



L'ARCHE HAMILTON CONNECTIONS

(Sharing of our newsletter always encouraged!)



4th Edition: SPRING 2023

Sarah's Desk

A Woman of Distinction!

Wish List

Why Donations Matter

Baking up Fun!

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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From Sarah's Desk Community Leader at L'Arche Hamilton

Have you ever competed in a race? I've never been much of a runner myself, but I do compete in a weekly race – to church! (Now how many of you can say that is something you have ever done?) In my church, there is a man, Bobby, who has an intellectual disability. Bobby has been coming to the church for nearly his whole life, and is an important part of the church family – he hands out bulletins, helps collect the offerings, greets and encourages others. Because Bobby lives at home with his aging mother, who is no longer able to drive, he and his mom rely on people to pick them up weekly for church, which my family usually does. We can't fit everyone in one vehicle, so we will usually drive over to their house, and then someone will get out and drive Bobby and his mother in their vehicle to church.

After a few weeks of settling into this new routine, Bobby began to make a game of things, by challenging the second car to a race to church. Whenever his car arrives first, he celebrates and brags endlessly, and when he is second or third to arrive, he proclaims, "We'll get you next time!" This little challenge has now spread and includes other members of the church as well, with several competing to be the first to arrive. (Pastors and deacons take note, this may be one to try in your own church!) It's a silly little game, but at the same time, it is so illustrative of how our relationships with others can make life more enjoyable. Of course, it's fun to win sometimes, but it is equally fun to see how much Bobby celebrates his wins. Even my parents have gotten into it, hurrying each other up, engaging in secret sabotages, and laughing when someone gets stuck at a red light or behind a turning car. Because of Bobby's nature (and the openness of others to embrace it), he has helped to turn something ordinary and mundane into something that we look forward to each week.

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FROM SARAH'S DESK COMMUNITY LEADER L'ARCHE HAMILTON



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In my opinion, this experience we have weekly with Bobby is very much reflective of the reality of daily life in L'Arche. We live pretty simple, often repetitive days together – and yet, in each day, there are sprinklings of affection and joy. You can't always plan or predict them – you never know when someone will say something profound over breakfast, or give you an unexpected hug when you walk through the door, or make you laugh while you're helping them brush their teeth - but they're sure to happen. In L'Arche, because we make space for relationships and see Core Members not just as "service recipients" but as co-leaders and co-learners on our journey, we're able to recognize and celebrate these moments together.

Last week, we hosted another musical performance at our Inclusion Coffeehouse. While we've been fortunate to be able to host a number of talented musicians and artists over the past year, this performance was really special as it was a joint effort between the musical group IMHope and our Core Members.

As I sat back watching the performance, I was so touched by the amazing atmosphere our Core Members had created. By openly sharing their gifts and abilities, Core Members in our community created an ambience of welcome and inclusion that went far beyond themselves. There was quite a large crowd present - others with disabilities who had come to watch and sing along, parents with young children, seniors who had come for programming and even some who were just passing by and wanted to stop and listen. The energy and enthusiasm circulating the room was palpable and several commented to me on how grateful they were to join us. This was yet another example to me of the impact our members can have when given the opportunity to do so.

As we enter into spring, my hope is that each of you will experience in your own lives the profound joy offered through relationships and the hope of new opportunities.

Blessings, Sarah

Mary Mather is a Woman of Distinction!

Long time Core Member **Mary Mather** was recently nominated for a YWCA Women of Distinction award. What is a Woman of Distinction? Someone who has made a commitment and a significant difference in her community by showing vision, creativity and initiative. Anyone who knows Mary knows she is every bit that person. Mary is incredibly active in her community with seemingly boundless energy. She is an advocate who speaks out about the rights of Persons with Disabilities. She is a grassroots changemaker, who for over a decade has been active in her Neighbourhood Association, church, and countless community groups. Mary is a fearless leader who never shies away from the microphone or the dance floor and a fashionista who often awes with her unique and colourful style. She is an encourager who constantly lifts others up and a giver who volunteers weekly at the Inclusion Coffee house and spends countless hours knitting blankets to give away. She is a proud sister, aunt, and daughter, but most of all, a great friend.

Congratulations Mary and to all the astounding nominees on your achievements!



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

Wish List

With lots of active people, our homes are always in need of donated items and looking for new outings and experiences to enjoy. Here is our current "Wish List". If you would like to help by donating any of these items to us we'd be most appreciative. Email Sue Mason at office@larchehamilton.org or give us a call at 905-312-0162

HOLTON HOUSE: bbq, electric kettle, Dutch oven, new 3-seater couch for living room & a desk

CHARBONNEAU HOUSE: humidifier, black-out curtains, desk, 11-cup food processor, water boiler & warmer, stereo w/aux cord & black/red cords (for Nancy)

CORNERSTONE HOUSE: badminton set, spice/coffee grinder, kitchen island trolley on wheels, desk chair, full-length mirror, patio string lights

LADIES BUNGALOW: an outdoor umbrella with stand and a living room rug

SHERMAN HOUSE: a new laundry dryer, sturdy dining chairs with arms, curtains, toaster, French coffee press & frying pans

DAY PROGRAM: passes to the Royal Botanical Gardens & member passes to the Hamilton Conservation Authority for day trips



Why Donations Matter

By Marianne Mulders

We want every single person who chooses to support us with a donation to fully understand the impact your gift makes in the lives of those with intellectual disabilities we serve.

We are fortunate that the Ministry of Children, Community & Social Services (MCCSS) within the government of Ontario provides developmental service agencies like ours with funding to cover the basic costs of caring for those who live in our homes: groceries, utilities, accommodation, medical supplies and all OHIP covered services. Direct support costs are provided based on a calculated formula designed to ensure the safety and proper care of those we support, but are **not sufficient to provide for exceptions**. For example, the amount of funding a Core Member receives is determined when he or she first comes to live with us. If their needs change as they age, we rarely receive extra funding to adequately adjust for these changed needs. A model of funding that focuses primarily on safety and risk reduction is also inadequate to support the full psychosocial needs of our members. For instance, if a Core Member wants to participate in a local disability choir and requires transportation to and from the choir and support while there, the cost of this extra support is typically not covered. Even just having someone available to go on a 1:1 walk with Core Members often requires resources outside of our base funding.

We regularly apply for federal and provincial grants to help defray the costs of major repairs (like a new roof, deck, wheelchair ramp, etc.). We are sometimes awarded funding, but sometimes, we are left to cover project expenses on our own.

We rely on donations to cover an array of expenses for which MCCSS funding is generally not provided. Our Inclusion Coffeehouse is 100% dependent on our fundraising and the sale of items. All of the outreach training programs we run in schools teaching about those with intellectual disabilities are done through donations. When Core Members pass the age of 65, the government provides minimal to no funding for dental care. All work done recruiting, screening and training volunteers and managing student interns is funded through donations. For assistants who live in our homes, items like desks and beds are not funded by the government. Our day program is currently at capacity and we are not able to welcome more people with intellectual disabilities to attend – the only way to expand is to find additional rental space which can only be done through increased donations.

We've shared this with you so that you can truly understand why your donation matters. We also want you to be confident that we use every single dollar to the greatest possible benefit. We carefully manage all of our expenses (even moving this newsletter to email instead of mail has saved significant money). Donations are important and make a difference. Whether you choose to make a single donation, become a monthly donor, dedicate a life insurance policy to us or consider a donation in your will, please know that your kindness will do so very much. Want to learn more? I'd love to connect via email at marianne@larchehamilton.org.

Baking up some FUN at Inclusion CoffeeHouse

By Paige McIsaac



Welcome to L'Arche Hamilton's Inclusion Coffeehouse! Operating inside the Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre, our Inclusion CoffeeHouse program provides the chance for people with and without disabilities to be themselves, share daily life and grow with the community. It's an opportunity for learning, not only about how to bake delicious vegan squares, but also to learn about our friends in the neighbourhood. Young parents and their children, seniors, writers, friends from baseball, day programs, volunteers, high school students and more keep returning for more than just coffee. **They come to us for the stories of friendship, belonging and welcome.** I loved watching Sandi bond with a young couple with twins who came to visit the coffeehouse for the first time as she came out to their table and shared about her own twin baby step-niece and nephew – their faces lit up. Across another table, Sandi's friend from baseball then joined the conversation about how she knew Sandi for many years as they all continued in laughter. The young family was back the following week along with the babies' grandparents so that they could share in the spirit of community together.

Inclusion Coffeehouse has been such a joy over the last several months. Open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10am-1pm, with a full day of baking on Mondays, we have been busy and welcoming lots of new friends including Parker – a good friend of many Core Members from basketball and dances and Marvean – a gentle presence each week. We also welcomed Lynda, Milan, Des, Lisette, Ariana, Amrutha, Cathy, Priscilla, Amal, Jake, Shedrick, and more who quickly became a part of the Inclusion Coffeehouse family.

We've been very busy sharing about who we are at various events. We opened a Pop-Up shop at L'Arche's Open House in November, hosted a Christmas table arrangement workshop in-house, Christmas Caroling and celebrated our first anniversary! We welcomed a class from a neighbouring school who wanted to learn more about their community. In February, we were open for the week of Winterfest in partnership with Frost Bites where we hosted, alongside Open Heart Arts Theatre, a dramatic arts workshop. We then shared the created stories from the workshop at Open Heart's performance of 'Show Home'. We also participated in the Community Marketplace, Procession of Lights and hosted some art projects on Family Day. We made coffee and muffins for the TrueCity Conference where we were able to share about what we do with various congregations in the community. In March, we had our first Coffeehouse Fundraiser and welcomed many to check out the space on a Saturday with coffee, treats, art, photography and music. Even a snowy morning brought a great crowd who came to support our community coffeehouse.

Our dreams of expansion continue. There has been continued interest from individuals with disabilities in the community who would like to become volunteers. There have been many neighbours and friends who seek a space for coffee and friendship on days beyond Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. We hope that with some additional funding, we might be able to welcome more individuals and open more days with additional 'Pop Up' shops and catering endeavours in future. **We are always in need of volunteers at Inclusion Coffeehouse** where people can support Core Members to bake, serve coffee or operate the cash register.

We want to thank friends, neighbours and community for such a great year as we celebrated our first anniversary and continue onto our second year. We hope that you all have a chance to experience the spirit of Inclusion Coffeehouse and as we get ready for continued music and art events in the Spring. **We invite you to come on down and build community with us!**



Inclusion Coffeehouse needs volunteers! Our volunteers, with and without intellectual disabilities, work together to serve coffee, take orders, chat with customers and sell baked goods on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. On Mondays we have a different group of volunteers baking our treats and doing inventory. We are looking for volunteers who can commit to coming one day every week from 9:00AM until 1:30PM. If you can help, please email Dave Drenth at dave@larchehamilton.org