



L'ARCHE HAMILTON CONNECTIONS

our NEW quarterly newsletter -- sharing encouraged!



WELCOME from our Community Leader Sarah Tuck

If you follow us on social media or subscribe to our Weekly Wave (which I hope you do!) you may have noticed we feature weekly Community Member Spotlights. These features include the Core Members who invite us to share our lives with them, and the Assistants that come to learn and help. We have an amazing community filled with such wonderful and unique individuals, so I am always happy to see them raised up and celebrated.

We have learned over the years that we need all kinds of people to make community work. It's just as important to have Michael Barry, our local celebrity, artist and café greeter with seemingly endless energy as it is to have Nancy, who rarely ventures outside of the home or Day Program, but calls people into deeply committed relationships through her unique way of touching hearts. Likewise, in community, we have people who are called to different roles – some in the homes and Day Program, some in the office, and others out in the community – but all doing equally important work.

Along with Assistants and Core Members, we have another group of individuals who also help us live out our mission: our volunteers! We have many volunteers in L'Arche who help us with a wide range of things, from gardening, to helping cook or pick up groceries, to visiting with people, driving, supporting on our board, helping us do outreach, and more. **As a way of showing our appreciation for our outstanding volunteers, we decided to use this Summer Edition of our newsletter to highlight some of the volunteers who are making an impact in our community in different ways.** You'll have a chance to hear from each of them about their experience in L'Arche, and if you're anything like me, you'll be touched and inspired by their stories!

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Second Edition: Summer 2022

WELCOME!

The Ross Moncrieff Scholarship Fund

Meet our Volunteers

As good stewards of our resources we are reducing the use of paper newsletters. We'd love for you to share the mission of L'Arche Hamilton by forwarding this newsletter to friends, family and colleagues.



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COMMUNITY LEADER

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Some volunteers come for a one-time event like a BBQ, festival or gardening day, and others have been committed to coming regularly for years, but each play an important part in keeping our organization safe, vibrant and thriving.

We wish we had room to highlight every single one of our volunteers, but that would be a very long newsletter indeed. In place of that, I hope you'll join me in saying a virtual "thanks" to all of our friends and volunteers who do so much to help us! We appreciate you! (And of course, if you're not a volunteer but feel inspired to become one after reading about these experiences, we would be happy to welcome you!)

Happy Summer Friends! ~ Sarah



THE ROSS MONCRIEFF SCHOLARSHIP FUND

An Important Announcement from Sarah



I'm a big believer in the idea that the right things come to us at just the moment we need them—whether that be a helping hand, a kind remark or a \$20 bill found in an old pair of jeans right when you need it.

A couple weeks ago I had just such a moment like this when our Core Member David handed me a folded-up piece of paper he had pulled out from his fanny pack. I

unfolded the paper, thinking it would be one of David's classic Batman drawings, but was surprised to see that this drawing of Batman was skillfully and intricately drawn by our friend Ross Moncrieff. I suspect David had been carrying it around with him for quite some time. The drawing was another reminder of Ross' continued presence in our lives even after his death, and a reminder of the beautiful relationships we have at L'Arche. Community is so much more than just the relationships between Core Members and Assistants. Ross showed he cared for others by taking note of their interests and celebrating it with them. For Jeff, he drew birds; for David, superheroes; for our friend Toinette from France, he drew the Eiffel Tower.

Although I received many drawings from his as well, he also made a point of always asking me about my outings with Mary, my family, my apartment and more. In his own life, Ross was fortunate to have opportunities that many have not. His family encouraged him to pursue many interests, including attending (and eventually instructing) at the Dundas Valley School of Arts, and helped him to build a beautiful and meaningful life. In his time at L'Arche Hamilton he was able to continue to fulfill many dreams. He traveled internationally, he found a church family to belong to, he joined a group for LGBTQ+ advocacy, he played sports, and much more. He grew to be comfortable and proud of his accomplishments, and he loved to encourage others in theirs.

In memory of our friend Ross we have established a scholarship to help others explore their interests and fulfill their dreams, just as he did. This scholarship, funded through an endowment, will be distributed annually to a Core Member who needs financial support to fulfill a dream (like taking a course, buying materials or going on a trip). We are excited to see what comes from this program, and grateful that even in his passing, Ross's legacy will carry on.

For those interested in applying to the scholarship, which will launch this September, or wishing to donate to this program, you can find out more about it on our website at www.larchehamilton.org/ross-moncrieff-scholarship.html



MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We asked some of our incredible volunteers a few questions about how and why they came to volunteer with us and the journey this experience has taken in their lives. We wanted to know what challenged and inspired them. We share their stories here on the pages that follow. We love our volunteers: put simply, we couldn't do what we do without them. If you feel a call to volunteer with L'Arche Hamilton, you can begin on our website www.larchehamilton.org/volunteer.html

We'd love to meet you.



Heather Whitehouse

About 25 years ago I became a weekly visitor for a time at Sherman House, one of L'Arche Hamilton's homes for people with and without intellectual disabilities. There I became a special friend to Alice. Over the years I have been a special friend and regular visitor to other Core Members, like Kevin and Janice. On a number of occasions my husband, Bruce, and I have invited groups of Core Members and assistants to our small farm for a summer picnic.

My husband and I have also been enthusiastic donors, especially over the last 10 years. I have particularly enjoyed worship times at L'Arche in the common room of the bungalow and at Ryerson Church; joining everyone in Taize is a real highlight for me.



A few years ago, I joined the board of directors and this June I became the vice president of the board.

My greatest surprise has been experiencing the openness, the trust and love many of the Core Members have shown me over the years; the sense of being loved without qualification has humbled my heart.

My biggest challenge and joy has been to let what I have experienced at L'Arche gradually transform me (and this remains an on-going project); the struggle and the joy of learning more and more to drop the mask I wear with others; to let people see who I am, rather than who I present myself to be. In other words, to be authentic!

In my relationship with L'Arche I have become a more joyful person and more hopeful that together little by little we can help in creating a kinder and more just world where everyone is valued and everyone is seen as bringing gifts and contributing to up-building God's kingdom.

Anand Chokshi

I am part of the L'Arche program. I became a volunteer at the Inclusion CoffeeHouse seven months ago. I want to gain experience, develop my communication skills, and learn other important skills. I work as a cashier at the counter, take orders, make different types of coffee and help with the dishes.

I am proud that I can do this work! It gives me great satisfaction to work. I find it challenging to make the coffee but I enjoy doing it. I am developing my skills in how to communicate with other people and learning how to work independently. I am enjoying my time volunteering and happy working with the people of L'Arche Hamilton.



I've been volunteering weekly at L'Arche Hamilton's Inclusion CoffeeHouse now for nine months. (Open Tues & Weds in the Bernie Morelli Community Centre) My greatest surprise is probably that I'm still here. Let me explain. As an artist, a machinist, I've spent my life doing things with my hands, by myself. I didn't know what it would be like working with others. And I certainly didn't know what it would be like working with people with intellectual disabilities. I thought it might be something I'd do for a month or two and then move on searching for something else.

But I look forward to every single Tuesday morning when I can go volunteer at the CoffeeHouse. I love hearing people's stories and every single person who enters the CoffeeHouse has a story to tell. The Core Members have welcomed me here so much. I've learned new things and been challenged to use the processes I learned in factory life to help make this CoffeeHouse a success. L'Arche Hamilton has changed me in enormous, positive ways I never expected and I am so very grateful to be here.



Wayne Long

2.5 years ago I was diagnosed with leukemia. As cancer often does, it changed my daily life. My days working as a machinist were done and I found myself searching for some other role that could fit with my many medical appointments. My daughter was friends with Ann, one of the assistants at L'Arche Hamilton. She encouraged me to reach out to L'Arche to volunteer but in reality I really didn't understand what that meant.



Scott Jones

I was taking a break from my desk one day when I ran into the group from L'Arche Hamilton's Cornerstone House, also out for a walk. I'm not sure if it was serendipity or divine intervention, but this encounter began a conversation that led me to becoming a volunteer.

More and more I see our North American lifestyle as taking a lot for granted. Furthermore, I am a very selfish person by nature. Overall, that's just a bad combination. Before I was even aware of L'Arche as an opportunity I knew that I was seeking an outlet that could be helpful to others and get my focus off of me. I hate to make this in any way about me, but I think that's the whole point: how do I get involved in something or with someone and set myself aside? It's a challenge and process but L'Arche Hamilton has opened the door.

For two years I have spent my volunteer time with one of the Core Members in particular, Mike. It's simply a matter of being friends. He and I go for walks, eat donuts, talk on the phone or Zoom (especially about wrestling) and sometimes just sit on the porch. I want to do more with him and am looking forward to going to church with him on Sunday. He really loves his church.

This is not a one-way relationship. The Core Members always make me feel very special. I wasn't expecting that. Mike doesn't need me to be his friend. I feel like he has allowed me to be his friend and has welcomed me into his life. I have gained the trust of a person who has no reason to trust and that's an incredible and precious gift to me.



To find out more about becoming a volunteer, visit our website www.larchehamilton.org

**PLEASE FORWARD AND SHARE THIS NEWSLETTER!
TO BE ADDED TO OUR DISTRIBUTION LIST EMAIL
MARIANNE@LARCHEHAMILTON.ORG**



Krutika Patil

My journey with L'Arche began through my participation in Intercordia Canada when I was an undergraduate student in 2008. Intercordia Canada was a university-accredited program that supported students in an experiential learning opportunity overseas. After an application process and pre-departure training, I set off for Ukraine. During the summer of 2008 I spent three months living with a host family. The first month I attended daily language classes and for the next two months I volunteered with L'Arche in Lviv. While there I worked with Core Members in daily workshops. It was a truly transformational experience. I learned about the mutuality of relationships and how much vulnerability can transform relationships for the better.

After returning from Ukraine I connected with the L'Arche community in my hometown of London, ON. While in my undergraduate studies at Western University I worked part-time/volunteered with L'Arche London. My experiences with L'Arche, locally and internationally, allowed me to increase my cultural sensitivity and moral responsiveness while gaining a more compassionate worldview. L'Arche in many ways shaped my career choices and played a key role in my decision to obtain my Master of Social Work/Juris Doctor at the University of Windsor.

In 2016 I married a very handsome Hamiltonian and was thrilled to learn that L'Arche was in my new city! I reached out to ask about volunteering and was quickly, warmly, and lovingly welcomed into the community. In 2017 I joined the L'Arche Hamilton Board of Directors. From 2018 to 2020 I acted as Vice Chair and later Chair of the Board. As of Sept. 2022 I will be joining The Board of Directors of the Ark Foundation.

The Core Members throughout my experience with L'Arche have taught me that each of us have our own strengths, abilities, and gifts worthy of celebration. L'Arche has been a key part of my life for nearly 15 years and I look forward to sharing my love of L'Arche with my two-year-old daughter, Karishma. I am so thankful for all that L'Arche has given me.