.
Living the Mission

The past few months have held many moments of life for our community. We celebrated the 12th anniversary of the opening of McKim House and the first anniversary of Creative Connections. At the Federation Assembly in Belfast, in a gathering of over 500 delegates from around the world, L’Arche Saint John was recognized as a Confirmed Community of L’Arche. In all of these places, the mission of L’Arche shines brightly, as new friendships are made, and old friendships deepened, personal growth experienced, and gifts shared.

During the plenary sessions in Belfast, we got to learn from some remarkable teachers, including Michael McDonald, co-creator of the As I Am film series, and Padraig Ó Tuama, leader of the Corrymeela Community. We sang and prayed, listened and celebrated, worked in small groups and walked in the footsteps of St. Patrick. And then there were all the informal times of connecting, such as in the dining halls at Queen’s University, where several times a day, participants and volunteers, people with and without disabilities, speaking so many different languages, flowed in, and found themselves sitting in new combinations around small tables to share meals together – and discovered, with delight and creative effort, so much common ground.

At McKim House and Creative Connections, too, we have welcomed the new: new assistants and volunteers, and new connections with groups and individuals in Saint John. We have welcomed students and local artists, and entered into new collaboration with the Saint John Public Library and groups such as the United Way. In each of these expressions of our mission, we seek to share our gifts and foster a more vibrant and inclusive society.

One of my best teachers in welcome and outreach continues to be Debbie, who proudly celebrated her 12th anniversary at McKim House this fall. Debbie’s confidence, and natural ease in almost any setting, allows her always to see the person in front of her. She advises her friends, “Don’t put yourself down,” “You’re very important to us,” and “Just be yourself.” Out and about in the City, her kind words come easily to the people she meets: “You look nice today.” She asks nurses not only their names but their favourite colour and whether they have any pets. And she carries others’ concerns in her heart and in her prayers, with utmost faithfulness. For these reminders, given by Debbie being herself, I am grateful.

Jocelyn Worster, Community Leader

When I reflect on the Gospel vision, I find that it is incredible. It is a promise that we human beings can get together. It is a vision of unity, peace and acceptance. It is a promise that the walls between people and between groups can fall, but this will not be accomplished by force. It will come about through a change of heart - through transformation.

-Jean Vanier, Living Gently in a Violent World
Summer Travels

Jocelyn, Gray and Kristina meet St. Andrew’s starfish

Patrick and gang hit the water in Newfoundland

Stéphane and Jocelyn in Belfast!

Gray and “Google Larry” in Belfast

Meeting up with old friends in Belfast
It’s not often that friends you make in elementary school remain constant into adulthood. Many friends I made at the age of nine are no longer in my life. I cannot say the same about Stéphane Bastarache. He and I met at a prayer meeting where my Dad would occasionally help with the music. I was running around and acting silly (as nine-year-olds do) and he was working the overhead projector and praying his heart out. I often think of that encounter with Stéphane, and how then I would have been oblivious to how essential his friendship would be to me as I grew into an adult. After that day, I would run into him at many church events and he never hesitated to start conversation about my family or what the Lord was saying to him at the time. He has taught me many things, including but not limited to, the gift of having faith, and how sometimes even a small prayer time can solve your problems of the day. I now find myself very lucky to be in the L’Arche community. I get to see Stéphane lots, and getting to know him even more has been a beautiful experience. Being a Casual Assistant with L’Arche has deepened my friendship with Stéphane, but has also helped form many new and amazing friendships with both Core Members and Assistants. So far, these new friendships have brought new perspectives and a new zest for life. I am confident they will each teach me just as much about life as Stéphane has over the years. I am thankful for friendships such as these, and I look forward to what God has in store for every one of them.

"The reason I love art and going to Creative Connections is because it allows me to express myself. I also find it is a good stress reliever. One reason is because what I draw in pictures I can’t express into words. I also like the people at L’Arche very much and have become friends with them”

Jacques Chiasson

“Creative Connection continues to be a very positive experience for our son Jacques. He has been participating in this wonderful program on a regular basis and always looks forward to spending time in this very accepting and welcoming creative space.”

Gisele and Martin Chiasson

-Jenna Dobbelsteyn, Casual Assistant and Friend

Stéphane and Jenna
During university, I spent three lovely summers as the Summer Assistant at L’Arche Saint John. I was instantly hooked. From Krista’s sass to Patrick’s puns, from walking with Stephane to Debbie’s hugs, and spending countless hours reading Harry Potter with Kristina, I felt a sense of home away from home. This feeling was re-affirmed when I returned to L’Arche Saint John as Development Coordinator; I was greeted with smiles and hugs, and Gray shouting “Welcome Home!” How lucky am I to call this my “job”? The past year has been full of learning experiences, new adventures and strengthened relationships. While I am settling into the fundraising world, I appreciate not only what I am learning in my role but what I am learning from time spent with our core members and our participants at Creative Connections. Here are some of my favourite photos!

Alex Hayes
Upcoming Events!

• Follow us on Facebook for more upcoming event details!
• December 8 — 7pm Carol Sing at Creative Connections!

Thank You!

• NBCC students for their Community Leadership Day volunteering
• Kent for donating paint and supplies,
• Lawton’s and Tim Hortons for sponsoring the John Pike Bowling Memorial Extravaganza
• Ed & Ruth Coleman for leading our Community Retreat day
• Bernie Cormier and the Saint John Free Public Library for their collaboration
• Kings Church for your energetic volunteering and generous donation during “Love Week”

Wishlist:
Multimedia paper  Air Miles

Refundables (donated to the L’Arche account at the Golden Mile Redemption Centre)

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!