

L'Arche Winnipeg, Incorporated Backgrounder

What Is L'Arche?

L'Arche is a non-profit faith-based organization, which creates homes where people with developmental disabilities and volunteer assistants live, work and share their lives together every day in an atmosphere of love and belonging. Our purpose is to create homes that encourage and honour the unique gifts of each person and to live faithful relationships in community as a sign of hope and love to the world around us. As in a family, members are given a lifetime home. They live a simple life-style, where relationships are the priority and are based on forgiveness and celebration.

History of L'Arche

In 1964, Jean Vanier, son of the former Governor General of Canada, with the support of his spiritual director Father Thomas Phillippe, invited two men with a developmental disability, Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux, to live with him in an old house in the French village of Trosly-Breuil. He named the house L'Arche, meaning "ark" in French, and gradually welcomed more men and women with developmental disabilities, as well as assistants who would live and work with them. People all over the world became inspired by his work. Others, like Jean, decided to establish similar homes and commit their lives to living with people with developmental disabilities. These humble beginnings grew into an international movement.

With Vanier's simple invitation, the Journey of L'Arche was launched. Over the years, L'Arche has grown to 149 communities in 39 countries around the world, and 29 communities in Canada. It is an ecumenical family of communities creating homes for over 2,700 people with development disabilities and 2,000 assistants.

L'Arche in Winnipeg

L'Arche Winnipeg was founded in 1973 with three people and one assistant in its first home on Rosseau Avenue, donated by the Oblate Sisters. Today, L'Arche Winnipeg operates six homes and two independent living apartments, supporting 28 members with intellectual disabilities and 25+ assistants serving in homes.

Those with a disability have come to us from either institutions or from their families. Our volunteer assistants come from around the world and for a myriad of reasons. They commit to life in a L'Arche community for a certain time frame, often starting with 6 months to a year. They are given room and board and a monthly stipend to cover their basic needs. L'Arche is often referred to as the "school of the heart" by assistants.

The L'Arche community is strongly rooted in Winnipeg with long term relationships and support coming from churches of various denominations, local businesses, other service agencies, and committed volunteers. The majority of funding comes from Manitoba Family Services and Housing. However, to ensure the high quality of services about \$72,000 of the annual budget must be raised through fundraising activities. Fundraising is also necessary to cover the costs of capital projects like vehicles, homes and more.

The Identity and Mission of L'Arche Winnipeg

Identity Statement

**We are people with and without intellectual disabilities*,
sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation.
Mutual relationships and trust in God 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**

* We invite you to substitute the terms with those that are accepted in your country

For more information, you can contact:

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