

L'ARCHE ANTIGONISH

"Don't you know yet? It's your light that lights the world." ~ Rumi



Be the Light! Share the Light!

Beth Wolters - Community Leader

When we were initially planning this newsletter, it was March shortly after our Community Retreat. During our few days of retreat together, we reflected on the theme 'Be the Light! Share the Light!' and explored these ideas through words, dance, skits, meditation, art, and music. There were gentle, quiet times and times when the room was filled with laughter – we were so happy to be together.

As the months passed and the initial glow of the retreat faded, I often found our retreat theme running through my mind. How can I be the light in the situation I find myself in? How do I bring the most light to what I am doing? Is what I am doing bringing light into the world? These were good reminders as we lived the uncertainty of another lockdown, watched friends struggle with health issues and missed laughing together.

The call to be and share light is a lofty goal. Often my ego or fear get in the way and I block it. One such morning I was driving through Antigonish during the quiet of lockdown. Few people or cars were about and I glanced over at the People's Place Library. The windows were alive with colour – fabric paintings by L'Arche artists filled the windows! On that morning, when I did not know how to be or share the light, grace was given and I was able to 'See the Light!'

'Recognising our need for one another' is part of our L'Arche identity. I hope there are times when I can be the light for others but, I know that I need others to share their light with me.

I need Eileen to remind me that 'everything will be okay if we take care of each other.' I need Kyle to joyfully sing along with the Rankins as he takes care of the office shredding. I need to see the joy in Heather's eyes as she tells me about her birthday and seeing her sister for the first time in a long time.

We do not shy away from lofty goals at L'Arche and we strive to be and share light in our world. I just need to remember to look around, 'See the Light!' and, my way shines brighter.

MY TIME AT L'ARCHE ANTIGONISH

Deborah Tewelde - Co-Op Student, University of Waterloo

I am a second-year student attending the University of Waterloo. This past fall I found myself looking for a co-op placement and, due to COVID-19 and the pandemic, I feared my options would be limited and scarce. I had never heard of L'Arche and was immediately pleased and drawn towards it after reading the Identity and Mission Statement.

My time at L'Arche Antigonish was spent at Jubilee House. This house is filled with playful jokes, movie nights, coffee and tea lovers and creativity. From my first evening spent at the house, I was greeted with Heather's beaming smile and genuine curiosity to get to know me. I was soon swooped away by Kelly taking down my phone number, Facebook and home address so that we could stay connected at all times. I soon witnessed Matthew's enthusiasm to help with anything and everything from dishes to setting up the table to peeling vegetables; he did it all cheerfully. With my time at Jubilee, I began to learn ASL. I quickly witnessed Christian's patience and grace while teaching me this new language while trying to understand each other. All the while, I got to know Elizabeth who was always checking up on me and had a genuine concern on how I was doing and adjusting. Although a majority of my time was spent at Jubilee House, because of the pandemic and safety precautions around visiting other houses, I was able to learn a new depth of mutual relationships. My experience here taught me vulnerability, getting to know people fully. Leaning on each other. Individually, we are different pieces, mere humans trying to get by, but together we make a whole, a community. It has been a lovely experience being a part of this community, being able to witness and accept the help, the embraces, the laughs, the practical jokes and the lessons the entire way. Through the many gifts present in each person to the caring hearts, this was a place of mutually transforming relationships.

Each person within this community comes with diverse backgrounds and experiences, enough stories and photo albums to last weeks. Through meeting different assistants and getting to know the core members even better, I was able to get to know a small portion of the deep history that comes from this community -- it has been a fulfilling experience.

In the early stages of finding a placement, I was worried about where I would find myself. Instead, I was very blessed to have found this community. Throughout this pandemic many things were cancelled and abrupted, despite the mandatory quarantine when first entering Nova Scotia and the altered way of living, being able to join this community and live life with everyone at L'Arche Antigonish has been the biggest blessing. Within my short time of 3 and a half months, I was able to form relationships that I will cherish forever.



MEET OUR ARTISTS

Lisa Leuschner

I like to dance, drum,
weave and paint.
I like it. I'm happy when I paint.
I think of water and waves
when I paint.
It feels good that
people see my art.

- Lisa



Alex Dearden

I like to paint.
I like the history of the Titanic.
The story makes me sad because a
lot of people died when the
Titanic sank.
I would like to go on a big boat
someday.

- Alex



SERVICE LEARNING 2.0

Service Learning at STFX has always been a two-way beneficial relationship with us at L'Arche. Most university students have not had many past friendships/relationships with people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Even in the school systems today there are few opportunities to learn together. Over the years, in our programs, we have had many service-learning students who have gone on to become volunteers and then long-time friends of the community.

We value the time to help the university students gain perspective on the positive impact our folks have on the community of Antigonish. One of my favourite things to do with the students is to have our folks teach them something. In the past this has been something like one of our Elizabeths teaching latch-hooking or Lisa and Christian teaching and then beating students in a group game of Skipbo. These face-to-face activities together are like little steps to change the world.

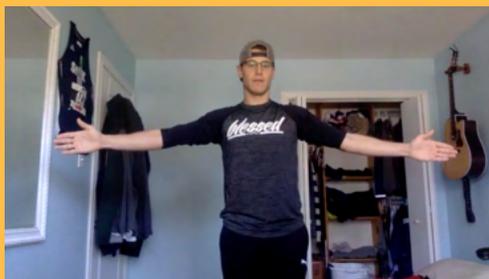
For the students, they gain experience of a marginalized group, and we have someone doing an activity with folks while we get something else on our to-do-list checked off. If the student goes on to become a volunteer, they get reference letters or post undergrad application support, and more valuable experience for a resumé. We also have help with knocking a few more things off our to-do lists. We have had students since I started at the program in 2012 who have become doctors, physiotherapists, nurses, parents, and even L'Arche assistants, in Antigonish and New Zealand.

This year, post-Covid, we have had to do things differently. Knowing that this was our one chance to reach some students, I felt a responsibility to do something to help out. I decided we could offer a few opportunities, with an exclusively online platform. In the fall term Christian and I taught a zoom beginner ASL class with 2 students, we had a student read a novel with Tim and Mark, and we had a great student Jordyn who sang and danced with Elaine. Then we had an internet upgrade, this made everything more reliable. For the winter term we had 2 more ASL students, a reader, a singer/dancer and an excellent well led exercise class with Isaac for Elizabeth and Heather.

Thinking outside the box here still worked well. Christian, Elaine, Heather, Elizabeth, Mark, and Tim had a bit more excitement in their day with different perspectives brought in, we will try for more ideas in the fall of 2021... I wonder if we could do a cooking class or yoga, the sky is the limit. Maybe we go back to in person time together, but I think we've learned a bit about our interdependence.



**Article written by:
Karen Stewart**



TIM'S BROWNIES

Gluten Free and Dairy Free!

Step 1: Preheat oven to 350F

Step 2: Mix ingredients into a blender and combine until smooth

Step 3: Pour into a 9 inch square pan lined with parchment

Step 4: Bake at 350F for 30 minutes

Step 5: Enjoy!

Ingredients:

- 1- 19 oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained;
- 3 eggs;
- 1/3 cup sunflower oil;
- 1/2 cup honey;
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract;
- 1/3 tsp gluten free baking powder;
- 1/2 tsp baking soda

Tablecloths

Napkins

Placemats

Food processor

Blender

Rice cooker

Karaoke machine

WISHLIST

Please e-mail
office@larcheantigonish.ca or
call 902-863-5000

SUMMER STARTED LATE THIS YEAR!

Rosemary Curry - L'Arche Antigonish Board Member

Summer started late this year! At least that is how it felt to me! But when it finally arrived, let me tell you, I was 100% committed to immersing myself in the experience. It was a special summer this year, late, but special. We came into it vaccinated and as restrictions eased we were able to gather in a different way. Family and friends were able to travel and join us and every moment felt precious. Every moment had an aura of gratitude attached to it. I, personally, am committed to maintaining my summer vibe until October, ocean dips and all! As committed as I am to this, I cannot deny what the fall brings; change and new beginnings. It shows us an abundance from our gardens and puts us in the headspace to ask what we need for the winter ahead. One thing that I find I need in the fall is to look at what is important to me and recommit, take stock, and ask myself how can I build upon these things and bring them to the next level?

The L'Arche community here in Antigonish is one of these important things. As I track my life with this community from student volunteer, to assistant, to program facilitator, and currently board member, I can easily speak to what my involvement with L'Arche Antigonish over the years has meant to me and what being welcomed into this community has done for my personal growth, my heart, and my world view. Something I am thinking about this fall season is how we have all dealt with extraordinary challenges during this pandemic. It's been hard to plan for what we want to see next in our lives, homes, and jobs, but this fall I have a feeling of hope and excitement for the future and specifically the future of this community! There is an energy afoot that feels like a new chapter, new ideas, and growth. I, for one, am excited to see what this year can bring to L'Arche Antigonish and I'm committed to being a part of that growth.

So I'll hang on to summer vibes for another few weeks and bask in the aura of gratitude, but I'm already ready to be 100% committed to immersing myself in an exciting new chapter with L'Arche Antigonish!

VACATION HIGHLIGHTS

Our community vacation was like a dream. It was meaningful to do something together. We did what we wanted to - what we liked and what would make us happy. We especially enjoyed watching a movie out! Leading up to going we watched all the trailers of possible movies and together chose Boss Baby! We were laughing and sad, touched at the same time through the big screen and at the end we were like children lost in our happiness. This vacation brought us closer together and built lasting memories that I will hold closely to my heart.
- Wendy Oh



I went on vacation with L'Arche. We went to River John . We left for vacation on my birthday July 28. July 28th is my Birthday. The core members I was on vacation with were Mary Eileen , Carol Anne, and Sachan. The assistants who went with us were, Hannah, Johannes, and Erin. My favourite part of the trip was the hot tub and the sheep farm. I liked the sheep farm because the lambs and sheep were very soft to touch . A lamb was trying to eat my crutches he ate a piece of moleskin off my crutches! Which was very funny he must have been hungry. I am looking forward to the adventures we will have on vacation next year. - Elizabeth Ablor



Our vacation went really well. It was perfectly organized and planned! We stayed home for the first few days and did some day trips including Wildlife Park where we were able to see animals. We also stayed in Cape Breton and did many activities around the island. We attended Bell museum and explored some beaches in Cape Breton National Park. We also went whale watching which was a highlight for our trip. Also, while in Cape Breton we went to see the Fortress of Louisbourg where we experienced a real cannon shooting! We spent a day in Sydney just exploring the waterfront. After returning from Cape Breton we stayed home for a few days and just took it easy as everyone was tired after so many activities done around the island. For the last two days of our vacation we went to the Valley and also attended Anne Murray Centre where Kelly wanted to go for ages! We wrapped up the trip with Matthew's favourite food - sushi (he was talking about it since I came here and finally it happened). - Dmytro Yakhvan



