



# IMPACT Bulletin

Winter 2025

## A Heartfelt Thank You as We Welcome 2025



**Sarah  
Kreplin**

National Director  
of Philanthropy

As we enter 2025, I want to thank you wholeheartedly for your support last year!

In this Winter Bulletin, I am excited to share how your contributions are helping

L'Arche address the challenges of isolation and limited housing, as well as the barriers that keep people from experiencing belonging. Together, we're nurturing communities, developing leaders, and advocating for lasting change.

In my first year with L'Arche, I've witnessed firsthand the impact of our work—especially in the lives of people like Shawna, who finally found her own place to call home after years

of dreaming of independence. Stories like Shawna's inspire me every day and remind me of the profound difference we're making, one life at a time.

Thank you for being part of this journey. Your support brings us closer to a truly inclusive world, and together, we're turning that vision into reality.

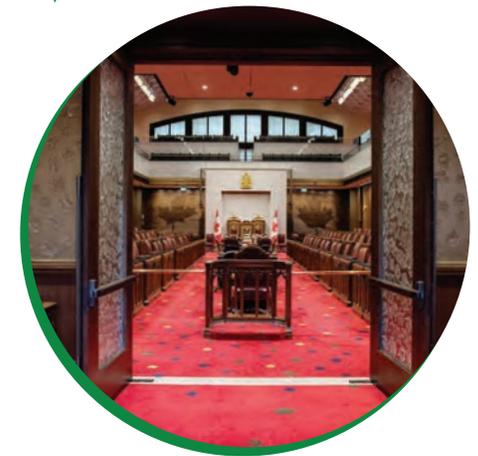
## Building an Inclusive Democracy: Senate of Canada Consults With L'Arche

L'Arche Canada is working with the Senate of Canada to make legislative documents more understandable and accessible. This initiative invites individuals with intellectual disabilities to review original Senate documents, including those on Chamber activities and committee work, alongside simplified explanations.

Participants share their feedback in group discussions, identifying words or ideas that

are unclear and suggesting improvements. Their insights are helping to shape materials that are easier for all Canadians to understand, making governance more accessible and inclusive. This collaboration highlights the importance of hearing diverse voices in creating a democracy that welcomes everyone's participation.

"The voices of people with lived experience are key to enhancing accessibility," said Julia Zayed,



Senate Accessibility Officer. "We are grateful to the L'Arche community members who participated in this consultation."

## L'Arche Connects: Finding Independence and Belonging in Saint John

Four adults with intellectual disabilities in Saint John, New Brunswick, have marked a significant life milestone in their lives. They are living independently in their own apartments, and they have settled in very well!

The L'Arche Connects initiative in Uptown Saint John blends affordable and accessible housing integrated in a modern urban apartment complex. L'Arche Connects provides support for adults with intellectual disabilities to take charge of their lives while receiving the individualized support they need.

For Shawna Morgan, this journey has been a dream come true. Shawna participated in L'Arche Canada's "At Home in a Neighbourhood Where I Belong" project just a few years ago. She summed up her experience with L'Arche Connects very simply. "I'm a lot happier. I have more independence." Having her own place to call home is clearly a source of joy and pride for Shawna.

When people with intellectual disabilities build their confidence and skills to make a move like this, their enthusiasm can be transformational—not only for themselves but also for those around them, including their neighbours.



L'Arche Connects is excited to help build a more inclusive, welcoming Saint John for all its citizens. The vision is to replicate this model for ten more people over the coming year.

L'Arche Connects has developed as a collaboration between L'Arche Saint John, Saint John Non Profit Housing, Inclusion New Brunswick, and the New Brunswick Department of Social Development.



## A Dream Becomes Reality: The L'Arche Greater Vancouver Building Project

Last September, a long-anticipated dream came true for L'Arche Greater Vancouver. They celebrated the opening of their new building with over 70 people gathered for the news conference, building tour and fantastic views from the rooftop garden.

The project, seven years in the making, now stands as a vibrant, welcoming space. L'Arche Greater Vancouver now offers three fully accessible homes, ten semi-independent units for adults with intellectual disabilities, and twenty-nine affordable rental apartments for the broader community. In a city where isolation can be all too common, this space is designed to foster connection and nurture a sense of belonging.

The building is thriving as its new residents settle in. Ten

individuals with intellectual disabilities are settling into the semi-independent living suites, while two others have moved into the affordable rental units. New friendships are blossoming and ties between neighbours are growing stronger as the participants of the Evergreen community inclusion program continue their volunteer efforts, further deepening connections with the broader community.

This milestone is about more than just homes; it's about creating a space and community where everyone belongs.



## Securing the Future of L'Arche Homes in Quebec

For many years, a funding crisis has loomed over Quebec's L'Arche communities. Recently, it reached such a level that people with intellectual disabilities and their families faced the heartbreaking possibility of homes closing.

Over the past year, members of L'Arche in Quebec took action, rallying the eight L'Arche communities across the province, L'Arche Canada, and families to advocate for change. Heartfelt letters were sent to local representatives, and a media campaign was launched. The crisis was brought to the attention of the National

Assembly and the Social Services Minister, Lionel Carmant, not only met with L'Arche but also committed to providing emergency support and developing a long-term funding plan.

Today, the AAQ and L'Arche Canada are working closely with government. Quebec's Ministry of Health and Social Services is working to find the needed resources to ensure care for individuals based on their specific needs. L'Arche has also been named one of the leaders of a working group, set up to develop a provincial funding program for long-term community housing.



The quality of life of hundreds of people with intellectual disabilities will be improved thanks to these efforts.

We are hopeful that this recent work will bring L'Arche communities in the province sustainable funding for years to come.

## Where Coffee and Community Meet: L'Arche Hamilton's Inclusion Coffeehouse

Nestled in the heart of the city, L'Arche Hamilton's Inclusion Coffeehouse has grown from a simple coffee shop into a vibrant community hub. Since its opening in 2021, the café has been a space where individuals with intellectual disabilities find meaningful volunteer work, while everyone is welcomed to share in the warmth of connection and inclusion.

In today's world, where many are searching for a place to belong, the Inclusion Coffeehouse creates a space to celebrate what makes each of us unique. It was founded to offer opportunities for people to express their gifts of cooking, hospitality, and

friendship—skills that transcend ability. It's a place where people of all backgrounds and abilities come together, build relationships, and feel valued.

At the café, individuals with intellectual disabilities take on



roles such as brewing coffee, greeting guests, and serving up smiles. Everyone's contribution is essential, and the team works together to foster a welcoming environment for all. As volunteer worker Janice M. beautifully puts it, "Coffee and friendship – it goes together because people can come and sit down and get to know each other. Inclusion means community, and it means like a family, and we're together."

Guests aren't just customers—they're part of a community where everyone belongs. So, if you're in Hamilton, stop by, grab a cup of coffee, and experience the true spirit of inclusion.



# Empowering Youth Voices

Young leaders from around the world – some with intellectual disabilities, some without – recently gathered in Croatia to learn how to make their voices heard.

They are part of L'Arche's *Together With and Without Intellectual Disabilities in Self-Advocacy (TwidSA)* project, a three-year initiative that trained 24 youth from Egypt, Palestine, Croatia, and France to be advocates for inclusion.

Through online exchanges and webinars, these young leaders had already begun connecting before arriving in Croatia. Last fall, they finally met in person

for a series of hands-on workshops focused on storytelling as a tool for change. In a supportive, creative space, they discovered the impact of sharing their personal experiences and learned how their stories could foster stronger, more inclusive communities.

L'Arche Canada's own Nicholas Herd and Lori Vaanholt are two members of the four-person training team, contributing energy and expertise to this movement. These youth are now taking what they learned back home, creating their own

webinars and training materials to spread their message even further.

TwidSA is more than a project; it's a powerful movement for belonging. These young advocates are stepping forward to build communities where every voice is valued, and everyone feels they belong.



# Resilience in Times of Crisis: L'Arche Haiti

This year has been particularly challenging for the L'Arche Carrefour community in Port-au-Prince. Violence and danger are part of daily life, and the community has been on high alert for months. Gunfire is often heard nearby, and some days, it's too dangerous to even leave the house.

Despite these challenges, the people of L'Arche Haiti are showing incredible strength. Over the past few months, they have created an emergency evacuation plan, choosing safe places to go if they need to leave quickly.

They practice drills so everyone knows what to do if the situation becomes worse.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, L'Arche Haiti has been able to stock up on three months'



worth of food and medicine. They've also hired extra staff to help with the heavy workload, put up extra security, like barbed-wire fences, to keep everyone safe, and found psychological support for staff and individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Amidst all of this, the extraordinary resilience of L'Arche Haiti shines through. When the gunfire stops, the community's workshop reopens, and everyone comes together to care for friends, families, and neighbours. In these tough times, they find hope and strength in their community.

The Impact Bulletin is published by the L'Arche Canada Foundation, 300-10271 Yonge St, Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3B5, Canada

**1-800-571-0212 ext 1 or 905-770-7696 ext 1 | [www.larchefoundation.ca](http://www.larchefoundation.ca)**  
**Our charitable registration number is 88990 9719 RR0001**