

# IMPACT

## Report 2019-2020

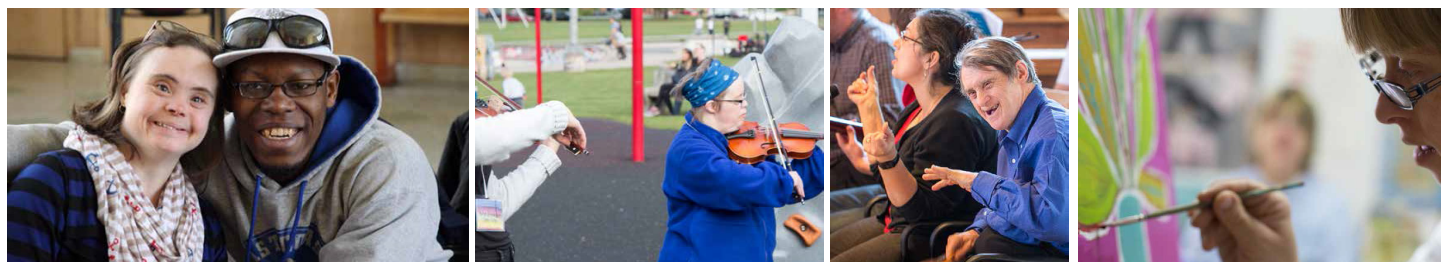


### *L'Arche Canada Today*

*L'Arche Canada is re-igniting the vision of L'Arche for greater impact in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities, their families, and all Canadians.*

Since its beginnings, L'Arche has recognized the unique contribution that people with intellectual disabilities make in building a more diverse, caring, and human society. L'Arche has grown to 153 communities in 38 countries. L'Arche Canada now includes 30 communities in nine provinces from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. Across Canada, 540 people with intellectual disabilities live in 140 small homes and apartments. 460

people with intellectual disabilities access day supports in 37 locations. They are supported by 625 full-time assistants and 260 part-time assistants, as well as over 700 volunteers. We are building on over 50 years of learning and collaborating with a broad range of partners to develop creative, sustainable ways to build inclusive communities where people with intellectual disabilities are at the centre.



### *What are the challenges facing people with intellectual disabilities and their families?*

We are living at a time of extraordinary technological and economic change that has brought remarkable progress as well as increasing challenges for people with intellectual disabilities and the organizations dedicated to their support and well-being. While in many ways Canada is a beacon of diversity and inclusion, we also face complex social challenges including the lack of equal

opportunity, increasing loneliness and isolation, and the plight of vulnerable people falling through the cracks of social service systems. People with intellectual disabilities often live in:

- Family homes with aging parents who worry about their future.
- Psychiatric hospitals, nursing homes, large group homes, and other institutional settings.
- Their own apartments with

weak social networks causing increased vulnerability. The provincially funded developmental services sector is under-resourced, over-regulated, and slow to change. 'The community' often lacks the capacity to fully welcome people with intellectual disabilities as members, co-workers, neighbours, and friends—a loss for them, for their families and for all Canadians.



## L'Arche Toronto's Sol Express Expands Its Reach Online

When the sledgehammer of Covid came down in March, Artistic Facilitators Cheryl Zinyk and Matt Rawlins had no choice but to close temporarily the Sol Express arts program at L'Arche Toronto's Gathering Place on Floyd Avenue. Matt and Cheryl deftly turned to ZOOM to be able to keep the Sol Express creative juices flowing, catapulting its artists into new mediums, realms of performance, and outreach. 35 Sol Express artists quickly found their way to the online program, now running Monday to Friday with a different area of focus each day: Text & Technique,

Movement & Dance, Visual Art Technique, Voice & Singing, and Song & Story. The variety is an example of how Sol Express has, since its founding in 2007, embraced a broad range of creative expression and hands-on learning. For the first time, two other L'Arche communities in Canada—L'Arche Halifax and L'Arche Saskatoon—have participated in Sol Express through the online program.

The group had been preparing to mount a show for its fourth season at Toronto's Fringe Festival when this year's Festival was cancelled—but Sol Express jumped at the invitation to be part of "The Fringe Collective",

an online alternative. The company put together the video "WikiHowNOW", a comedic line-up of eight 2-minute to 5-minute clown demonstrations that "offer some unsolicited advice on topics that we are more interested in, which may or may not be provided by experts." Nicholas Herd, for example, is priceless in "How to Relax in Bed". The advice may not be expert—but these clowns are experts at their art, and a welcome blitz of mirth in these sobering times. Sol Express has adapted its repertoire of arts practice without missing a beat.



*L'Arche Toronto's Sol Express arts program has continued to thrive by moving online during COVID and sharing opportunities for creative expression virtually. Sol Express also took part in "The Fringe Collective" with the video "WikiHowNOW," a comedic line-up of hilarious clown performances.*

## ECCU Stays True to L'Arche Cape Breton

People at the East Coast Credit Union (ECCU) have been friends and supporters of L'Arche Cape Breton for the past fifteen years, raising public awareness and much needed financial support—but the impact of the Credit Union goes far beyond its generous work in organizing two annual fundraisers. People at ECCU have also become friends, and they have shown tremendous creativity in how to nurture friendship, even during the lonely limits of COVID-19. The pandemic has placed on pause all live fundraisers and get-togethers, and L'Arche Cape Breton homes have been pretty much on lockdown since mid-March. Despite these challenges, people at the ECCU were determined to find ways to stay connected with their friends in L'Arche.

The ECCU managed to maintain their connections through the post, by sending mail to community members. Letters and cards are filled with humour and personal support, while parcels are packed with snacks and small gifts personalized to each community member's likes, to great effect. When David Gunn received Montreal Canadiens stickers, he raised them above his head with jubilation as if he'd just won the Stanley Cup!

As the ECCU's mail arrives in L'Arche homes, assistants are often on hand to film community members opening their letters and packages—so the videos can, in turn, be sent along to the ECCU. It's a heart-warming gift exchange on both sides. To be sure, there will be live events and gatherings again eventually. For

now, L'Arche Cape Breton and the ECCU will stay connected however they can. Even a pandemic cannot dampen the spirit of fifteen-year-long friendships.



*Friends from the East Coast Credit Union have found creative ways to stay personally connected with L'Arche Cape Breton, even during a pandemic.*

## L'Arche Vancouver Plans a New Place to Live, Gather and Grow

The community of L'Arche Greater Vancouver is saying goodbye to the building that it has called home for more than 46 years. Community members feel a mix of sadness and excitement as they anticipate their building being demolished later this year. In its place will be a modern, innovative, mixed-use building that addresses the urgent need for accessibility, allows community members to age in place, and enables L'Arche Greater Vancouver to expand both its residential and community inclusion programs.

The three-storey, fully accessible building will include three L'Arche homes, expanded common spaces, a courtyard, chapel, an art gallery/coffee lounge, and a rooftop garden. There will also be 10 units of housing for people with intellectual disabilities who are able to live more independently while being part of the L'Arche Greater Vancouver community.

What will be truly unique about this new community is the inclusion of 29 units of non-market housing to respond to the urgent need for

affordable housing in Vancouver and the increasingly recognized need to nurture community. L'Arche Greater Vancouver hopes that this innovative concept for creating community might inspire other organizations and L'Arche communities who are committed to housing models that are also places of belonging.

L'Arche Greater Vancouver has a projected fundraising goal of \$6 million for its stake in this exciting building project. To date, \$3 million has already been received or pledged.

*L'Arche Greater Vancouver is taking a leadership role in an innovative project to construct a new, fully accessible, multi-use building where community is at the center.*



## L'Arche Lanaudière Dares to Dream

Lucie Bellerose's daily life is full of small, warm gestures—a smile, a hug, a surprise cup of coffee—that show the care she gives so freely. Lucie has a dream. She dreams of one day having a little coffee shop where she can welcome not only her own friends, but also people from the town of Joliette. When members of L'Arche

Lanaudière gathered to write their community mandate for the next four years, they decided to share Lucie's dream. And why not? It was a perfect example of how the community might reach out and build relationships with its neighbors.

Writing a mandate is often compared to creating a roadmap. It can be like planning a trip with a few dozen people, all with their own ideas of where to go and how to get there. L'Arche Lanaudière had the good fortune of working on this mandate with a coach from Innoweave, an initiative of the McConnell Foundation. Innoweave

and McConnell share the mission of building a sustainable, resilient and inclusive Canada through these local projects. Lucie's dream served as a great starting point for writing the new community mandate for L'Arche Lanaudière.

Lucie will soon move to a new home, one that has space for the community office, its day program, a multi-purpose room—and a little coffee shop where Lucie can live the dream. For Pierre Boute, L'Arche Lanaudière's Community Leader, the coaching "was a beautiful gift that helped shift our thinking from one of survival to one of realizing our dream for connection."

*With the support of a coach from Innoweave, L'Arche Lanaudière wrote a dynamic community mandate. Innoweave is committed to building a sustainable, resilient and inclusive Canada through local projects like this.*





# What is L'Arche Canada's Roadmap for Change?

L'Arche Canada has embarked upon a journey to re-vitalize the vision and mission of L'Arche to achieve greater impact in the lives of Canadians. With the support of our donors, government funders, and other partners, L'Arche Canada has developed an impact-focused Strategic Plan that includes people with intellectual disabilities as co-leaders for social change and inclusion. This plan brings together our local and national networks and diverse partners to move forward in three reinforcing priorities:

## 1. Community Support Services

We are strengthening our organizational capacity for collaboration and deliver efficient and consistent services to L'Arche communities across Canada to build expertise in targeted areas: person-centered planning, human resource management, inclusive housing, advocacy, finance, communications, fundraising, and policy development. We will also improve our capacity to measure, evaluate, and communicate impact, and foster continuous learning.

## 2. Leadership Development

We are energizing our capacity to change and grow, grounded in our deep belief in the transformative power of relationship. The wisdom of people with intellectual disabilities is central to this work. We are empowering people with and without intellectual disabilities for change leadership rooted in the vision and

mission of L'Arche, delivered through an enriched and inspiring program of leadership development.

## 3. Strategic Partnerships

Relationships are at the heart of L'Arche and they are essential for us to take a stronger role in the movement toward inclusion. L'Arche Canada is proud to collaborate with Inclusion Canada, People First, Planned Life Advocacy Network (PLAN), la Société québécoise de la déficience intellectuelle (SQDI), le Consortium national de recherche sur l'intégration sociale (CNRIS), Tamarack, the Trinity Centre Foundation, and the Disability Studies Program at King's University College of Western Ontario. This work for social change includes options for inclusive housing, employment, and person-centered supports that promote social choice and inclusion for people of all abilities.

*"Social Innovation approaches in Canada aren't really well spread nationally. It's growing but there's definitely a gap between how social innovation is used and talked about in the two languages. With L'Arche, there was more of a truly national learning presence for us. We had an opportunity to work with communities in both languages, and that helps us live out the McConnell Foundation mission to build a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive Canada."*

Ryan Conway, McConnell Foundation,  
Program Director, Innoweave



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