

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

larchesaintjohn.org





STATEMENT

We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation. Mutual relationships are at the heart of our journey together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need of one another.

Our mission is to...

- Make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.
- Foster an environment in community that responds to the changing needs of our members, whilst being faithful to the core values of our founding story.
- Engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society.



Friends,

This year marked a very important milestone for L'Arche Saint John - we launched our brand new supported independent living program, L'Arche Connects.

This is exciting, and important, on a number of fronts. With this program, we are privileged to help four adults with intellectual disabilities live on their own, in most cases for the very first time.

Do you remember the excitement and the freedom that came from moving out on your own? I'll never forget it.

These L'Arche Connects members will each have an apartment of their own in The Wellington, a brand new apartment building uptown owned by Saint John Non Profit Housing while receiving services and support from L'Arche.

This is our second housing venture - the first, of course, being McKim House on the west side of Saint John where five core members live their lives with three assistants. McKim House, which recently celebrated its 18th anniversary, is a true success story in shared living - if you've ever visited McKim, you will have witnessed the care, joy and love that makes this house a home.

With L'Arche Connects, we're nearly doubling our housing support. Just as important is the outreach component of the program. We will be working with another 20 adults with intellectual disabilities and their families to help prepare them for independent living.

As we've undertaken this exciting journey, we were fortunate to work with three very important partners: the Department of Social Development, Inclusion NB and Saint John Non Profit Housing. All three have provided instrumental support and encouragement, and I thank them for their commitment.

We also could not undertake this kind of growth without the support of our generous donors.

About half of our budget every year depends on individuals, foundations and organizations who believe in what we do. Your gifts to us help foster a more inclusive city, a more inclusive society.

As exciting as this growth is for us today, we are all too aware of the need for more. Families turn to us, wanting their loved one to have a place in L'Arche Saint John. With heavy hearts, we have to say we have no room.

But we're working hard to change that. We're in talks with the provincial government, seeking a more sustainable funding model that will allow us to grow to help meet that need.

We'd not only like to see L'Arche grow in Saint John, but take root throughout the province.

We've established the L'Arche Brighter Futures Fund through the Greater Saint John Community Foundation. We seek to significantly grow this endowment fund so every year, its proceeds will help fund that growth.

We've invested in growing our fundraising efforts and partnerships. Not even three years ago, we hired our first community development co-ordinator, who has propelled us forward in ways we could not have imagined.

Right to left: Adrian and Katie take the stage at Government House, Stéphane performs at Songs from the Back Deck, Art hangs on display at Government House



And today, she is our new community leader: Rachel Vander Vennen was chosen to replace Zoël Breau, our community leader for the last five years. Zoël has devoted more than four decades of his life serving L'Arche around the world, and I am so thankful for the passion and commitment he brought to our community.

We are fortunate to have a leader of Rachel's calibre – and care – step up as we continue to build a more inclusive society, sharing the gifts and talents of those with intellectual disabilities.

None of the successes we have achieved this year would have been possible without the truly extraordinary commitment of our program leaders, assistants and volunteers. They are the essence of our success. Bravo, and thank you.

It's also true that it could not have been possible without our supporters. Without you, we would have no McKim House, no Creative Connections art program, no L'Arche Connects. Without you, we could not aspire to grow or dream of a more inclusive community.

Together, we can turn our dreams into reality.

Sincerely,





Community is a verb - ever-changing, ebbing and flowing like the tide.

The past year at L'Arche Saint John was certainly full of ebb and flow. We were presented with new and, at times, difficult challenges, juxtaposed by moments and opportunities of true beauty and brilliance. These tides of growth, transition, opportunities, welcome and farewells challenged us to grow into what I believe to be a more resilient community.

If community is a verb, then it is shaped by those who make up the fabric of it. We bid farewell to some long-term members of our community, including our bookkeeper, BJ Blanchard, who was committed to her role since our inception in 2005, Victoria Woods, and our executive director and community leader of five years, Zoël Breau.

While goodbyes can be difficult, we took great joy in welcoming – and in some cases, re-welcoming – folks into our community. In the past year, we were happy to celebrate new core members and assistants across the organization, bringing with them new energy, ideas and opportunities for lifelong friendships. L'Arche transforms lives, often influencing future paths and careers. It is a privilege to witness this transformation in core members and assistants alike.

With Zoël's departure in spring 2023, it was my great honour to be selected as the new community leader. It's a role I intend on carrying with great care and enthusiasm in the coming years as our deeply committed board of directors and I continue, following Zoël's lead, to pursue opportunities for sustainable growth that is so needed in our province.

None of this would be possible without the support from you, our friends, volunteers and donors. Whether you attended our sold-out Building Community dinner gala, sang with us during our Songs From the Back Deck concert, delivered dinner to McKim House during our battle with COVID, or purchased art at our Togetherness-Ensemble art exhibition at Government House – and so much more – thank you. Your support makes these meaningful, life-transforming relationships possible, helping to build a brighter future with adults with intellectual disabilities.

Indeed, at the core of our community are our core members – members with intellectual disabilities at McKim House, Creative Connections and L'Arche Connects. They guide our priorities, processes and opportunities, shaping our community and greater society into one where disabled folks are invited to the table to share their voice in a meaningful way.

As I look ahead to the coming year, I am optimistic and grateful. We have strong leaders, dedicated volunteers and voices of lived experience around our table guiding us. And, with your continued support, we are in good hands. Together, let's build a future where people with disabilities are celebrated for their gifts and contributions.

With gratitude,

Rachel Vander Vennen

Community Leader/Executive Director

Stéphane and Rachel working in the garden.



Looking back over the past twelve months of McKim House reflects on a time of big transition and change. New faces have joined us whom we have come to love, while other people we love have departed, but for as many times of hardship there are bright memories of adventures and inside jokes.

Last summer was a glowing era which McKIm House core members remember fondly. Favourite memories include volunteering with Elder Dog for Patrick and Sarah, and spending a week at Hampton Bible Camp for Stephane and Patrick. It was a summer of music and garden parties, most notably the Songs from the Back Deck concert coordinated by former assistant, Luke Trainor, in memory of Kristina, a late core member. One big highlight was the house holiday to Berwick, as well as a group trip to Halifax.

As the fall rolled around it was difficult to say goodbye to our much appreciated summer staff: Cameron, Allie, Andrew and Jenna. Around the same time, our big fundraising gala, Building Community, hosted at the Delta Hotel, provided a welcome opportunity for everyone to dress to the nines, come together, do speeches and win cool prizes!

The fall also marked when Adrian moved to McKim House full-time after a period of transition in previous months. Patrick and Greer attended the Prayer Partners retreat at Villa Madonna. Stone Church hosted a coffee house where Pat performed. The house said goodbye to Megan and Janet, and Sara transitioned from her role as house leader back into a casual assistant role. During a time of assistant shortages, McKim House members displayed strength and resilience in navigating through and there is much gratitude to everyone who helped ensure each day transitioned as smoothly as possible into the next. This season ended with the annual McKimmas tradition (Christmas at McKim House), around which time Edrine arrived from Uganda as a full time live-in assistant.

The new year brought along the beginning of a new era with a full time team. I moved in as a house leader and Susan and Edrine as house assistants. This brought along a sense of stability, bringing new life into house traditions such as weekly community reflections on Sunday nights often led by Jennifer, Greer, Brandon or Edrine. Evenings were filled with Special Olympics sports from bowling to floor hockey to basketball and swimming. Adrian even attended two Special Olympics Provincial tournaments! Old friends who'd drifted away during the pandemic such as Charlene and her faithful therapy dog KC returned on a weekly basis, and Patrick became the proud Godfather to Denise's new puppy called Islay. We attended a L'Arche Regional Meeting in Truro where we got to catch up with old friends. The upstairs of McKim House was freshened up with a new coat of robin egg blue paint and new flooring was installed thanks to generous funding from United Commercial Travellers. Adventures were had from gallery hops uptown to beach walks and picnics, to day trips to Saint Andrews and Fredericton.

There were also losses that were hard to swallow, such as Victoria's exit plus Zoel's departure to L'Arche in Montreal, but these blows were softened by seeing Rachel taking on the community leader role and getting to welcome new summer staff for the house and in the other

coordinator positions. Indeed, welcoming these new faces feels like the beginning of yet another season... summer! Patrick, Edrine, Stéphane, Adrian and I are

busy planning for their week in Quebec City where they're doing a house swap with a L'Arche home there. Krista has big summer holiday plans with Gray. Meanwhile Sarah is keeping busy and entertained by finding humor in the ridiculous, from screwdrivers to gurgling baby yoda dolls, to anything oddly out of place... as well as musing over

the mischief of her siblings, of course.

Life at McKim House is so simple while being busy, as rich in friendship and laughter as it is in resilience to roll with the punches. As seasons come and go, so do the joys and tragedies which are shared by each member of McKim House.

Islay Purcell

McKim House Leader

Right to left: Krista holds a cup of hot chocolate, Islay Adrian and Stéphane, Adrian presents artwork to Port Saint John





Sharing and celebrating the gifts and talents of people with disabilities is essential to our community.

This spring I asked one of our artists, Warren, what the most important thing about Creative Connections is for him. He knew right away, answering without hesitation:

"I can be myself."

I think about Warren's answer nearly everyday.

Creative Connections is a reflection of the gifts, passions, and needs of our members. As the world and our artists have grown, changed, and evolved, so have we. This year we have seen new talent bloom, heard new voices speaking up, and laughed harder than ever. As we gather to create, there is room at the table for each of us to be ourselves- just as Warren says.

This past year offered new opportunities for our artists to share about their work and wisdom regarding accessibility in the arts at the Arts Atlantic Symposium, and Third Shift Festival. Along with Sculpture Saint John, we taught skills and inclusivity to art instructors from the Anglophone South School District. Being respected and listened to is an important part of the confidence we see in our artists. Krista often tells visitors, "I am an Artist. People love my art."

The work of our artists connected with patrons and supporters online and close to home. Postcards created by Creative Connections were sold in the container village at Port Saint John's Port Pod. Artists participated in "Creative Melody," an online art show featuring art from other L'Arche communities across the Atlantic region, as well as through festivals and symposium sessions.

The largest show of the year came at the invitation of the Lieutenant Governor. "Togetherness-Ensemble" was showcased at Government House in Fredericton and celebrated the work of artists from both L'Arche Saint John and L'Arche Fredericton. It was a smashing success.

For many artists, like Patrick, the highlight of the year was spending time in the garden. Patrick says, "Gardening is relaxing. When it's sunny out it's like being at the beach. I can see the port and all the ships on the move. I can hear trains and dogs. It feels very good. If we have vegetables we can eat them and we always have flowers and I helped to pick them out and plant them!"

In our garden project, program participants learn gardening skills and teamwork while significantly benefiting from time in nature. Looking ahead, work has begun to make the garden more accessible.

Along with time spent in our garden, building positive mental health strategies have become a valued part of the Creative Connections program. Stretching, chair yoga, and meditative breathing help to build self regulation and boost overall health.

We are privileged to be a part of a wider community of organizations and professional artists who make space for the artists of Creative Connections and work together for a more inclusive world. We built new connections through a Disability/Rainbow Pride

Beach Party with Chromans. The Saint John Arts Centre led us in a screen

printing intensive course.

Our artists worked in varied media including, screen printing, collage, acrylics, textiles, water colour, and sculpture. Thanks to your donations, Creative Connections is able to operate and enrich the lives of our Artists. We are looking forward to another year of creativity and community.

Right to left: Jenn and Gray cut and glue paper, Danielle shows off a sunflower drawing, colourful art hangs on display



PROGRAM REPORT: L'ARCHE CONNECTS



It is a very exciting time for L'Arche Saint John with the launch of our newest program, L'Arche Connects, an independent living model of support to adults with intellectual disabilities.

As Dave previously described in the president's report, L'Arche Connects supports four adults with intellectual disabilities, or core members, to move into and live in apartments of their own. L'Arche supports them to grow in independence and thrive in the greater community.

In the past year, significant groundwork was laid to launch the program. Milestones included allocating a full-time position to developing the program, selecting and building relationships with four adults with intellectual disabilities as core members of the program, and nurturing collaborative partnerships with Saint John Non Profit Housing, Inclusion NB and the Department of Social Development to make this pilot project a success.

The apartments are located in The Wellington, a state-of-the-art new build with mixed income units located in the heart of uptown Saint John and built by Saint John Non Profit Housing. Although the projected move-in date was early 2023, building and permit delays have delayed that timeline. We anticipate the units to be ready for occupancy in summer 2023.

In the meantime, we have worked closely with core members and their families to build relationships, draft transition plans and dream about what life will be like in an apartment of their own – in some cases, for the first time in their lives. Our thanks to Inclusion NB, partners on this program, for their support in navigating this new model of support for our community.

Recently, I asked members of the program, Warren, Shawna, April and Kathryn what they are most excited for about the transition. Common themes were, as Kathryn articulated, "being in a new place and having a fresh start," and being "alone in a place I can call my own." Demonstrating abilities was also important, such as what Shawna described as most exciting: "For people to see we have a disability but that doesn't stop us from our abilities." Warren is excited that the building is wheelchair accessible, so everyone is welcome, "and specifically my girlfriend."

While this model of support is based on independent living, there is an important component of building a community network of support around core members. This is important for April, who is excited to navigate a new chapter of independence yet alongside the support of new friends – she is excited to be able to "joke around and play games to get to know one another."

By fall, we will initiate the outreach component of the program, which will extend social support to an additional 20 adults with intellectual disabilities in the region. We look forward to growing our community circle and witnessing growth in friendships, skills and confidence!

I was excited to take on the leadership of this program in late spring 2023 and look forward to watching our core members thrive. A big thanks to Catherine and Gray for their committed work on this program, particularly in spring 2023, as well as Denise and Fiona's ongoing support.



REPORT FROM THE TREASURER



It is my pleasure to provide you with your 2022–2023 year end treasurer's report. This report is based on L'Arche Saint John's internal financial statements as of March 31, 2023 as our audited statements were not available at the time of this annual report.

L'Arche Saint John's balance sheet has grown again this year by \$30,417 for total assets of \$410,125. Liabilities remained relatively flat, increasing by only \$484 for total liabilities of \$101,534. This makes our net asset value for the year \$308,591. Note that current liabilities reflect a Canadian Emergency Business Account loan in the amount of \$40,000 that will be repaid in full by Dec. 31, 2023.

L'Arche Saint John income was higher than anticipated again this year with total revenues \$643,220 against a budget income of \$601,202. As we often see with the increase in revenues comes an increase in expenses, also more than budgeted for a total \$639,275. At the end of the year, we recorded a modest net income of \$3,944. I would like to thank everyone at McKim House and Creative Connections for doing a great job at keeping expenses down, which is not an easy task these days.

Our Brighter Futures Fund with the Greater Saint John Community Foundation, launched in 2021, was initiated to help with our goal to create long-term sustainable funding for L'Arche Saint John. This fund brought us income last year of over \$3,000 and we are looking forward to seeing this grow more in the years to come. As at the end of March, the balance of \$190,915.

L'Arche Saint John also has held some fantastic fundraisers again this year such as GivingTuesday, Battle of the Fans, Memorial Cup Ticket Raffle and Support our Artists. All of these fundraisers take a lot of time and effort to put together and I would like to thank the staff and fundraising committee who make these happen. Without events like these, L'Arche Saint John would not be able to provide the same level of support to the community.

I cannot talk about fundraisers without highlighting the huge success of our Building Community event with special guest Marcel LeBrun, which was held this past fall. This event raised over \$30,000 and brought a tremendous amount of awareness and publicity to the organization which will serve the community well for years to come. A special thank you to volunteers Wayne Cooper and Moira Wilson for taking the lead to organize this as well as the many, many hands it took to pull this amazing event together.

We need to build on the momentum of these great events. L'Arche Saint John currently receives just over 50% of the income needed in government funding. Although funding has increased over the years, so too have the operational costs. There is approximately a \$22,000 deficit every month between what is needed to operate L'Arche Saint John and what the government provides. Each year we need to raise over \$250,000 through other funding options such as donations, fundraising, art sales and applying for grants. This takes a lot of diligence and hard work from all involved. On behalf of the board, I would like to thank everyone for their efforts over the past year. The resilience and dedication from the L'Arche Saint John employees, board and community is outstanding.

This will conclude my last year as your board treasurer. I want to say what a pleasure and honour it has been to serve on the L'Arche Saint John board. I have taken more away from this experience than I could have ever given and I am so grateful for having been part of this organization for the past six years. Although I will no longer be on the board, I will still be part of the L'Arche Saint John community, and I will continue to support L'Arche anyway I can. Thank you to the board, staff and entire L'Arche community for your support!





BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dave Stonehouse

President & Chair of the Board

Tonya Coleman

Vice-President & Secretary

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Treasurer

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Director

Jake Robinson

Director

Dustin Leclerc

Director

Connie Dunnett

Director

Bernadette Fernandes

Director

Moira Wilson

Director

Mike Doherty

Director

Total Revenues: \$643,221



Government Funding: 56%

Donations: 31%

Grants: 12%

Other: 1.5%

Total Expenses: \$639,276

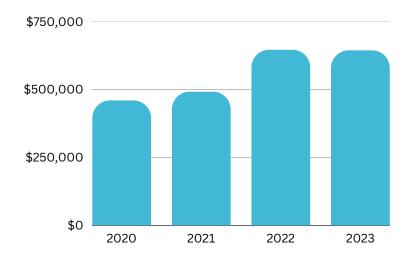
Program Services: 70%

Administration: 11%

Fundraising: 19%

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Annual Income Trends



Please note that the numbers reflected in this Financial Snapshot are based on unaudited financial statements. These numbers will be finalized upon completion of the audit.

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS!



Thanks to your support, Saint John is a more inclusive city for adults with intellectual disabilities.

While core members are at the centre of L'Arche life, you, our community and supporters, are the backbone of our community. With your support, we look to the coming years with hope – and a vision to grow our community to reach more adults with intellectual disabilities in Saint John.



MAKEA LASTING IMPACT

- CREATE A LEGACY GIFT by supporting the L'Arche Saint John Brighter Futures Endowment Fund.
- **BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR** to help us plan for the future.

Contact our Community Development Coordinator, Kristen, at kristen@larchesaintjohn.org.

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