



THE COMMUNITY BEACON

SPRING 2016

Celebrating the Unique Value of Every Person

Message From Our New Community Leader

Warmest greetings to each of you in the L'Arche Jacksonville family! I am deeply humbled and grateful for the opportunity to serve as Community Leader. I am also deeply appreciative of all of the people who have been part of my "Formation" process, including Nick Connell, L'Arche Regional Leader; Shannon Henderson, Board President, the L'Arche Jacksonville Board; Marty O'Malley, L'Arche Mobile Community Leader; Amy Finn-Schultz, former Community Leader and the Staff, Assistants, Core Members and Volunteers.

In addition, The Federation of L'Arche invited all new Community Leaders with less than two years under their belts, to the tiny and beautiful village of Trosly, France for a week of training (formation) presented by Federation Leadership and trainers. Along with 30 other Community Leaders from around the world, I was steeped in the history and foundations of L'Arche at the very place it all began! We were in awe to see the original home where Jean Vanier lived with the first L'Arche Core Members, just down the street from our retreat building, as well as the gravesite of Father Thomas, co-founder of L'Arche. We were given a tour of the L'Arche Trosly arts workshop and farm, both quite amazing. Our training included sessions on the Identity and Mission Process, Servant Leadership, Human Resources and Inclusion. The trainers included Patrick Fontaine (Leader of the International Federation), George Durner, Christine Bruggeman, Eileen Glass, Tobias Gerken and Anne Chabert. It was wonderful to make L'Arche friends with colleagues from around the globe, knowing we were all embarking on our L'Arche journeys together. Since then, other L'Arche trainings and retreats have followed, each informative and well-planned.

Getting to know the Core Members, Assistants, Staff and Volunteers continues to be a great pleasure. It is *relationships* which bind us together as a family and keep us motivated to serve one another with open hearts. As I begin my tenth month as your Community Leader, please know that my door is open to you for suggestions or questions. I am blessed to be sharing this journey with you! *Melanie Saxon*



Melanie with core member Paul

UPCOMING EVENTS

June

2 Community Night
6pm, Blanchart Center

July

7 Community Night
6pm, Blanchart Center

August

4 Community Night
6pm, Blanchart Center

September

1 Community Night
6pm, Blanchart Center
WAFF Annual Campaign
(watch for information)

October

6 Community Night
6pm, Blanchart Center

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Shannon Henderson, *President*
Kate Thilges, *Vice President*
Jim Sebesta, *Treasurer*
Mark Cashen, *Secretary*
Ian Dankelman
Fr. Vincent Haut
Jennie Mazur
Lisa McGowan
Missy Pierce
Linda Tisdale
Mary Baer (Honorary member)
Julie Hirshan, *Intern*

ADMINISTRATION

Community Leader/
Executive Director
Melanie Saxon
Community Coordinator
Sharon Toth
Community Coordinator
Bridget Cashen
Rainbow Workshop Director
Nora Ramirez de Santamaria
Development Director
Lori Rush
Business Manager
Karla Smith
Strategic Projects Manager
Mike Belle

L'Arche Jacksonville

700 Arlington Rd. N.
Jacksonville, FL 32211
904-721-5992
904-721-7143 FAX
larchejacksonville.org



Assistant Kelsey helps Katrina with her Braille

Grant Expands Katrina's World *By Mike Belle*

Katrina has been a part of the L'Arche community for 25 years. Over that time, she has grown into a natural leader, in song, prayer and advocacy for others with disabilities.

However, she has not benefited from the technology that has made things so much more accessible. This changed recently when, through a grant awarded by the **William and Helen Thomas Charitable Trust**, L'Arche has provided Katrina with a braille translator called the *BrailleNote Apex*. With the *BrailleNote*, Katrina's horizons have expanded. She is now able to experience the world in new and exciting ways.

For example, Katrina can write letters that can be emailed by a house assistant. To demonstrate her gift for public speaking, programs and readings that are used for events can be translated to braille beforehand so that Katrina can take an active part in reading before her peers and community. And, as we all know, Katrina has a passion for music. With her new Braille translator, she can select songs that she wants to listen to.

We are incredibly grateful to the **William and Helen Thomas Charitable Trust** for enabling Katrina to share her unique gifts and to more fully enjoy the gifts that others have to offer.

OUR NEW LOGOS



Change takes place every day at L'Arche communities all over the world, and we are no exception. For the sake of continuity and ease of recognition, L'Arche USA has asked all L'Arche communities to identify themselves by location. **L'Arche Harbor House is now L'Arche Jacksonville.** Please help us in this transition by sharing with others what L'Arche Jacksonville is all about! *Thank you.*



“A real friend, to whom we can say exactly what we feel, knowing that we will be listened to, encouraged and confirmed in love and tenderness, is an essential resource.”

—Jean Vanier
Community and Growth

Living Nativity

By Melanie Saxon, Community Leader

One of the elements of the L'Arche Jacksonville mandate is to “Share our gifts with the city....”. One beautiful way we do this is by presenting our annual Living Nativity each Christmas season.



Being new to L'Arche, I had not yet experienced its Living Nativity, though everyone who mentioned it to me had a glow in their eyes when they spoke of it.

Many told me it was their favorite L'Arche event of the year. So, I was expecting it to be special, possibly powerful and moving. When I dropped in on the first rehearsal and saw directors Kate Norton and Dawn Smyser working with our Core Members and Assistants, I immediately knew Living Nativity would be one of my favorite L'Arche events, too.

The birth of Jesus Christ is deeply ingrained in the lives of all Christians. Perhaps no other story has been told to us as many times over our lives. We more or less take for granted what a miracle it really was!

Experiencing L'Arche's Living Nativity refreshed the wonder of Jesus' birth in perhaps a way nothing else has done for me. Seeing how each of our Core Members and many of our Assistants enact the Christmas story was both powerful and tender and deeply affecting. Our Core Members embody the spirit of Christ in his gentle ways of love. They understand the reverence of Christ's birth and they share this gift with us.

We are so grateful to Kate and Dawn for directing this production as volunteers for each of the last seven years! The many hours they put into the planning and rehearsals is a gift of love to L'Arche and the Jacksonville community. We also thank Riverside Park United Methodist Church for hosting the 2015 production in their beautiful sanctuary. The hospitality shown us was so appreciated.

It was a joy to see so many people come to experience L'Arche Jacksonville's 28th Annual Living Nativity, which was followed by a joyous reception. The birth of Jesus is a gift from a loving God and L'Arche's Living Nativity is a very special way L'Arche shares its gifts with the Jacksonville community.

Living With Pam

By Claire McGrath, Greatfull House Co-Coordinator

When I came to L'Arche this past July, I knew that it was going to be drastically different from my college experience, which I had just concluded with graduation the previous May. I knew that I would be led to grow, but I had no idea just how much the core members were going to teach me in such a short time. One of the most transforming relationships I have been gifted with is my friendship with Pam, a core member in Greatfull House.

Pam does not speak or walk, she depends upon the assistants to guide her through her daily routine, and she is also loving and funny and finds ways to communicate her needs and desires. My relationship with her helps me to understand my relationship with God. When I first began learning Pam's routine, I tried to be as efficient as possible. I quickly learned, however, that efficiency was not what Pam needed or wanted. I came to understand that the speed at which I could get her ready for the day was not going to strengthen our relationship! I learned that by taking my time and allowing Pam to take her time, and by viewing the small tasks of getting ready for the day as moments to enjoy each other's presence, we could begin to deepen our relationship.



Claire loves to spend time with Pam

Pam shows me that God is not concerned with efficiency, checklists, or completion of tasks. He simply wants to be with me, even in the simple, mundane, day-to-day activities of my life. When I began to open my heart to experiencing the presence of God in Pam, I began to realize that something as simple as the action of helping Pam brush her teeth or eat breakfast was an opportunity to deepen my relationship with her, and therefore, with God. God is not confined to churches or basilicas or temples or mosques or other places of worship; he's seeking to enter into relationship with us in the ordinariness of our daily lives. We cannot encounter him if we rush through our days with a mindset of efficiency and detachment. I'm lucky to have Pam in my life to remind me of God's real, physical presence in the ordinariness of the everyday, where even brushing teeth can be an encounter with God.

My Time With Robert

By Nelson Bigcal, Nouwen House Assistant

When I started working with Robert a few years ago, I discovered a quiet individual who liked to listen to his audio books at home. After a little time, we created a very strong relationship, bonding almost every day telling stories, going for rides and spending more time with him in his room.

Every morning he really loves to go to house prayers. I could see the delight in his face. Every Sunday we attend Mass at Christ the King Church. Robert loves the water so we schedule swimming at the YMCA therapy pool on Thursday and Sunday. He looks forward to this activity, and when Robert talks about swimming, everyone can see the joy on his face.

Most of all, since Robert finds comfort in singing, we requested a karaoke machine which was delivered in no time! We play karaoke in Nouwen House very often and he enjoys it. The beat of the music makes him want to dance. Good job, Robert!!!



Wish List

As a large community with very limited means, we couldn't do what we do without the generosity of our friends and supporters.

If you choose to donate an in-kind gift, please deliver it to the Blanchard Community Center office or inform us of the donation in order to receive proper acknowledgment for income tax purposes.

A complete Wish List is posted on larchejacksonville.org.

Community

- 15 padded folding chairs
- Tickets to concerts and plays

Rainbow Workshop

- Michael's/Hobby Lobby gift cards
- Canvas, different sizes
- Wood crosses, different sizes
- Stained glass pieces
- Acrylic paints (all colors)
- Card stock (different colors)
- Magnets (small round and flat for craft)
- Glue sticks, small and medium
- Elmer's glue all purpose
- Plastic gloves
- Paper bags (different sizes)
- Water color paper (different sizes)
- Tracing paper (different sizes)
- Pastel paper (different sizes)
- Pretty beads

Peace House

- Laptop computer for core members
- HDMI cable for TV/computer
- Bagless lightweight vacuum cleaner
- CD's for karaoke machine
- Window blinds for kitchen & living room
- Vertical blinds for sliding glass door

Nouwen House

- Paper shredder
- Paved walkway to gazebo
- TV
- Office chair
- Red copper frying pan (12")
- 2 door mats 60"x36" rubber backed
- Memory foam or water absorbent rug for women's bathroom (blue-18"x24")

Greatfull House

- Tupperware
- Board games (easy)
- Digital scale
- Bath mat
- Throw rugs
- Vacuum cleaner
- Exterior light for back porch

Sunflower House

- Volunteers to help with yard work
- Queen & Twin comforters (masculine)
- Standard pillows
- Patio set
- Vacuum
- Screen door to back deck
- Small chain saw
- Concrete pad for back patio

Farewell to Regional Leader Nick Connell

L'Arche Jacksonville sends love and appreciation to Nick Connell, who after completing his four year mandate, has left L'Arche USA as Central Region Leader. Nick knows our Community well, having visited many times and always fully participating in community life with us when present. He took the time to get to know the Core Members, Assistants, Staff, Board Members and other Volunteers. Needless to say, there are many here who will miss him.

Nick provided support to L'Arche Jacksonville in many ways. He served as liaison between our community and L'Arche USA, he provided expertise and support for our community in living its L'Arche mission and identity, he guided the community through the mandate and discernment processes and he provided formation to new Community Leader Melanie Saxon.

Nick is marrying his fiancée Pamela in June and as they blend together two families, Nick wishes to work in Chicago at a position that does not involve heavy travel responsibilities. We know if not for that, he would have loved to stay with L'Arche. Our best wishes and love to Nick in all he does. We hope he will visit us whenever he can.



A Volunteer Reflects on L'Arche

By Rev. Phillip Baber, Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville

My name is Phillip Baber and I am the minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Jacksonville. It is my honor to also serve as a volunteer at L'Arche Jacksonville. For the past 7 months, I have been spending 8 hours a week with the core members of L'Arche; it is no exaggeration when I say this has been a truly life-changing experience for me. Sharing life with the core members of L'Arche has blessed me in countless ways. It has transformed my understanding of what it means to live with people who have intellectual disabilities. I once held the naïve belief that the disabled had to live restrictive lives. But L'Arche Jacksonville has radically altered this false assumption.

L'Arche Jacksonville is a life-changing community—and I'm not just referring to the lives of its core-members. I'm referring to my life, the life of my family, the lives of my congregants, and the life of our city. The city of Jacksonville needs L'Arche and all that L'Arche represents. L'Arche is a vital part of our city's spiritual pulse.



Jack, Jeffrey, Jeanne McLaughlin & Mark Struhar

Good Cheer Speeds Healing

By Jeanne & Mark Struhar

Mark Struhar, a community friend, last August developed osteomyelitis, an infection in his spine. It caused him to spend one week in the hospital and 3 months in a rehabilitation center. During the course of his illness and lengthy stay in the Life Care Rehabilitation Center, members of L'Arche Jacksonville continually prayed, supported, visited, and loved Mark through his ordeal. Viva prayed daily at morning prayer gatherings. Members from each of

the houses went to visit Mark. Peace House made several visits. It was Jeffrey's smiles, Katrina's singing, and Joy's sense of humor that brought Mark laughter and happiness in those discouraging days.

"It really cheered me up to receive cards, well wishes, and visitors from the community," said Mark. "Your presence made me feel like I was never alone. Somehow I knew God was working through this. I now have a deeper appreciation for friendships and time spent together. Thank you."

Mark is now at home and recovering well. The infection is gone and a Physical Therapist works with him on increasing his mobility.

In this issue of the *Community Beacon*, we gratefully acknowledge tribute gifts made to honor the life events of friends and families. Contributions have been made in memory of a loved one, or in celebration of special events such as birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, etc. For all tributes, L'Arche notifies the recipient of the gift and the donor receives a grateful acknowledgment of the tax-deductible gift.

*The following tributes were received between 7/20/15 and 5/17/16. Please let us know if there are any omissions or errors.

In Honor of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Catherine Bain
<i>Steve & Colleen Frick</i> | Dottie Klein
<i>John & Lynn McManus</i>
<i>Amy & Jim Norris</i> |
| Dino Baron
<i>Claudia Baron</i>
<i>Susan Brewster</i>
<i>Grant Davidson</i>
<i>Laura Galiano</i>
<i>Aimee Machado</i>
<i>Mark Mandich</i>
<i>Synove T Maraffino</i>
<i>Carol Mazor</i>
<i>Jennifer Neibert</i>
<i>Gary Ng</i>
<i>Brad Panganiban</i>
<i>Keith Urtel</i> | Betty Jeanne Kramer
<i>Keith & Laurie Raines</i> |
| Rita Baum
<i>Nathan & Lorraine Anello</i> | Robert McCormick
<i>Mike & Janice McCormick</i> |
| Martin & Jan Benton
<i>James & Janice Benton</i> | Lisa Meadows
<i>Susan Della Porta</i> |
| Core & Staff Members
<i>Barbara Jane Bath</i>
<i>James & Maureen Burnett</i> | Mom, Dad & Maria Elena
<i>Kevin Sullivan</i> |
| Wanda Edmondson
<i>Susan Della Porta</i> | Nick Morrison
<i>Melinda Morrison</i> |
| William Bacher, Sr.
<i>Sharon Toth</i> | Peace House
<i>Michael Hanck</i>
<i>Danielle Mahoebney</i> |
| Amy Finn-Schultz
<i>Becky Brady</i>
<i>Fr. Tim Lozier</i>
<i>Michael & Charlotte McAuley</i> | Ron Pendleton
<i>Barbara Jane Bath</i> |
| Michael P. Hanck
<i>Donald P Hanck</i> | Joanne Powers
<i>Nancy Powers</i> |
| Shannon Henderson
<i>Sharon Toth</i> | Lori Rush
<i>Suzanne H. Catto</i> |
| Michael Jennings
<i>William & Jane Muir</i> | Mary Steves
<i>John & Jean Grant-Dooley</i> |
| | Mark & Jeanne Struhar
<i>Kelsey Case</i> |
| | Charlie & Linda Tisdale
<i>Gregory Ross</i> |
| | Kathy Vallencourt
<i>Dennis & Barbara Byrne</i>
<i>William J. Byrne, Jr.</i> |
| | Mike Vallencourt
<i>Jason Sessions</i> |
| | Brenda Viera
<i>Nelson Viera</i> |

In Memory of:

- | | |
|--|---|
| Nathan Anello
<i>Nathan & Lorraine Anello</i> | <i>Michael Kane</i>
<i>Clarence Lowery</i>
<i>Marcella Mikell</i>
<i>John & Erika Moyna</i>
<i>George & Jerri Pare</i>
<i>Jacqueline Powell</i>
<i>Nancy Powers</i>
<i>Jerry & Pam Rillstone</i>
<i>Cynthia H. Ross</i>
<i>Robert A. Ross</i>
<i>Jean Sell</i>
<i>St. Vincent's Mobile Health</i>
<i>Outreach Ministry</i>
<i>Warren & Joanne Powers</i>
<i>Charitable Foundation</i> |
| Dorothy Bacher
<i>Karl & Dorothy Klein</i> | Peter Lasher
<i>Lon & Pat Bryan</i>
<i>Rodolfo & Jennifer Engmann</i>
<i>Michael & Phyllis Luman</i>
<i>Joyce Martenies</i>
<i>William & Eileen Ryan</i>
<i>Russell & Lee Taylor</i>
<i>Jane Wallace</i> |
| Joe & Agnes Baum
<i>Jim & Patricia Baum</i> | James Laughrey
<i>Sandra Rodriguez</i> |
| Joseph Bennett
<i>Patricia Clements</i>
<i>Coretta Ephrem</i>
<i>Mary L. Grey</i>
<i>Helen Klicker</i>
<i>Jeff & Nancy Smith</i>
<i>Kathryn Splinter</i>
<i>Zelda Taylor</i> | Jane Mead
<i>James Mead</i> |
| Elizabeth Bilderback
<i>Sherry Williamson</i> | Keith O'Brien
<i>Debbie Benoit</i> |
| Mary Bilderback
<i>Sherry Williamson</i> | Marcella & William H. Saelinger
<i>Peter & Patricia Kuhlman</i> |
| Capt. & Mrs. Leonard Blanchart
<i>William & Denise Boudreau</i> | Frank Scruby
<i>Jeff & Shannon Henderson</i>
<i>Lorraine Scruby</i> |
| Oscar H. Bonner
<i>Steve & Colleen Frick</i> | Lois Shannahan
<i>Michael I. Coulson, PA</i>
<i>Carl Dawson</i>
<i>Steve P. Prather</i> |
| Ireen Brayman
<i>Karl & Dorothy Klein</i>
<i>Jeff & Nancy Smith</i> | Eileen Smith
<i>Kay Henderson</i> |
| Elwood Browning
<i>Gary & Sylvia Bement</i>
<i>Cynthia Flanders</i>
<i>Kay Holmes</i>
<i>Randy & Joyce McCormick</i> | Sharon Starling
<i>Scott & Mona Allen</i>
<i>James & Becky Bilderback</i>
<i>Dolores F. Jonjock</i>
<i>Wayne & Nicole Mangum</i> |
| Reba Browning
<i>Elwood L. Browning</i> | Delores Szarfinski
<i>Linda Szarfinski</i> |
| Sharon Coffman
<i>First Coast Apartment Association</i> | Nell Williamson
<i>Sherry Williamson</i> |
| Nan Coyle
<i>Maureen Smith</i> | |
| Gene & Kathleen Dunham
<i>Frank Dunham</i>
<i>William & Maripat Meide</i>
<i>Jeff & Nancy Smith</i> | |
| Anthony John Haut
<i>Tom & Frances Towle Jr.</i> | |
| Vincent Kraus
<i>Richard & Alice Barrett</i>
<i>Donna Tootle Boyett</i>
<i>Rosalyn Everhart</i>
<i>Duane & Marlene Fenstermann</i>
<i>Dick & Mary Ann Heiden</i>
<i>Rick & Mary Ickes</i> | |



We Mourn the Loss of Fr. Rene Robert

In early April, our L'Arche community lost a long-time friend with the shocking and tragic death of Fr. Rene Robert. He ministered especially to the deaf community, which he faithfully and joyfully served for more than 35 years.

From Bishop Estévez, "To those to whom he ministered, Father Rene will be remembered for his kindness and endless love for them. He always saw the good in the people he served, reminding them that God created them for greatness with a good and noble purpose for others."

Night to Shine *By Samantha Ross, Greatfull House Assistant*

In February, L'Arche had the privilege of attending the *Night to Shine Prom*. Sponsored by the Tim Tebow Foundation, this extravagant event included entertainment such as dancing and karaoke, dinner and desserts, hair styling, shoe shining services and limo rides. Core members enjoyed preparing for the night by picking out dresses that were provided by the Tim Tebow Foundation. The homes were buzzing with excitement as everyone dressed up, applied makeup, and took photos in the backyard.

When they arrived at the hosting church, core members were enthusiastically introduced as they posed for photos on a red carpet and were greeted by over 500 volunteers who served as "buddies" for each participant. This allowed caregivers to relax in a separate dining room with a buffet and live music. Buddies accompanied core members throughout activities and dinner – quickly befriending the core members as well as assistants – and became acquainted with the L'Arche Jacksonville community.



Ready to shine...core members Chris and Kathy with assistants Claire and Samantha

Core members danced the night away on an enormous dance floor with their buddies and new friends. When the evening came to a close, nobody wanted to leave! Everyone had a blast feeling like kings and queens at the *Night to Shine Prom*.

Holy Cross Student Experience *By Micala Smith, College of Holy Cross*



From day one, we were struck by the welcome and hospitality we received at L'Arche Jacksonville. In early March, I and five other Holy Cross students arrived in Jacksonville to spend our spring break in community with L'Arche Jacksonville. The five vibrant houses of this community welcomed each of us...though we arrived in the night, smiling faces were waiting to greet us, indications of the continuous welcome that would be poured out on us throughout the week. To be so readily accepted, to share life with core members and assistants, to enter into mutual relationships, and to come together in prayer were all ways in which we grew in friendship.

And let me just say, the week passed in the blink of an eye. While no one wanted to say goodbye, we knew we would continue to carry L'Arche in our hearts. The new-found friendships, lessons learned, and transformative experiences would stick with us long beyond this week. Many thanks to L'Arche Jacksonville for welcoming us so generously and for being a beacon of hope in our world!

South Jacksonville Deanery & Heather Garden Club

L'Arche Jacksonville has been blessed with two faithful volunteer groups for many years. These two groups "lighten our load" during First Thursday and Anniversary Celebrations. **South Jacksonville Deanery** prepared their famous Chicken Divan dinner in April. It was good to catch up on all their news, strengthening our relationship with these wonderful women. **Heather Garden Club** has been friends with our community for the past 26 years! Their specialty dinner is spaghetti, which they provide for First Thursday Community Night. You can probably guess what else they do to meet our community needs – yes – **GARDENING!** They have been maintaining the garden in our front lawn facing Arlington Road since 1987. Our community noticed that the crepe myrtle in the center of the front circle was looking frail. The Garden Club cut off the "dead limbs," and now it is thriving with new life and green leaves. Do these words remind you of any scriptural verse?

Eagle Scout Projects

We were very fortunate to have three wonderful Eagle Scout projects completed for L'Arche Jacksonville this past year. Many thanks to the Eagle Scouts for beautifying our community through service and creativity.

- **Eagle Scout Troop 182** member **Guillermo S.** and fellow scouts created a garden on the grounds of our Rainbow Workshop featuring a beautiful statue of St. Francis.
- **Eagle Scout Miles V.**, along with help from his troop, designed a lovely garden, which became home for a Peace Pole gifted to Amy by the community. It's a daily reminder to work towards peace.
- **Eagle Scout Troop 225** member **Ben W.**, joined by troop members and family, beautified the L'Arche Jacksonville



Special Olympics

Once again many of our core members participated in the Special Olympics at Atlantic Coast High School in the county and area games. **Chris, Paul, Larry, Ann, Jeff, Viva** and **Jack** competed in either walks or the ball throws. They all did great and have ribbons to show for it.

Assistant Tim accompanies Larry, Jack and Viva as they wave to fans and take a tour around the track.

Three cheers for our wonderful volunteers!

The **Vietnamese Sunday School** group of Christ the King Catholic Church hosted the community for an afternoon of Christmas carols, delicious desserts, wonderful Santa sack full of treats and a beautiful Christmas centerpiece. We enjoyed talking and singing with you all.

Six wonderful young adults from the **College of Holy Cross** chose to spend their spring break with us. They lived with and did projects for our community. Their group leader Micala writes: *"We have enjoyed sharing life, smiles, prayer and friendship."* They walked into our lives as strangers and left a week later as special friends.

Eleven special people from **University of Missouri** spent a week with us for a Mizzou Alternative Break. They enjoyed spending afternoons and evenings in our homes and created beautiful relationships with all our members. Tyler, one of the group leaders, writes: *"Mizzou students are supposed to serve the sites we go to on our trips but I think L'Arche may have had a bigger positive impact on us than we had anticipated."*

Twice a month we look forward to the students, teacher, para-professionals, etc. from **Alden Rd. Exceptional School** who come to our community to help us with so many things. They always work with such dedication and passion on whatever job we have asked them to do. We are blessed to have them as part of our family.

The core members were treated to an afternoon bingo/karaoke/snacks party by the **Darnell Cookman National Honor Society**. The kids were so sweet and really put forth great effort to make the day special for our members.

As part of **JU's Charter Day of Service**, we hosted 29 students and faculty from the School of Education who worked eagerly on various projects around our campus houses and Rainbow Workshop. These young people not only worked incredibly hard but also showed compassion for our core members.

Thank you

PPMAMERICA 

A special shout out to the employees of PPM America in Chicago for raising **\$5,000** for L'Arche Jacksonville through its office promotion of "Wear Jeans Friday" during March. Not only did **Claudia Baron**, sister of core member Dino, advocate for L'Arche to receive March's charitable giving, she also matched the donations dollar for dollar! Thank you to everyone who helped make "Wear Jeans Friday" so successful.

Rainbow Workshop Now Open For Shopping

MONDAY - FRIDAY 10:30 - 3:30

Our 2015 Christmas Sale, the first big "gala" since the Rainbow Workshop's opening celebration, was a huge success. The European Street Café provided the hors d'oeuvres and wine and our artists at the Rainbow outdid themselves in decorating the many rooms in the new workshop that displayed their handmade arts and crafts.



When we designed our current Rainbow Workshop on Owl Ridge, (located across the street from our homes on Arlington Road) it was with the intent of having "Daily Sales" displaying the articles made by our artists throughout the building. **We are now ready to open our doors** to our friends and prospective

new customers. **The store hours will be Monday through Friday, 10:30 till 3:30.** We look forward to your upcoming visits!



RAINBOW WORKSHOP

Many celebrations are coming before our 2016 Christmas Sale – Father's Day is just around the corner. We have many items to select from for that very special person.

26TH ANNUAL GOLF Classic

Tournament Tops Fundraising Record



Synovus Bank of Jacksonville President & CEO Damon Olinto (2nd from right) and his team.



Nick Rogers (2nd from right) and Key Auto GMC team

The L'Arche Jacksonville 26th Annual Golf Classic surpassed last year's fundraising record, netting more than \$63,000 this year! The tournament was held on Monday, March 14 at Deerwood Country Club. We are very grateful for our two title sponsors, **Synovus Bank and Key Buick GMC Hyundai**. Synovus and Key Auto Company are both dedicated supporters of our community and share in our efforts to celebrate each individual person and their talents. Both title sponsors were represented by 12 players; many of whom hope to return next year!

Thank you to all returning players, sponsors, volunteers and family members.

Next year's goal is \$75,000 (or more!) and with your help, we will make it happen!

SAVE THE DATE: March 13, 2017
Deerwood Country Club

Many thanks to Alan Fickling for sponsoring us. We're thrilled to return to Deerwood in 2017.



Core member Dino was happy that his artwork was auctioned to Maureen Burnett, President & CEO of Key Auto Company



Home Improvements

Sunflower House *by David Scharf, Sunflower House Assistant*

Sunflower House has two new bathrooms thanks to the generosity of L'Arche Jacksonville friends **James and Maureen Burnett**. Now the core members have use of completely renovated, freshly painted and inviting bathrooms with new cabinetry and fixtures that are easy to keep clean. This is a huge improvement in our everyday life!!

Nouwen House *by Iris Avery, Nouwen House Co-Coordinator*

The new Nouwen House kitchen is really beautiful from floor to ceiling. Yes, we really have new flooring, cabinets, countertops, and built-in microwave, as well as new paint! Our storage cabinets and larger drawers have made it so easy to organize all our kitchen items from canned goods to dish towels in perfect order. We're grateful to Board member **Missy Pierce** and family member **Nancy Smith** (Tommy's sister) for their time and painting skills, new window blinds, and redecorated kitchen and living room.



Phase 1 Goal Reached!

Trumpets, please!! The **We Are Family Fund**, our annual giving campaign, has reached its initial goal of \$250,000.

The majority of funds received go directly to meet operating expenses. Like families everywhere, we must buy food, pay utilities, repair our homes and meet the individual needs of our family members. Our new goal will be announced as part of the fall 2016 annual campaign.

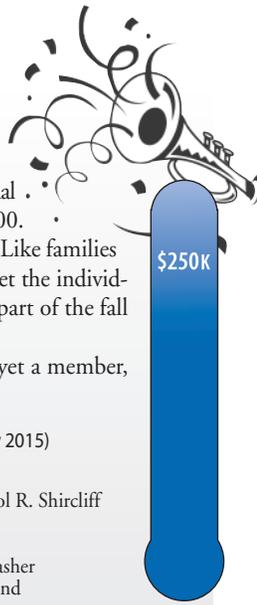
A warm welcome to our newest WAFF members. If you are not yet a member, please join today and be a part of the success of L'Arche.

Welcome to Our New Family Members (Since July 2015)

Jim & Patricia Baum
Jack Borntraeger
Becky Brady
Harry & Marjorie Burke
Pam & George Dewey
Cherl Evers
Paula Faustini

Steve & Colleen Frick
John & Lynn Giorgianni
Frances A. Green
Linda Janus
Gregory E. Poth
Marilyn Rath
Mary Rath

Ann Sabatino
Robert T. & Carol R. Shirdliff
Advised Fund
Maureen Smith
Jeff & Anne Thrasher
Margaret Townsend



Join the family **ONLINE** at www.larchejacksonville.org and click the link on the Home page; or contact the Office at 904-721-5992.

Boosting Our Appeal for Trust and Foundation Grants

By Mike Belle

This year, as part of the strategic plan to meet specific community needs, L'Arche Jacksonville focused on grant applications to charitable trusts and foundations that share our heart and passion. Of 14 grants received for fiscal year 2016, **eight are new grants totalling \$73,000.** (see list above)

The largest of these eight grants was awarded to L'Arche through the Rotary of Jacksonville. L'Arche Jacksonville was one

- Rotary of Jacksonville: \$22,000 *Replace piping in 3 houses*
- Riverside Hospital Foundation: \$14,000
Partial salary for L'Arche Jacksonville Nurse
- Community Development Block Grant: \$13,500
Partial salary for Rainbow Workshop Assistant
- William & Helen Thomas Charitable Trust: \$7,500
Braille Translator & Printed Word Reader*
- Our Sunday Visitor: \$5,000 *Living Nativity and Annual Retreat*
- The John Templeton Foundation: \$5,000 *Unrestricted*
- Joseph & Gertrude LaRose Foundation: \$5,000 *Unrestricted*
- Friends of Adult Day Services: \$1,000 *Rainbow Workshop scholarship*

of only two selected, receiving a generous grant of \$22,000 to repipe three houses: Peace, Nouwen and Greatfull.

We are very excited about the prospect of future grant opportunities that result from nurturing relationships with charitable trusts and foundations that love what we do and choose to become part of the L'Arche family.

*see Katrina's story, page 1

Here's More Good News

For many years L'Arche Jacksonville has worked to obtain state funding for our eligible core members. A percentage of our operating budget relies on funds from the Florida Medicare Waiver Program (MedWaiver) which provides varying amounts of financial assistance for the majority of our core members, specifically because of their disabilities. We are so grateful to have been successful in enrolling two more of our core members. This has been no easy task since there are literally thousands of individuals with disabilities in Florida who are in need of these limited funds, which tend to fluctuate from year to year.

Updates

Join the L'Arche Auxiliary

Monthly Meetings: 2nd Wednesday, 6pm

The L'Arche Auxiliary has enjoyed getting together in 2016. In February each core member received a personalized Valentine. March is always a busy month with the annual golf tournament, held this year at Deerwood Country Club. Auxiliary members helped in many ways: selling raffle tickets, handing out packets, setting up the wonderful auction items and awarding them to the lucky winners.

March also featured the annual Gate River Run for which we volunteered to hand out runner packets on Friday, prior to the Saturday event. Auxiliary members also participated in the 5K Charity Walk.

We celebrated Cinco de Mayo in May at Cantina Laredo and look forward to hosting a summer Ice Cream Social for the community. Please join us! We meet the 2nd Wednesday of every month at 6:00 in the Blanchart Community Center.

Birdies for Charity



Thanks to the generosity of THE PLAYERS Birdies for Charity campaign, L'Arche has raised **\$900** to date. The final amount will be announced by the end of May.

Gate River Run

As one of the charities supported by the 2016 Gate River Run & 5K Charity Walk, L'Arche Jacksonville received **\$3,000** for participating as volunteers (and walkers) for the 39th annual event.



Walking for L'Arche: 5K Charity Walk competitors Ann Doolittle, Penny Jones, Anne Thrasher and Nancy Smith

Capital Campaign

A New Dawn Campaign:

\$2million pledged; \$1.75million paid to date

We are in the process of raising funds for the **Endowment** and continue working to build support. **Our goal is \$200,000.** Stay tuned for new and exciting updates in the coming months.

Meet the Assistants

We Welcome:

Elizabeth (Beth) Came — Peace House

Beth grew up in Massachusetts and went to college at Hampshire where she majored in studio art and religion. She was drawn to L'Arche because of our mission to live the Beatitudes and celebrate the gifts of all people. Beth appreciates the education she is receiving at Peace House, where the core members are teaching her the joys of living in the present.



Tim Rosset – Peace House

Tim is from Wolfach, Germany. He has prior experience working with people with disabilities and plans to become a special educator and devote himself to making sure that everyone can live a full, rewarding life. Tim hopes to improve his English language skills during his time at L'Arche Jacksonville.



Destiny Johnson – Greatfull House

A native of Brooklyn, New York, and a 2013 graduate of Lincoln University, Destiny was seeking a “personal, hands-on experience” when she signed up with Catholic Volunteers in Florida. L'Arche Jacksonville answered that description, and we were the lucky beneficiaries.



Laura Layou – Nouwen House

Like Destiny Johnson, Laura came to us through Catholic Volunteers in Florida. This Michigan native is a graduate of Wayne State University and was seeking an experience where she could serve others and focus on the possibilities of a career change.



Samantha (Sam) Ross - Greatfull House

Sam is from Columbus, Ohio. During college at John Carroll University, she was a Psychology major with a minor in Italian and worked for several organizations that help people with disabilities. She was drawn to L'Arche because of the mission and the opportunity to share daily life and build close bonds with core members.



Claire McGrath – Greatfull House

Claire is from Laurel, Maryland. At Mount St. Mary's University, she directed *Best Buds*, a program that helped college students form relationships with adults with disabilities. Through *Best Buds* she joined a planning committee that is working to start a L'Arche community in Frederick, Maryland.



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L'Arche Jacksonville is proud to be a registered charity in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) annual drive. Pledges dedicated to L'Arche Jacksonville may be made by Federal civilians, postal and military donors. CFC# 95302

David Scharf – Sunflower House

Nineteen-year old David is from a small town near Hamburg, Germany. After high school, he joined the IN VIA program in order to experience life in another country. IN VIA connected him to L'Arche – one of the most unique “foreign study” programs anyone could have! David shares his love of ballroom dancing by giving lessons to the community.



Stay in the loop with **paperless** L'Arche newsletters! 
For electronic mailing, please contact us to add your email.

Michael Hryniuk, PhD

Canadian Michael Hryniuk, Ph.D, spent three days in early May leading formations at L'Arche Jacksonville and sharing insights from his 37-year relationship with L'Arche communities. Michael has written extensively about L'Arche and currently teaches a university class on the spirituality of community life.



Michael, pictured with Katrina, enjoyed spending time with the core members, assistants, staff and board members during his visit.

Congratulations, Mike!

Former Peace House assistant Mike Hanck was ordained on September 27, 2015 at Salem Lutheran Church in Toledo, Ohio and now serves as its pastor. With Lori Rush behind the wheel of her Jeep, core members Joy and Katrina, along with Peace House coordinator Sr. Betty, set out for a 7-day adventure to attend the ordination. Mike was surprised to see his friend and fellow former assistant Nelson Sinchi also had joined the celebration. Nelson now lives at L'Arche Chicago. We wish Mike all the best!



Nelson, Joy, Mike, Katrina and Sr. Betty

