

The Seven Calls of L'Arche

To announce the gift of people with developmental disabilities and to empower them to take their rightful place in our communities and societies.

To create flexible models in response to the needs and vulnerabilities of all community members and the needs of people with developmental disabilities in local cultures.

To encourage, support and sustain membership and commitment of new and long term members.

To foster an environment where we can live out in our daily lives our identity as communities of faith.

To integrate and harmonize our faith, community and professional lives.

To be fully involved in our culture, engaged in dialogue with it and to value and to bridge religious and cultural differences.

To announce and be a witness to the vision of our common humanity, i.e everyone is of unique and sacred value, and everyone has the same dignity and same rights.



“Community is not built upon heroic actions, but rather upon love shown in the little things of daily life.”

- Jean Vanier
Founder of L'Arche

Bridging The Distance

L'Arche communities recognize the beautiful diversity of cultures and religions within our world. But we're also acutely aware of the vast disparity in access to material resources.

We are thus called to promote understanding and interdependence among the countries and communities of L'Arche. We have launched programs to encourage greater solidarity and friendship between the communities of L'Arche. Through personal visits, assistant exchanges, meetings, prayer and financial support, L'Arche Erie and the other communities in the Americas are growing in mutual understanding and relationship. We also seek to build relationships with other organizations that work to promote justice and unity in our world.

Relationships • Faith • Home



Share our spirit of welcome, unity and simplicity

Do you have an interest in living and working with people with disabilities? Do you have a desire to get to know yourself better? Or do you want to contribute to nurturing new signs of hope in our world?

If so, opportunities abound for you at L'Arche Erie. Become an assistant. Volunteer at one of our eight homes. Make a tax deductible donation. However you are involved, you can make a difference and form new, life-transforming friendships.

The time I spent in L'Arche Erie had a great effect on me, and this effect will last an entire lifetime. I went from being extremely nervous on the first day to 100% comfortable introducing myself to different core members I had not yet met. I attribute this confidence to your welcoming attitude and I thank you so much”.

- Kevin Foley
volunteer from Marquette University

**A faith-based
community
where life is shared
between people
with and without
intellectual disabilities**



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L'Arche: Celebrating the Gifts of all People

In 1963, philosopher and spiritual leader Jean Vanier visited a friend who was working as a chaplain at a small French institution for men with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In this and other larger institutions, Vanier witnessed a deep hunger for friendship among the men and women residing there, shut away from society.

Vanier was so moved by these experiences that, in 1964, he bought a house in a small village and invited two men from institutions to live with him. The house was named L'Arche, which means "the ark" in French and embodies a place of belonging and hope, grounded in faith and trust in God.

Since then, L'Arche has grown into an international movement. With more than 135 communities in 36 countries, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those without disabilities live and work together. These remarkable communities are signs of hope where:

- ◆ People are welcomed, celebrated and encouraged to grow as human beings.
- ◆ People are transformed through mutual friendship with others.
- ◆ Justice, compassion and faith are practiced in the smallest acts of daily living.



Relationships • Faith • Home



Relationship

Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of every L'Arche community. The call to welcome God's love for ourselves and to joyfully share it with others inspires everything we do.

In L'Arche, venerability and imperfections are not viewed as obstacles, but rather catalysts to strong, nurturing relationships. L'Arche communities reflect the reality that persons with disabilities often possess inherent qualities of welcome, wonderment, spirituality and friendship.

An extraordinary concept in our fast-paced and consumer-driven society, L'Arche believes that these qualities can make people with a disability our true teachers about what is most important in life: to love and to be loved.

The Mission of L'Arche

- ◆ To make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- ◆ To foster community that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and responds to the changing needs of our members.
- ◆ To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.

Living Essential Values of the Heart

L'Arche first came to the United States in 1972 with the opening of a L'Arche home in Erie, PA. As part of the International Federation, L'Arche in the US has now grown to sixteen communities across the country, with others in development. In each of these communities, made up of family-like homes and work or day programs, core members - people with intellectual and developmental disabilities live side-by-side with assistants, enjoying a life that is both simple and transforming.

When I came to L'Arche at age 21, I had no idea who I was or who my friends were. I was definitely lost. Finding L'Arche was my saving grace. Within the Bethany home I found peace, acceptance, friends, family and a husband. The relationships that I began building gave me a new path. I became a better person, a better mother, a better friend. I became a leader and an optimist. I was given back the dignity and hope that I didn't even know I had lost. The thing about L'Arche Erie is most people seem to find it when they are most broken (the assistants as well as the core members). Somehow though, through this common bond, we help each other heal and become better people.

- Nikki Lavery
former assistant and friend

