



Christina

## Christina's Story—A Parent's Perspective

*A day in the life of two young adults.*

**A typical day in the life of my daughter,** Christina, begins when she awakes to an alarm, gets ready for work, grabs her cell phone and backpack, and hurries off to catch the bus to her part time job. After work, she heads home, mindful of her commitment to go to exercise class or to have coffee with a friend.

When she gets home, she tumbles into the hubbub of the household's day to day life, secure in the knowledge that she's where she belongs. She's also looking forward to a vacation she's going on with her housemates.

**Contrast this to** a typical day in the life of several other young adults I know still living at home—which I describe here in the context of a single person. Her day starts when her mom wakes her up, although she would rather stay in bed, so she turns on the TV and plunks down in front of it.

Mom pesters her to have breakfast and hovers around, asking what the plan is for that day. She says she just wants to stay home by herself. She might walk over to the mall or she could take a bus somewhere, but really, there's no place to go.

It's Friday and mom has registered her for an evening social programme at the community centre. It's sort of fun, but she never sees the other participants except at the program. She's kind of anxious when she meets new people—usually it just feels safer to stay home. Her day passes much like many others.

**These young people—Christina and the others I have described—all have Down Syndrome.** They grew up in loving families that advocated for inclusion in school and in the community, they attended special education college programmes, and they all learned to travel independently on the bus and can read. They have many gifts, abilities, strengths and weaknesses.

What makes these two "typical days" so very different is that **Christina lives at L'Arche.**

Christina has been a member of L'Arche Greater Vancouver community for the last fifteen years. She lives a very full life where her gifts are valued, her talents are nurtured, and her shortcomings are accepted. She is challenged to accept responsibility and to take risks and her opinions and ideas are important. She has a wide circle of friends and acquaintances and a social life that is independent of her family.

Young adults like Christina need meaningful work and challenges, opportunities for fun with friends and for authentic relationships with people outside of their families. They want a chance to be independent. If their needs are chronically not met, they are vulnerable to depression and emotional distress.

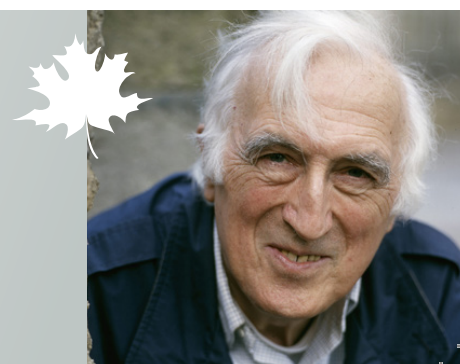
**Without L'Arche, Christina's experience would have been quite different.** I will be forever grateful that L'Arche and all it stands for came into our lives.

—By Diane Bruce, who is Christina's mother and an advocate for the importance and value of L'Arche



**CANADIAN INSPIRED...** Canadian humanitarian and social visionary Jean Vanier founded L'Arche in France in 1964. It was his concern for people with disabilities that prompted him to invite two men from a local institution to live with him. This simple act of welcome inspired a movement that has changed the lives of thousands around the world.

People with and without disabilities sharing life together in community







*Celebration is a specific act of a community as people rejoice and give thanks to God who has bonded them together and is looking after them and loves them. They are no longer individuals locked up in their own loneliness and independence.*

—Jean Vanier

## We All Belong

Jean Vanier, a Canadian humanitarian and founder of L'Arche, left academic life to assist a friend and chaplain of a French institution that was home to men with intellectual disabilities. There, he also visited a psychiatric hospital where he was struck by the apparent loneliness of the people there.

That was in 1964, and shortly after that visit, Vanier discerned in prayer that he should invite two men with developmental disabilities to live with him in a small house in France that he had named "L'Arche," or "The Ark."

As a society we have come a long way since then, but even today people with developmental disabilities are often marginalized. While children with disabilities are now included in our daycares and schools, **once they reach adulthood, the opportunity for inclusion in work and social communities is greatly diminished.**

As children become young adults, the challenge for parents can be having the physical and emotional strength to continue to support them.

**If they want to move out of their family home, where do they go?** With limited quality housing options, it's not uncommon for adults with disabilities to become isolated, and when people become isolated, they are especially vulnerable.

**At the heart of L'Arche is the understanding that we all belong;** that every person is valued and has unique gifts to contribute to society. L'Arche is a place where people with developmental disabilities can live in stable, secure and affordable homes.



## Home is our Cornerstone

Home life is the cornerstone of L'Arche. It is in the home that **mutual relationships come to life** with each person contributing as they are able. Meaningful work and day time activities are essential to **dignity and self worth** and are the focus of our community inclusion programs.

Unique to the L'Arche home is that assistants come to live, work and participate in the community, building meaningful, mutual friendships with members with developmental disabilities. During their stay of one or more years, these assistants, who are often **young people, discover their gifts and the gifts of others.**

## Our Building is Aging

L'Arche Greater Vancouver supports 39 individuals with developmental disabilities in our six homes and two community inclusion programs. Our building on Sussex Avenue in Burnaby, where three of our homes and the community inclusion programs are located, is 50 years old.

Some people who live at L'Arche are aging and many have mobility issues, requiring a fully accessible building. **There is also an urgent need to support younger individuals with developmental disabilities with new housing options and support models.**

The existing building does not allow us to expand our residential capacity or our community inclusion programs, and needs extensive costly upgrades. The best option is to re-develop our Sussex Avenue property.







## Our Plan

Taking advantage of our existing property, L'Arche has decided to replace our aging building in Burnaby with a new one that increases the total number of adults with developmental disabilities who can be supported to live in community.

The plan will see the construction of an innovative three-story structure to replace three existing homes and **create new options for those who can live more independently.**

The **major components** of the new building include:

- Three new, fully accessible **L'Arche** homes for people with developmental disabilities and those who assist them, replacing three existing homes.
- **Expanded space for community inclusion programs** to welcome additional people into these programs
- **10 units of housing as new models of support** for adults with developmental disabilities who can live more independently
- **29 units of affordable rental housing** for those who wish to be a part of our intentional community
- **Fully accessible meeting spaces** that can adapt to various groups

**WE ALL BELONG**

## Our Campaign

The **We All Belong** campaign is well underway, with almost 50% of the \$30 million project cost secured through the support of BC Housing, the City of Burnaby and the many generous donors who have already come forward.

With the continued generosity of many individuals and organizations—including the commitment of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Vancouver and Archbishop Miller to support our campaign—we are confident that we will achieve our minimum goal of raising \$5 million to ensure the financial viability of our project.

However, by raising as much as \$15 million we can be debt-free when we open the doors of our new building in 2022. This would provide us with more resources than ever before to support our current community members and more adults with developmental disabilities.



## Executive Director & Board Chair Message



Denise Haskett  
Executive Director



Ted Kuntz  
Board Chair

Our belief is that “We All Belong” and it has long been our dream to create a new community resource in support of it. That time has now come—time for the biggest dream in our history!

Our vision comes from our commitment to respond to the changing needs of our aging members and the growing need and desire for younger people to be part of an intentional, supportive community.

As society and people’s needs continue to change, L’Arche must diversify the way in which we support people. There is an urgent need for individuals with developmental disabilities to have a broader choice of affordable housing and support models.

L’Arche will continue to provide homes and community inclusion programs for people with and without developmental disabilities, but the exciting addition will be the much-needed new component of affordable housing, creating options for individuals to live more independently in a supportive community.

In a large city where many people feel isolated and alone, L’Arche will continue to be a valuable asset to our neighbourhood by being a place of belonging.

## Honourary Campaign Committee

### **The Most Reverend J. Michael Miller, CSB**

Archbishop, Roman Catholic  
Archdiocese of Vancouver

### **The Most Reverend Melissa M. Skelton**

Archbishop, Diocese of New Westminster  
Anglican Church of Canada

### **Richard Cheng**

Senior Vice President, BMO Nesbitt Burns

### **Kathi Bental**

A Founder of the Rivendell Retreat Centre  
Board member, Co:Here Foundation

### **Sister Marie Zarowny**

Province Co-leader, Sisters of St. Ann

### **Hugh Ker**

Vice-President of Development,  
Polygon Homes

## PLEDGE FORM

### **YES! I/We want to support the campaign to build the L’Arche ‘We All Belong’ Campaign.**

I/We wish to make a tax-deductible contribution in the total amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, as follows:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ paid in \_\_\_\_\_ monthly installments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_, starting \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

**OR** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to be paid in a single payment on or before \_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_

(Contributions received before December 31, 2019 are deductible for the 2019 income taxes)

### **AND / OR WE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO:**

☐ Make a Gift of **Publicly Traded Shares** [Contact L’Arche for more details]

☐ **Volunteer** to assist the campaign: Areas of Interest/Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **PLEASE CONTACT ME** to discuss options to support the L’Arche campaign

### **I WISH TO PAY BY:**

☐ Cheque or Post-dated Cheque—Payable to **L’Arche Foundation of Greater Vancouver**

☐ Credit Cards: Please call us at the number below to make your donation on your credit card

**OR** Go to [www.larchevancouver.org](http://www.larchevancouver.org) and select the **DONATE NOW** button



### **TAX RECEIPT INFORMATION:**

(Donations of \$25 or more will be issued a charitable donation receipt)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **SEND COMPLETED FORM TO:**

L’Arche Foundation of Greater Vancouver  
7401 Sussex Avenue  
Burnaby BC V5J 3V6

To make your donation by phone call  
**604.435.9544**

**[larchevancouver.org](http://larchevancouver.org)**

[capitalcampaign@larchevancouver.org](mailto:capitalcampaign@larchevancouver.org)

Charitable Registration Number 137648671RR0001

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_