

L'ARCHE SYRACUSE

Creating a World Where Everyone Belongs



**SAMUEL & BRAD
LEADING PRAYER
TOGETHER**

NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 2 – Executive Director's Column
- 3 – Mary Collene Sinnott's Column
- 4 – Lydia DeMoss's column
 - Capital Improvements at highland
- 5 – Volunteer experiences
 - L'Arche Syracuse gets its own video
- 6 – Community picnic
 - Day hab gets creative with cryptids
- 7 -- Pastoral Minister's Column
- 8 -- Community highlights
- 9 -- Upcoming events & opportunities for community

A COLUMN FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Knechtle, Executive Director

What we live each day, welcoming, affirming, sharing life together, is badly needed today in our deeply divided society. Why? Because drawing close to and recognizing the gifts of those who are different from us, transforms us and builds a sense of belonging.

Although judging people from a distance may help keep our ideology alive, drawing close to each other gives us a chance to keep our humanity alive. Core members are way ahead of most of us in welcoming and drawing close to others regardless of race, religion, political affiliation, status, and all the other ways we build walls of separation and denigrate the other.

Two government inspectors who have spent their careers reviewing provider homes in CNY told me separately that if they had a family member in need of a home, they would want that family member to come to L'Arche. When I asked why, they both gave the same answer. Because L'Arche is not an institution, but a home and a family, not a bunch of distant professional relationships between the server and the served, but loving relationships in which the barriers between those with and without disabilities are lowered.

Recognizing everyone's contribution to the community, those employed and those not employed by the community, creates an atmosphere of partnership and collaboration, and begins to level the playing field so that everyone feels empowered. When you constantly do things for others, you prevent them from developing their own skills, confidence and independence. The person doing the work can experience burnout or resentment over time, especially if their efforts aren't acknowledged or appreciated.

"Doing with" empowers and builds the capacity of all involved. When everyone is engaged, there is shared ownership in the outcome which strengthens commitment and motivation. "Doing with" operates on a foundation of mutual respect and acknowledges the inherent worth and contribution of everyone involved.

While sharing time at Croyden recently, I told Patty I was going outside to trim branches that were up against the house. I didn't ask her to join me because I wasn't sure what she could do. She didn't miss a beat and said, "John, I am coming with you." So we walked out together and she sat on the wall next to where I was cutting bushes and trees and she pulled weeds. We bonded talking and working together, while making the property more attractive.

Her quiet presence calmed me and her dedication to work inspired me. She taught me again how "being with" and "doing with", trumps the alternative.



HERALDING HAROLD... A LIGHT-BEARER OF HOSPITALITY

By Mary Colleen Sinnott

There are some blessed moments in life when heaven's light comes crashing through into our world and leaves us forever changed. My first connection to L'Arche through a core member was such a moment... It was 1983. My youngest child was 2, my oldest 5 and the middle one 3 ½. I was working part-time as a special ed teacher, my husband was frequently out of town with his work and my father was in and out of the hospital. And, I was exhausted... feeling quite unmoored as I ran from one situation to another. A friend suggested I go to the newly opened Spiritual Renewal Center for spiritual direction. I couldn't imagine what anyone could say to me that would ease my stress, but I knew something had to change.

I met with the director, Jim Krisher, and after hearing my story he encouraged me to visit the L'Arche James Street Community and gave me their number. I called and was warmly invited by the founders Doug and Perry to come and meet the community. A date was set for the next week, and I continued whirling in my chaos, to the point that I almost missed the meeting... but God had someone waiting for me...

It was a cold, windy November day. I trudged up the walkway to the front door and rang the bell. I heard heavy, slow footsteps come to the door which slowly opened and there stood Harold, welcoming me with a big bear hug and a quick question, "Coffee?" He pointed to a chair and soon a steaming hot mug of (very sugared!) brew was set before me. Then Harold and I sat together, content to exchange a few niceties, but mostly in a deeply companioned silence. I felt like I was being held in the palms of God's hands. The care, incredible presence and unconditional love Harold offered me was the cure for my angst. I have never forgotten that moment, that hug of hospitality so generously



bestowed on me. It has become my 'pocket first-aid'... I pull that memory out when life starts swirling, then I am taken right back to Harold again,,, with much gratitude.

I could write volumes about L'Arche. My forty years of experiencing myriad relationships within the community have gifted me over and over again. But, it was that first moment with

Harold that took my heart and changed me forever. Together we are better, we are L'Arche... Thank you my dear friend Harold for showing me the way.

GROWING IN FRIENDSHIP

By Lydia DeMoss

Lydia was an assistant from 2022-2024, and despite moving to Chicago has maintained a strong friendship with the core members.

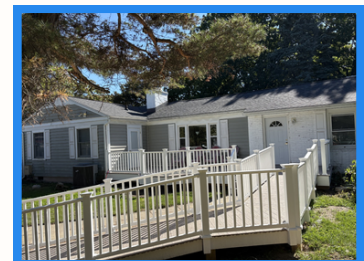
Craig has called me a lot of things throughout our friendship: nice, silly, “losing my marbles”, friend, best friend. I knew from the start we would get along well when we each moved into Highland House on the same day with our bedrooms adjacent. We seemed to understand each other very well. Even so, Craig surprised me one evening when he called me something new. He said confidently, “you’re my angel – my guardian angel!” Then, he let me know, “when I die, Lydia, then I will be yours”.

Craig has taught me a lot about friendship, and on this day, he reminded me that friendships are a touching mixture of giving and receiving. We have grown to be so close simply because we care for each other. Even today, my best friend Craig and I make time every Monday to talk on the phone because we want to keep investing in each other. I’m honored that Craig wants this friendship to last beyond this lifetime, too!



HIGHLAND RECEIVES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

For anyone who has visited our Highland Home, the porch is arguably the best gathering spot. In the morning the sun is squarely beaming onto the porch, and in the evening there is the perfect amount of shade. However, as the years have gone on the porch has aged with it. In an effort to make it a more welcoming place a new contractor was hired and a brand new porch built! The Highland porch can once again be a wonderful place for a variety of different community gatherings. Capital improvements like this are a blessing as they give us the renewed physical structures for greater community gatherings.



VOLUNTEERS FLOOD HOMES

Community at its core is about relationship. Our relationships with one another is what gives us meaning in our everyday lives. One way we've been blessed in the past quarter is with a flood of volunteers. In partnership with the Brady Faith Center, L'Arche Syracuse welcomed groups from St Joes Preparatory in Philadelphia, BC High School in Boston, the Brady Faith Center & from All Saints Catholic Church in Syracuse. Volunteers are the lifeblood that sustain us, making us known to greater Syracuse.



INTERESTED IN
VOLUNTEERING?



GROUPS FROM THE BRADY FAITH CENTER NOT ONLY PARTICIPATED
IN SERVICE PROJECTS BUT IN TUESDAY PRAYER AS WELL



IN ORDER, SAMUEL, AMY, & ¾ OF CROYDEN BEING INTERVIEWED

L'ARCHE GETS A VIDEO

As L'Arche grows in presence in Syracuse through volunteer partnerships, a little bit of 21st century tech certainly levels the playing field. In September L'Arche Syracuse was proud to start the production phase of multiple new videos to introduce our community to the internet. In the first round of interviews roughly a dozen community members were interviewed, and more footage is to be shot at our upcoming October potluck. The video will premier at the Brady Faith Center's "God Love Ya" awards on October 26th, where L'Arche is accepting an award for our community service. Afterwards it will be available on social media platforms. Be sure to keep your eyes posted!

COMMUNITY PICNIC 2025

During the summer we have the pleasure of gathering together year after year to celebrate. To welcome those who have come, to celebrate those who have stayed, and to reflect on those we have lost. This year was no exception, with the Sandpiper Shelter at Jamesville Beach. We were packed to the brim with community members, friends & family.

We were blessed to celebrate the following anniversaries at this years picnic:

5 years: Brian Powers & John Knechtle

10 years: Paola Murgia

15 years: Ian Nordmark & Zach Holloway

20 years: Matt Barnett

25 years: Tony LoBello & Patty Stapleton



DAY HAB GETS CREATIVE

As Shannon Gannoe has taken over the day hab in the recent months, she has put her creative talents to work with themed months. Our day hab recently spent all of September focusing on Cryptids. With the help of day hab assistant Dominic a bigger than life Sasquatch was constructed with core member assisting in its creation. As the summer has wrapped up the community also has sought to take advantage of the natural scenery, especially at Green Lakes State Park and at Onondaga Lake Park. It has been a summer of fun!



OUR BELOVED TED FOX AT GREEN LAKES & OUR SASQUATCH PORTRAIT

RECEIVING AND PROCLAIMING LOVE IN COMMUNITY

By Samuel Thomas, Pastoral Minister

To be a pastoral minister in L'Arche can often feel like being a tusked elephant: life is slow and there aren't as many of you around as their used to be. As far as I am aware, I am privileged to be the only full time pastoral minister within a L'Arche community in the United States. There used to be so many that in the 1990s a volume was put together entitled 'the priest in L'Arche' Those days are no longer the norm.

I ardently believe that the core of my role in L'Arche is to announce the comfort of the good news in community and to equally receive that comfort from the community. Being in L'Arche means being surrounded by people in their truest form – not the perfect version, not the best version, but simply oneself with all the



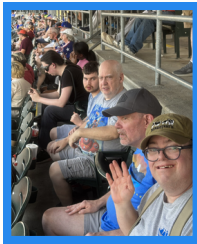
faults, insecurities, and hang-ups that come with being human. As we deal with the impending death of loved ones, as we deal with hurt, and as we deal with growing pains of community, we know that God has given us a community to be loved by. People are neurotic at times, and we will all tear our hair out about something we were subjected to (and certainly other times it will be people tearing their hair out about ourselves!). God has given the church and L'Arche as vehicles to rage against the injustice of the world, to be a place of love.

There is a real tangible feeling of being loved in community. While not every core member is articulate in the traditional sense, they echo their love in a multiplicity of ways. The image above of our own Tim and Chris, two people who have limited speech, embody this. While they cannot say "I love you, and I am here for you" they still demonstrate the love of community, holding hands to pass the peace of Christ and love to one another in their joy and in their anguish. We are called to be like this.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

This summer our community has been all over! See below for some of the experiences photographed this Summer:

- The summer kicked off with a Syracuse Mets game
- Core members hit Green Lakes and Onondaga Lake Park this summer
- Various community members were interviewed for our promotional video
- Galster home & the Pastoral Minister attended the Syracuse Orchestra's opening Summer concert series
- Volunteers from Philadelphia, Syracuse, and Boston made their way to serve with us
- Tuesday prayer continued with a variety of musicians assisting us
- Day hab participated in designing cryptid-inspired pieces for the community
- The community picnic happened at Jamesville Beach in stunning weather
- Assistants meetings continued at the Park Central Presbyterian Church
- Beloved friend of the community Lydia DeMoss returned to vacation in the community



UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

Fall Clean up for Highland & Cleveland Houses - 11.01

Join us from 9:00A-12:00P for a time of renewing our properties as we clean up leaves, clean out garages, and work alongside one another in the beautiful fall weather.

Monthly Potluck- 11.11

Join us at 1228 Teall Ave on Tuesday, November 11 from 5:30p-7:00p for our monthly potluck. Join in for great food, community, and prayer.

L'Arche Advent Service- 12.02

Join us at 1228 Teall Ave on Tuesday, December 2 from 5:00p-7:30p for our annual advent service filled with singing & reflection followed by our potluck dinner.

L'Arche Taize retreat - 12.29

Come dwell in unity as L'Arche walks through Taize practices, followed by pizza for all. Come join us at Park Central Presbyterian Church from 10:00a to 2:00p.

BE IN COMMUNITY

Potluck fellowship

Join the community potluck the first Tuesday of every month at 5:30p at the Reformed Church of Syracuse, 1228 Teall Ave, Syracuse *November is the exception, with potluck on 11.11 because of local elections

Volunteer with us

Whether its bringing dinner, spending time with a home, offering your skills to make a home a better place - we'd love to have your support!

Join for a dinner

Of all L'Arche traditions, the nightly gathering around the dinner table for food, fellowship, & reflection is the most essential. We'd love to have you join a home.

**If you'd like to join us for any of the aforementioned opportunities, please email
pastoralminister@larchesyracuse.org**



L'Arche Syracuse - 920 Spencer St, Syracuse, NY 13204
larchesyracuse.org

