Different changes; it’s hard.

This is a phrase that Debbie often says when there are lots of changes going on in our community life. This can come up when a beloved assistant is leaving, when encountering an unforeseen shift in the daily whiteboard schedule, or with a friend being away from the house longer than initially thought. Change can be an uncomfortable, intimidating thing. Not only for the core members, but assistants too!

Routine is something that is safe, secure and known. We all like knowing what’s going to happen; who’s doing the morning drive? What are we having for supper tonight? Has Vic done the movie schedule for the month?

To stick with what’s comfortable and safe is easy; but without change, how can we grow as a community? As members of this community?

Although the core members may not appreciate big changes happening at first, these changes really do bring us closer together as a house, and as a community. Our relationships deepen with a sense of “we’re in this together, and things will be okay.” We rely on each other; we know that it’s okay to be vulnerable and say, “I need help with this, can you help me?” Having that freedom to ask and receive that help is so wonderful.

Debbie volunteering to help fold laundry, Stéphane helping to water plants, Patrick helping with a Costco and water cooler run, Krista sweeping the whole living room, or Kristina very closely supervising everyone cleaning amidst a busy, full day may seem like small tasks, but even these small places of helping serve our community is such a great help to the assistants. And our friends grow in their own roles as proud members serving our community. A win all around!

We’re living in a season of change at L’Arche Saint John right now. Jocelyn will be finishing up her time as our Community Leader after 9 years accompanied by deep care and love, wholehearted dedication to serving her community, and her constant spirit of holy foolishness. She will be missed by all of us, but we’re also excited for her to take the next step on her own journey.

Although different changes may be hard at first, it gives us new horizons to look towards, new possibilities to dream about. And, yes, it may be a little intimidating at first, but it will also be very exciting to see how our little community will grow and flourish even further.

Victoria Woods
The Fabric of Community

The fabric of community is a phrase that enters my mind often in these days: the frequently unseen threads of connection that develop, and strengthen, among the people who make up a community. In a particular moment or circumstance, this fabric may become more evident, more apparent or deeply felt. I perceive it in the expressed care and concern of core members for the people they live with, the spontaneous offers of help from volunteers and friends, the prayers voiced aloud for people nearby or at the edge of our awareness, and in the time and attention invested in each person’s wellbeing: knowing them, noticing what matters to them, and valuing it accordingly. I recognize this fabric in so many stories shared – at McKim House, at Creative Connections, and across our Region. Some of the stories span not years but decades. Taken together, they reveal a map of wondrously overlapping hearts.

Recently, we’ve shared the grief of friends in Nova Scotia who have lost founding members of their communities. I’ve been thinking about Joe White – my friendship with Joe goes back 19 years, and overflows with stories. And those stories overflow with foolishness, affection, and wonder. Joe taught me much, from my earliest years as a House Leader – and, as I reflect on those scenes, his life continues to teach me. Joe was someone who perceived what he wanted clearly, and pursued it determinedly. He knew what his life was about – and he lived that life with passion, concern, humour (much humour!), and grace.

Kristina, with whom I’ve been keeping close company in recent days, is an astonishing teacher. She pays attention! And in so doing helps the rest of us to pay attention. Her presence reveals an intuitive listening, beneath the surface of things; a quiet tenderness towards those around her; and a feisty independent spirit, even in difficult circumstances. I’ve always loved to see Kristina initiating interaction with her environment – and, over the years, my favourite actions have been her closing others’ laptops in front of them, prying Debbie’s word search books from beneath her pen (sorry Debbie), and lifting cell phones from friends’ hands. At the core of what Kristina offers us, end expects of us, is the gift of attention.

So much of what we treasure in our days at L’Arche – the smallest moments of connection and interaction, a trust built, the ridiculous delighted in, a friendship emerging – the fabric of our community – is revealed only through attention. Our lives are what we pay attention to. For all those who call me to pay attention, and to pay better attention, I continue, grateful.

-Jocelyn Worster, Community Leader
Farewell, Jocelyn!

Members from L’Arche from the Atlantic Region gathered at the beach to celebrate Jocelyn!

Jocelyn and Fanny share some treats
When I first received a call from Jocelyn many years ago to be interviewed for a summer student position I was instantly struck by how “cool” she sounded. I remember hanging up and thinking she sounds awesome, I want this job! That summer turned into three, and I am now in my second year as Development Coordinator, where I have learned so much from Jocelyn. Jocelyn was an amazing Community Leader, she built L’Arche Saint John into what it is today. Jocelyn gave her all to this role; spending many, many hours in the office, helping at McKim house, even mowing the lawn and doing repairs around the house. Jocelyn’s friendships with our core members are inspiring, and I plan to use everything she has taught me to help me be the best I can be in my role. Jocelyn, I will miss our laughs, sharing stories, and dealing with leaky pipes with you. You helped me through one of the hardest years of my life and I am forever thankful for you. You will be missed!

Love, Alex

I appreciate Jocelyn’s professionalism, passion for L’Arche and our people, and the fun times we had like at our bowling event. It was at that event that I saw Jocelyn working with Jacques and realized she is incredibly coachable in many areas. Especially bowling. We’ll miss her. I wish her much success in her future.

Jim Kokocki

Jocelyn has done wonderful things with L’Arche Saint John! I think she has always been able to stay rooted in the philosophy of L’Arche and truly embodies Jean Vanier’s teachings. She is a lively participant in the house, always willing to sing, and cook amazing meals! I like that she enjoyed the nature in Saint John, loving to go to the beach and just relax in the beauty of our landscape! I wish her the best in her moving home and discovering her new path!

Rob Hanlon

It was very evident to me from our first meeting that Jocelyn was very passionate about and dedicated to the L’Arche community. She is very knowledgeable and a great help to me while trying to settle into my new role on the Board of Directors. I know we have big shoes to fill in her absence and I wish her all the best in the future. Thank You!

Cheryl Lambert

Want to get Jocelyn excited? … Simply ask her: What does L’Arche really offer to people with intellectual disabilities? Her eyes light up as she starts describing the incredible value of the organization with such positive vibrancy. If you then follow that question up with: Is Creative Connection delivering the outcomes we were hoping for? She radiates more enthusiasm with countless examples of how the program is bringing joy to all those involved including the volunteers and community members who take in the experience. It is this type of passion and conviction that has made Jocelyn such a remarkable contributor to the Saint John L’Arche community over the past several years.

Merci et Bonne Chance Jocelyn! Martin Chiasson

I have appreciated Jocelyn’s deep dedication to the Mission of L’Arche– I know she will carry this passion forth as she leaves Saint John and embarks on her next life chapter—all the best Jocelyn!

Moira Wilson

Best wishes Jocelyn in your next chapter. Your passion for L’Arche has been inspiring and we will carry that forward in your absence.

Sarah Fitzpatrick

Dear Jocelyn,

Hopefully there will be many sunny and hot days in your future. For your upcoming adventures and new start, I am wishing you all the best. I hope that you will find joy and happiness in what you are doing. Hopefully you will get to take many walks, get to take photos of beautiful and breathtaking nature all over the world and just have a lot of fun and get to laugh often. I also wish for you to find good coffee and chocolate wherever you go. I would love to thank you for your thoughtful friendship during my time in Saint John and afterwards. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to visit again by letting me stay at your
Celebrating Jocelyn!

time in Saint John and afterwards. Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to visit again by letting me stay at your house. Thank you for lots of laughter, Scrabble games and learning new words, letting me sit on your deck and at your fire place, for pranks and jokes and for proving me that there is good Canadian chocolate. Thank you for making me feel welcome. Your contagious excitement for so many things like the breathing sound of whales, new cake recipes and beautiful sunsets really added a lot of excitement to my life. Thank you for all of that!

Liebe Grüße und alles erdenklich Gute!

Maren

P.S. Maybe there is an orange fluffy cat waiting in the future. Who knows.....

Thanks Jocelyn for your warm welcome to Saint John, it was nice to visit Canada through L’Arche, I hope you still remember my song, (karibu mgeni- visitor karibu, karibu hapa nyumbani). But now that you are leaving, I will sing for you kwaheri Jocelyn kwaheri*3. Kwaheri nenda salama. (Kwaheri means goodbye- salama mean go well.)

Justine Muthoni

“Around here we don’t look backwards for very long we keep moving forward opening new doors and doing new thing because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” Hey there Jocelyn I wish you all the best in the future and remember to keep in touch either by email or a letter to let us what’s happening with you.

Jannette Jarvis

I’m thankful for Jocelyn’s wonderful friendship and will miss our coffee dates!

Britney Andrews

Event News

On February 3rd, we held our annual “For the Love of Art” art show at the Saint John Arts Centre. This event was once again attended by both Mayor Don Darling and the Honourable Jocelyne Roy-Vienneau, Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick. That evening we hosted a new fundraiser “31 Days of Art”, where local artists and Creative Connections participants donated pieces of art to be auctioned in support of Creative Connections. Both events were very successful! Thanks to everyone who attended and a special thank you to our lovely artists! On March 9th Creative Connections hosted their first “Award Gala” to celebrate artistic accomplishment. The “Creative Spirit Award” went to Warren Tompkins for his animations. The Award Gala was a red-carpet event, hosted at Creative Connections, with a viewing of Warren’s animations! Congratulations Warren! On March 17th, O’Leary’s Pub held their annual Irish Breakfast in support of L’Arche Saint John. This was an amazing event- the biggest turnout to date!
Thank You!

- Thank you to all the artists who donated pieces to our “31 Days of Art” fundraiser
- Thank you to O’Leary’s Pub, the Saint John Arts Centre, the Saint John Community Arts Funding Program, Mindcare, L’Arche Canada Foundation and the Sisters of Charity!

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!