

Spotlight on Volunteering for L'Arche

Hi! My name is Allison and I'm the no-longer-newest-member of the Public Relations Committee. I'm currently attending Catholic Central as the "middle-man" in the school and I have three siblings that I think the world of. In my spare time, I play basketball and any other sports I can fit into the schedule. Rock climbing is one of my favorites. I've also been playing the piano for the past twelve years and have loved every minute of it- although my Mom might disagree.... I participate in the local Music and Speech Arts Festival annually, and have gone up to Edmonton to compete provincially as well. Apart from that, I'm involved in my school's Student Council, Big Brothers Big Sisters, and the Lethbridge Youth Advisory Council. I love smiles, making connections with people, and doing anything hands on.



knew I'd found something special. So far, I've worked on the advertising for the 30th Anniversary Celebration along with Van. If you saw anything on Instagram or Facebook leading up to the event, that was probably me. Although I've only participated virtually in the L'Arche community, the word I've felt the most is certainly just that: community. I've only been able to make it to a few Tuesday Prayer Nights, but the feeling that encompasses it is like nothing I've ever felt. Everyone is there for everyone else. The prayers, the anniversary celebrations, all the birthdays, it all comes together to form a very special week night.

Our monthly meetings are always filled with happy hellos, and plenty of good discussion. I've also appreciated the impressive emphasis on our faith, in everything that L'Arche does. L'Arche has helped me to grow personally closer with God, as the community leads by example by relying fully on Him. Furthermore, I've learned that all good relationships are two-way. A good friendship is two-sided, with mutual effort and appreciation being shared. L'Arche does a beautiful job of bringing people together to serve each other as disciples of Christ, and spread plenty of joy along the way. With that being said, I'm so excited to be here and I can't wait for the coming year!

I first heard about L'Arche through my cousins (Iain, Sean, Aidan, and Declan) and my aunt (Michaela), who were all on various committees at different points in time. Declan roped me into it, surprising me into attending a meeting last spring. I was reluctant at first, but upon meeting Tim, Mary, Jen, and Sharon, and getting a better grasp of what the community was all about, I was hooked. The positive atmosphere, all the laughter that took place, and even just the underlying "vibe" (as my generation would say) of inclusion and belonging; I

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Board Members Wanted

Are you passionate about supporting people with intellectual disabilities? Do you want to open people's hearts to those who are differently abled and create a more caring and human society? If so, consider joining the L'Arche Lethbridge Board!

The Board ensures that L'Arche Lethbridge remains a vibrant community, faithful to its Identity and Mission by providing support and resources. It does this through effective governance, strategic planning, public relations and fundraising. Board members usually commit 5-6 hours a month to L'Arche including: a monthly Board Meeting (2 hr), one committee meeting (2 hrs), other possible volunteer activities (1-2 hrs). During the pandemic all meetings have been taking place virtually.

By serving on our board, you will meet people with shared interests. You will share in a community of people, with and without developmental disabilities, committed to trusting in God, building mutual relationships, and respecting the unique value of each person and our need for each other.

Contact Tim Wiebe, Community Leader/ Executive Director at office@larchelethbridge.org or by phone at 403-328-3735 for more information.



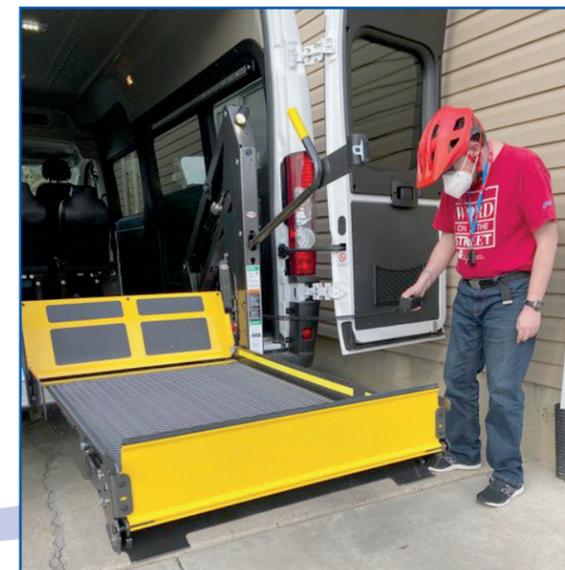
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Fundraising Update!

Submitted by Sandra Riddell

Thank you, thank you, thank you to everyone who so generously donated their time, talent, and money towards the purchase of the new 2021 Promaster cargo van for Chinook House. Together, we raised \$101,000 through the gala dinner and auction, two online dinners, plus grants. Just as important as the funds secured to purchase the van, however, are the relationships we have strengthened and developed in the wider community. Certainly, this project bears witness to the idea that generosity begets generosity, especially when generosity is rooted in the rich soil of community, as Henri Nouwen so wisely said.

I was delighted to see when I visited Chinook House that they were already familiar with their new vehicle. Although it is a rather large vehicle, seating 5 people and 3 wheelchairs, Karen (Respite) states it's easy to maneuver and very comfortable. Brad (CM) enjoys the good visibility as well as the ease in operation. David (CM) was so excited when it came - happy clapping and laughing, and Margaret (CM) is thrilled to be taking it on her next trip to High River. Gilberto (HL) and Brad treated me to a ride around the block and I concur, great visibility, smooth ride, and lots of room for wheelchairs. Gilberto is pleased...now the whole house can travel together. "We are happy."



The Hope of Spring

Tim Wiebe, Community Leader

Many things are happening in L'Arche Lethbridge this spring! At the organizational level we are working with L'Arche Canada to implement a new Human Resources Information System as well as a new Membership Agreement between L'Arche Canada and local communities. We also made a major change to how we schedule Assistants' time in our homes, along with the other L'Arche communities in Alberta, to a 40 hour/week schedule. As I write, we are preparing to start our accreditation process in early April. All this while continuing to navigate the uncertain waters around COVID restrictions for all Albertans and our responsibilities under Health Orders from the Chief Medical Officer of Health.

As the omicron wave recedes we are beginning to talk and reflect about how we will re-enter into our in-person community life. Most of the Assistants who are now in our homes don't have a lived experience of our life together before the pandemic. We need to be aware of the differing level of comfort of each person in the community and begin our gatherings with compassion and respect for the differing views that our present in our diverse group.

Thankfully we seem to have avoided any outbreaks in our homes during the omicron wave and for the most part those who did test positive had mild symptoms and recovered quickly.

I appreciate the feeling of hope I have as Spring arrives and the days get longer, the trees begin leafing out and the soil begins to warm. I am full of gratitude for each member of our community who helped us to weather the pandemic and continue to live our Mission.



L'Arche Lethbridge 30th Anniversary Celebrations

Submitted by Jen Culler & Mary Shillington

As a long time, committed community member of L'Arche for many, many years, I was especially honoured to be part of this committee as I felt I could impart my knowledge and experience to it. I feel having all the events for the 30th Anniversary, brought people together in a very interesting and engaging way. Even through the hard times of Covid, the celebratory nature of the events brought to light the values, relationships and the way they support the vision and mission of L'Arche Lethbridge.



displayed 30 DVD's, 30 transformers. Lots of individualized & creative ideas submitted for this activity.

3) A Summer Vehicle Parade & Pizza Party – in August approx. 15 vehicles & 60 people took part with fancy decorated vehicles and 3 great donated prizes. Gathered at Park Place Mall & drove around ending up at Indian Battle Park (Baroness Picnic Shelter) for pizza. There were 100 views on Instagram.

4) Virtual Closing Event

– on Zoom with 4 presenters who were very informative and spiritually nourishing for all participants: (1) Father Bill Clarke speaking about Compassionate Listening; (2) Hailey Pinksen speaking on Mindfulness & Healing; (3) Reno Guimond sharing re Music and Healing; (4) Tim Wiebe sharing Thoughts about L'Arche & Our Values. Jordan Hart entertained with his great original music between speakers.

This anniversary event has made me feel that future anniversaries should be celebrated in ongoing creative ways such as those we developed this time. Unfortunately, there were some events that we couldn't hold because of Covid but in the future, given better circumstances, we could possibly follow up on. If you would like to be part of such a committee, please feel free to volunteer.

Planning Committee:

Vanessa C., Jen C., Liki W., Cathy F., Romina D., Aiden S., Yamen S., Emma K., Emma H., Pat L., Dianne B.

Tri-Committee: – Tim W., Sandra R., Sharon Y. (gave support & advice)

Activities:

1) Garage Sale – live at Ruah House (garage & driveway) for July 11, 2020 weekend; then went on-line virtually when Covid hit. Raised approx. \$3,600.00: items eventually not sold taken to McKillop United Church for next Fall Fair (money from items for L'Arche will be credited to L'Arche Lethbridge).

2) 30th Anniversary Challenge – Houses, individuals & community members did 30 items – were shown on line & in The Bridge -- such items as 30 cookies, cupcakes & waffles, 30 Bible verses, 30 Loonies, someone planted 30 plants,



Message from the Board

by Sharon Yanicki, Board Chair



There have been a few recent changes on the board. First, we bid farewell to our treasurer, Annette Kerpel. It has been such a pleasure to work with Annette and we wish her all the best with her move to Australia. Michael Pollard has agreed to become the treasurer and Ron Hoar is the new chair of the Public Relations (PR) Committee. Many thanks to Sandra Riddell (chair) and Sarah Dalby and the volunteer members of the Fundraising Committee, and the PR committee, for all their work. Despite the pandemic, L'Arche Lethbridge has greatly benefited from the sustained support of our volunteers, sponsors and donors who help to assure the ongoing success of our community.

I am seeking to deepen my knowledge and understanding of L'Arche at the regional and national levels this year. I have had the opportunity to attend a regional council meeting and to meet community leaders and board chairs from across the region. At this meeting we were invited to share strategies used to strengthen the links between board members and community members. When the pandemic subsides and public health regulations permit, the board is looking forward to resuming regular visits with core members and assistants in each of the houses. It is particularly helpful for new board members to meet and a spend time getting to know members of the community.

Finally, the board has been involved in reviewing and updating policies in preparation for accreditation and preparing for the new mandate. Accreditation helps to identify opportunities for improvement and to assure that L'Arche Lethbridge maintains high quality standards. I also look forward to being part of the local mandate process this year and the new MAP process being implemented by L'Arche Canada.

Best wishes for a joyful spring!

Interview with Diane Mitchell, L'Arche Lethbridge Respite Coordinator

by Mary Shillington,
Public Relations Committee Member

We have a new, interesting, and efficient woman named Diane Mitchell filling in for Vanessa Clarke's maternity leave. She came to us in December 2021 and worked alongside of Van for a number of weeks and now is using her skills, ideas and expertise on the computer to make her unique contributions to the Administration Team at L'Arche Lethbridge.

Diane comes with a great deal of experience in the social action field, having worked for years in SACLA in administration and management. Her beginnings in this field were as a result of her diploma in the Rehabilitation program at Lethbridge College and her own personal interest and experiences in her family. She has a lot of energy and enthusiasm for new challenges that range from using more efficient computer programs, to organizing things, to renovating houses.

Diane has lived in a variety of places. This includes being born in Lethbridge, moving to Saskatchewan near Saskatoon, back to Leduc and Edmonton and finally returning to Lethbridge where many in her family still live. She has 4 adult children as well as grandchildren, two of whom she adopted, raising them from babies to teenagers with their own disabilities & challenges. In our discussions, Diane shared past experiences and interests in people who had all kinds of physical and cognitive disabilities that she came to love and respect for what they offered to the world around them. She sees the acceptance and caring for relationships here in L'Arche Lethbridge as a very positive and deep value which are reflected in all that we do together and share. Diane also sees a high level of trust in the House Leaders and in the Administration Team and respects how everyone's gifts are acknowledged. She recognizes that there are many changes coming to

L'Arche Lethbridge in the next few months and feels she has much to contribute to the community in this time. I agree that she will help in many different ways over these next months and we are lucky to have her as part of our current team.

