

# L'ARCHE SYRACUSE

Creating a World Where Everyone Belongs



## AMY ATTENDING A DAY HAB OUTING

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## A COLUMN FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

By John Knechtle, Executive Director

Community life, just like an individual's life, has both an inward and outward journey. This issue of our Community newsletter reports on our inward journey (Day of Reflection, Board Appreciation Dinner) and outward journey (Holy Cross Visit, visit to the Bruderhof, community outings). Both aspects are vital to a balanced and healthy journey that expresses God's love. However, the more we are called to speak of God's love, the more we need to deepen the knowledge of that love in our own hearts. The farther the outward journey takes us, the deeper the inward journey must be. Only when our roots are deep (below ground) can our fruits be abundant (above ground).

Deepening the knowledge of God's love requires reclaiming our chosenness. Long before any human being saw us, we are seen by God's loving eyes. Long before anyone heard us cry or laugh, we are heard by our God who even hears our sighs. In our world where we are surrounded by rejections, we have to keep unmasking the world for what it is: manipulative, controlling, power-hungry and, in the long run, destructive. We have to keep looking for people and places where our truth is spoken and where we are reminded of our deepest identity as the beloved. That is the truth we seek to speak in L'Arche by saying "thank you" to God for having chosen you, and "thank you" to all who remind you of your chosenness.



*Bedroom, by Vincent Van Gogh, 1889*

## A DAY IN THE LIFE OF DAY HAB

By Shannon Gannoe, Day Hab & Quality Assurance Coordinator

Each morning that we have Day Hab, our Core Members start to arrive between 9:30 and 10:00am. Depending on the day we have numerous fun filled activities and adventures planned. We try to incorporate their daily goals into each day whether it is making healthy food choices, practicing reading and writing, safety, and socializing and interacting with their friends.

Tuesday's are our busiest Day hab day. In the mornings when the weather is nice we try and get out into the community to various parks, the local duck pond, the Gifford zoo, and many other fun adventures. The first Tuesday of each month the Day Hab program goes bowling where they often run into some of their peers from other groups. After the mornings' happenings, we say a prayer and enjoy lunch together as a group. Tuesday afternoons are spent being creative – painting flower pots, making birthday and anniversary cards for the L'Arche community. We make fun things with all the various avenues of art. From clay, to stickers, and lots of paints and markers; getting hands on and into projects is a lot of fun for all.

On Wednesday's we have a smaller group that experiences more one on one time with the assistants. We work on goals in the morning or go on outings into the community. The afternoons are spent doing various art projects or puzzles and

sometimes we even watch a movie and enjoy music. We hope to add a "service to others" program into the day to help them find places that can be mutually beneficial to both business and Core Member.

Friday's are Movie Club Days. Each week we have a rotating list of which Core Member gets to pick a movie. Sometimes they have a movie picked out for quite awhile and sometimes they like to surprise their friends' last minute with their choice. Before the movie starts we read

reviews and rating online and guess whether the movie will be better or worse than what the website rates it. After each movie we give it a final score and see how well the movie is liked.

Day Hab is a fun time while still incorporating working on goals. We get input from each Core Member on places they'd like to go and projects they'd like to work on. The goal is to grow our program to five days a week with more core members served.





## L'ARCHE VENTURES TO THE BRUDERHOF

By Samuel Thomas, Pastoral Minister & John Knechtle, Executive Director

On the weekend of May 2 – 4, John, our Executive Director and Sam, our Pastoral Minister, visited the Woodcrest and Fox Hill Bruderhof communities in the Hudson Valley, New York. They went to thank them for sending ten assistants to L'Arche Syracuse over the past six years and to nurture our common bonds and mission. The Bruderhof is a Christian community in the Anabaptist tradition that was founded in Germany in 1920 by Eberhard Arnold. The Bruderhof seeks to live the Sermon on the Mount and early church practices of pacifism, peacemaking, a common purse, the proclamation of the gospel, and lifelong marriage. There are approximately 3,000 members living in 23 communities in seven countries.

The primary community visited, Woodcrest, is a rural community of roughly three hundred people living life together. During their trip they toured their farm, Rifton Equipment which builds adaptive equipment for people with disabilities (they have donated equipment to L'Arche), Community Playthings which makes high quality playground equipment for children, and Plough, their publishing house which has published articles and books by and about Henri Nouwen and other L'Arche members. John and Sam also visited The Mount Academy, their residential high school program housed in a former Roman Catholic seminary founded in 1907 by the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, to discuss gap year options for Academy graduates to come to L'Arche. The visit culminated with John giving a brief talk to the Woodcrest community during their Sunday morning service.

John and Sam encountered overwhelming hospitality and good company during their visit, not to mention excellent food and faith sharing. L'Arche is indebted to the Bruderhof and grateful for the relationship we have as both communities seek to build a more inclusive and just world.





## DAY OF REFLECTION: GROWING CLOSER TOGETHER

By Samuel Thomas, Pastoral Minister

Once a year, most L'Arche communities host a day of reflection – a day for the entire community to gather, reflect on the past year, and chart the future together under a common theme. This year we did not buck that trend! On May 20th our community gathered under the theme of growing closer.

Galster Home wrote an original short play, Croyden collaborated together to create a painting, Cleveland sung happy birthday and talked about celebration, and Highland created a board of community. After skits our community sat down for a community meal, and made candles together, reviving a long-lost tradition at L'Arche Syracuse. After candle making, we engaged in a community discussion on how to grow closer to not only each other but the Syracuse community at large. More songs followed this, and a game of 'this or that' was played to discern what exactly about community we liked in particular (namely, getting out of the house, going to day hab, spending long stretches of time together, and the season of summer). The day concluded with a final skit from the Support Team about all the parts of community in dance form and a sweet parting treat was prepared for all by the one and only Donna.

Thank you to everyone who pitched in for the day and made sure each person felt celebrated as part of our community! We cannot wait to see what Day of Reflection brings us in 2026!



## BOARD APPRECIATION

On June 3, the community gathered for the Board Appreciation Dinner at the Reformed Church to celebrate and thank our board members for their service to our community. Kay Scharoun, Elly Pearlman, Dave Lasda, Buster Melvin, Amy Davis, and Jeff Keeler were presented terracotta vases painted by core members in our Day Hab program and potted with Marigolds. Ray Ray's Catering by Kate provided the delicious pulled pork, salt potatoes, and salad and Peter Sinatra providing the upbeat music. It was a joyous time of celebration of the service that our board members commit themselves in safeguarding our community.

## COMMUNITY OUTINGS



As our community has gotten settled after the years of weathering the Coronavirus pandemic, we have realized a need that as a community lifeboat, we are not meant to wander the sea aimlessly but be discovered. Our community has realized the need to grow in community with our city. In response to this our Pastoral Minister, Samuel Thomas, his wife, Jennifer, and their two children have volunteered to donate their time and schedule monthly outings for the community. The group recently went out to see the Syracuse Mets clobber the Buffalo Bison. Fun was had by all on a beautiful June night. On these outings, all core members, assistants, and friends of the community are invited to join them. See the events on the final page for more information about community outings.

## HOLY CROSS STUDENTS VISIT

One of the gifts of community life is having volunteers come into L'Arche. One long term relationship we have maintained is with Holy Cross University. For over a decade they have sent a team of college students to L'Arche Syracuse during their spring break for a service program. This year we were blessed with six ladies who traveled all the way to Syracuse to serve. During their time here they helped beautify Cleveland home, provided organization to Highland & Galster each home, ate meals with houses, and spent time getting to know core members. The highlight of their trip happened during our monthly potluck for Mardi Gras, where they helped make wristbands for community members and spent time serving the community in dinner and in prayer. The group was fortunate enough to join in a daylong trip with the Day Hab program to go bowling. We cannot wait for our next group to visit again next year and are grateful for the group that spent time with us this year!

## A PASTORAL REFLECTION

By Samuel Thomas, Pastoral Minister

Growing closer to become a true community is easier said than done. Community requires us to get closer than we'd ever like to be. There is a phrase I say often in community that the assistants and core members say too often, but it is one that I believe strikes at the core of community. It's an expansion of a Nouwen quote, "Being in community means being closest to the person you despise, and growing in love for them." That word despise is a strong word; hatred doesn't take much energy, but to despise someone is something else. In our polarized country, the feeling of despising someone is not far out of reach for most Americans. I find the artwork of Edward Hopper, pictured below to demonstrate the estrangement we often feel in our polarized communities. To be together but yet somehow not. But we are called as community to set aside our grudges, our burgeoning anger, our pride to move closer to those we have been called to live alongside. Let our despise wither and love grow as we learn more each day how to live in community in our little life boat that is L'Arche.



SOLDIER ENTERING A PARLOR, EDWARD HOPPER 1921



## UPCOMING COMMUNITY EVENTS

### **JULY 23** - Outing to the Syracuse Orchestra

7:30p at 709 James St, Syracuse, NY | **No cost, free tickets to be obtained by Pastoral Minister**

### **JULY 29** - Superman Legacy viewing

Time TBD at 1 Destiny USA Dr, Syracuse, NY | **Tickets to be purchased through the Pastoral Minister**

### **AUGUST 9** - Brown bag picnic at Burnet Park

12:00p at 299 Coleridge Ave , Syracuse, NY | **Community members bring their own lunch, Pastoral Minister will provide dessert**

### **AUGUST 23** - Outing to the Zoo

11:00a at 1 Conservation Pl, Syracuse, NY | **Tickets will be purchased through the Pastoral Minister**

### **AUGUST 28** - Community Picnic

3:00p at 3992 Apulia Rd, Jamesville, NY | **Free to all community members**

### **SEPTEMBER 1** - Outing to Luna Cat Cafe

4:00p at the 1001 E Fayette St, Syracuse, NY | **Food available for purchase onsite**

**Contact [pastoralminister@larchesyracuse](mailto:pastoralminister@larchesyracuse) if interested**

## UPCOMING ASSISTANT EVENTS

### **JULY 24** - Assistants Meeting on Communication & Boundaries

10:30a at 504 E Fayette St, Syracuse, NY | Lunch provided

### **AUGUST 21** - Assistants Meeting on L'Arche Charter & Mandate

10:30a at 504 E Fayette St, Syracuse, NY | Lunch provided

### **SEPTEMBER 25** - Assistants Meeting on Money Management

10:30a at 504 E Fayette St, Syracuse, NY | Lunch provided

Be on the lookout for announcements surrounding our fundraiser The Heart of L'Arche. More details to come soon!



L'Arche Syracuse - 920 N Spencer St, Syracuse, NY 13204  
[larchesyracuse.org](http://larchesyracuse.org)

