



Board Update

Submitted by Sharon Yanicki, *Board Chair*



As board chair, I came back from the National meeting in September reflecting on the meaning of solidarity within L'Arche. In the new charter, solidarity focuses on "building relationships across differences...to contribute to a more loving and sustainable world..." Solidarity is enacted within the federation at local, national, and international levels. I'd like to share a few examples.

At the L'Arche Lethbridge board level, I'm pleased to report that our financial position has improved, thanks to the generous donations and support received for our fundraising efforts. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this success. We are in the process of installing solar panels on

one of our houses, and through grant funding, our homes are now more accessible. Despite the rising costs of living, we are working towards becoming more sustainable and adapting to the changing needs of our members with disabilities.

At national and regional levels, solidarity also involves building partnerships and engaging in advocacy and justice efforts. This year, L'Arche Canada advocated for appropriate funding levels to support people with disabilities and a L'Arche Canada core member addressed the United Nations. Alberta L'Arche board chairs and community leaders have also been collaborating on advocacy at a provincial level.

At an international level, the solidarity funds collected within Canadian L'Arche communities have contributed to critical support for communities in need such as L'Arche Haiti, L'Arche Ukraine, and L'Arche Bethlehem. Conflict within the world affects all of us, especially those who are most vulnerable. Within L'Arche, solidarity is making a difference.

The Gift of Mutual Vulnerability

Submitted by Tim Wiebe, *Community Leader*

One of the things I enjoy most about summer vacations is sitting on the beach and reading. This summer one of the books I read was Astra Taylor's *Age of Insecurity*, the CBC Massey Lectures in 2024. I was struck by this part in the first chapter:

"An ethic of insecurity can provide a powerful moral framework to help us reimagine and reorganize our social and economic systems. The simple recognition of our mutual vulnerability – of the fact that we all need and deserve care throughout our lives – has potentially revolutionary implications."

This quote resonated with the work L'Arche has been doing since our founding. The Charter of the Communities of L'Arche states our Guiding Insight as "Mutual relationships among people with and without intellectual disabilities transform us by revealing the unique value of every person. This experience is a sign in the world that all belong."

L'Arche has always welcomed those who are vulnerable and created spaces where each person can give their gift and receive from others. This is difficult. To welcome those who are vulnerable we need to be in touch with our own vulnerability. Our modern world is one based on self-interest and competition; to be vulnerable means someone will take advantage of you to get something for themselves, we learn early to keep our vulnerabilities hidden. People with a disability have no choice but to be vulnerable, to depend on others for care and support so welcoming them can put us in touch with the gift that is the reality of our mutual vulnerability.

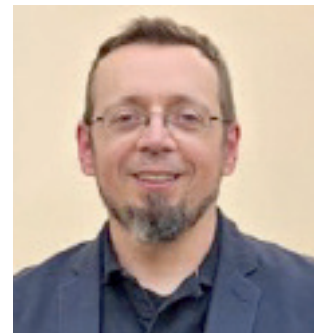
In our own way L'Arche Lethbridge contributes to bring this into

reality. Life in our homes is simple, built around the activities of daily life, but we also welcome diverse people who work together to bring our Identity and Mission to life. We also support the efforts of L'Arche in Canada and L'Arche International to bring the gifts and learnings of L'Arche to more people around the world.

Locally, we are advocating along with partners in the Disability Services sector to raise wages for all our workers so they can be paid a living wage. We meet with our MLAs to advocate for people with disabilities and those who care for them. In this time of increasing income inequality there is a role for our leaders to step in and ensure that those who are more vulnerable, and those who care for them, are not left to fend for themselves. Caring for those who need it most sends a message that when I need care and support, I too will be cared for.

The closing of *the Age of Insecurity* Astra says:

"The essential and life-sustaining labour of caring for people and the planet...cannot be automated or outsourced, which means that care work has the potential to be the meaningful, well-compensated, and secure work of the future. Taking care of others rewards and replenishes us and helps ensure we are cared for in return. By giving the gift of care, we take care of ourselves too."



Celebrating Cathy

Submitted by Emily Baptista, PR Committee Volunteer

This fall, Cathy from Ruah house celebrated her anniversary with L'Arche! To celebrate, she received a yellow flower, and a few days before Thanksgiving I was able to chat with her. The biggest highlight of her year was receiving the flower since she had been waiting a long time for it.

This summer she went to Waterton twice. Once with Ruah House and once for work. She spent time walking, going by the lake, getting ice cream, and was also able to see the visitor's center. Recently, she started taking dance classes at CASA on Wednesdays and has a performance later on in the year that she is looking forward to. Aside from dance classes, Cathy loves going to church, spending time with children, swimming, baking,



movies, and going for walks. At her church she likes being with the kids and even helps with the puppet shows. Another one of Cathy's hobbies is listening to music and collecting CDs and pictures. She loves mini pops concerts and is hoping to go to another concert soon as well as hoping to spend more time helping kids whether that be at church or elsewhere in the community.

Cathy is always one to make others smile and is always ready to give people hugs and a nice wave. She brings joy to everywhere she goes and has a beautiful heart. Her smile is contagious, and it was great to hear about her life. We are so grateful for Cathy's presence in our community and we wish her a wonderful year ahead!

Property Updates at Chinook and Amani

Submitted by Sarah Dalby, Board Member/Community Committee Member

Two of our homes have had some pretty big changes since the last newsletter and we are thrilled to tell you about them. Chinook House has had extensive kitchen renovations and Amani House has had solar panels installed!

Chinook House's renovations were made possible in part thanks to the enabling accessibility grant. Ruah had a similar renovation last year thanks to the same program. Marcy, Madu, Brad, Todd, and Erick from Chinook House all agree that the renovations have made for some huge improvements for life in the home. Notably, the wider hallway between the counter and the stairwell has allowed for more people to use the space and a greater ability to share time together. The new counter has two different heights and a space designed for a wheelchair to roll under! In addition to the renovations the house also put new labels on the cupboards including a special place for Brad's coffee pods! Brad says that the best part of living



at Chinook is having a place to play games with friends and the new kitchen renovation has made for even more accessible space to do this in.

Over at Amani house, the roof has had some significant changes. The board voted to have solar panels installed last spring and this fall they were finally installed. The community is grateful for this opportunity to be a more energy-efficient presence in Lethbridge. The homes have made this a goal

in other ways like increasing recycling and purchasing "greener" household products. The Fundraising and Public Relations committee has set a goal of purchasing a new electric or hybrid vehicle to replace the next vehicle in the L'Arche fleet to need an update! Please keep an eye out for more information on our fundraising efforts in the near future.

Thank you for your ongoing support to help L'Arche Lethbridge continue to foster accessible and sustainable spaces for our community!

L'Arche Association of Lethbridge is planning to raise an estimate amount of \$30,000 this year on Fundraising Campaigns. It will cost our organization an estimated \$5100 to raise this. The money raised will fund costs such as vehicle fleet replacement, capital costs such as house maintenance, and community outreach. For further information please contact Tim Wiebe at 403-328-3735 ext. 1 Our Address is 240 12 C Street N. Lethbridge, AB T1H 2M7 and we are incorporated in Lethbridge, AB.