

L'Arche Calgary 2020-2021
ANNUAL REPORT



A Message from the **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

2020/21 is another year past!! We thought we put the COVID pandemic behind us. Ground hog day, déjà vu or “I told you so” just happened, we continued to work through the pandemic again this year.

Our community hunkered down for another year in the mist of health orders and waves of rising cases. Fortunately, we learned the lessons of the past year and COVID had a minimal effect on our community. This is a tribute to the leadership team, administrative and development team, team leaders and assistants for their vigilance, dedication, and hard work.



We spent most of the year navigating the health orders so that we can continue with our day program. Thankfully, we managed to continue to operate our day program in a limited capacity. Throughout the year, we did what other Calgarians did – renovations to our homes. We managed to work and complete most of our “To Do” list. With that in mind, as always, our faithful and committed donors has blessed us with their generosity to enable us to support and provide for our core members. Like last year, the annual Rogers Run for L’Arche was held virtually. Once again, thanks to all the participants, it was a success again and more optimistically more L’Arche communities had participated in the Run – something that we can grow next year!

The community found ways to continue our spirit through community life, prayer nights, celebrations, and coffeehouse as we went virtual – Zoom!! Despite not being able to physically meet, we continue to inspire, socialize with each other, and support each other.

As we start the new 2021/22 year, the spring air brings a sense of renewal, hope and vitality. We have begun planning and working towards a new mandate in the fall. This mandate will drive L’Arche Calgary with a focussed goal of not only sustaining our community but enhancing it by diversifying, integrating, and sharing the gifts that our community has to offer.

In closing, I invite everyone to share the enthusiasm that I feel every time I walk into the office and our core members are present. They live each day with joy and with much happiness to be able to see each other and share their day with everyone. Their gifts are truly genuine to share!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Eng". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

John Eng
Director of Operations
*(Acting Community Leader/
Executive Director)*

A Letter from the

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

from 2020-2021

The Board of Directors of L'Arche Calgary has been working hard to support our community. You may wonder what the Board of Directors does. L'Arche International has a short video* that explains the role of the board in a L'Arche Community. The Board meets regularly to, as the video says, understand the mission of L'Arche Calgary, ensure its legal and financial integrity, ensure the credibility of our community within the wider Calgary community, and contribute to the growth and development of our community. We do this by working by working closely with the Community Leader and the Regional Leader to ensure that the community has the resources it needs to fulfill its mission. Who are the people that make up the Board of L'Arche Calgary? We are a group of nine women and men of various backgrounds, experience, and skills who have volunteered to serve the L'Arche Calgary community.

As we all know, this past year has been challenging. I don't know that anyone would have imagined a year ago that we would still be facing lockdowns and restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has presented many challenges to the mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing of our community. Restrictions on our normal activities have been particularly difficult and have resulted in a less connected community than we would all like to have. I know I speak for all board members, when I say that we particularly miss opportunities to connect with the community through suppers at homes and other community gatherings. I take comfort and give thanks, however, for the outstanding effort of our dedicated staff to keep the community safe and healthy. This includes our wonderful Assistants, House Leaders, Day Program and SILP Leader, Leadership Team, Office Staff, and volunteers. All have given a tremendous effort that is very much appreciated by the Board of Directors.

One of the concerns of the Board amid the pandemic is the financial health of our community. I am pleased to say that, under the circumstances, our finances are in good shape. This is thanks to the effort of our employees, access to grants from generous foundations in the Calgary community, and the ongoing support of many dedicated individual donors.

As we look forward to the coming year there are hopeful signs that the pandemic will be brought under control. With everyone's prayers and support our community will grow stronger and better than ever.

Finally, I want to thank our beautiful core members. Your kind, generous, and enthusiastic spirit continues to inspire us and make our world a better place.



Mike Doty

President

L'Arche Calgary Board of Directors



*Mission of L'Arche and Role of Board
<https://vimeo.com/279283631>

our STORY

L'Arche began in 1964 in the French Village of Trosly-Breuil. The first house was named "L'Arche", French for "the ark" after Noah's ark: a safe and secure plan, and a sign of God's care and provision. Today there are 154 L'Arche communities in 38 countries around the world.

L'Arche Calgary creates community with 19 core members (individuals with a developmental disabilities) plus 19 live-in Assistants residing in five homes. Our Supported Independent Living Program assists five core members to live in the broader community.

In addition, we provide the Tamarack Day Program which allows 16 individuals to enjoy activities related to their goals, interests, and particular needs with a focus on helping them build relationships.

At L'Arche, we believe...

Every person deserves and longs to be loved and to find a place where they truly belong. Our abilities, or disabilities, do not make this any more or less true.

WE are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing and creating a community rooted in shared respect and belonging.

We celebrate the unique gifts of every person and recognize our need for one another. Together we are building a more inclusive community with trust in God at the centre of our journey.



SILP: Resilience through hard times

The pandemic has been difficult for everyone. Our Supported Independent Living Program (SILP) is no exception. Jyothi, one of our assistants, was caught on the other end of the world at the start of the pandemic, and it took her three months of constant trying to get back to us. Duncan was laid off from his job after five years of dedication and Basil, who thrives on community contact, struggled to understand the realities of his new isolation. Ed could no longer engage in his daily ritual of going to get a copy of the newspaper and a coffee at the mall. We lost in-person contact with Karen and Sheila, who reside in long term care and more recently we said goodbye to Karen altogether after she died in March.

Yet despite our struggles, we managed to grow and thrive through it all. Basil became reconnected with many friends over the phone and even got a new phone! Duncan was able to move to a new apartment in December in the middle of the second wave because community members, including the community leader, Robyn, and her family, responded to the call one weekend to help Duncan move before the monster snowstorm that would arrive two days later. Ed became the proud owner of a cherished model car that he keeps on display in his apartment. Sheila was ecstatic when she could return to our Day Program once a week. Even Karen was reconnected with her friends at SILP through regular Zoom meetings before she passed away.

Last fall, we welcomed a new assistant, new life, and even a new Core Member through it all. Jovelyn, an assistant, had a beautiful baby girl in the fall. Travis came on board to cover Jovelyn's maternity leave. We welcomed Philip our newest core member to the SILP family.



Our assistants all agree that the pandemic has brought us all closer together. Jyothi knew who to call when her car was stuck in snow. Travis and Prosper came to her rescue! SILP became a COVID cohort and celebrated holidays and milestones together and attended prayer night together in a much more intimate setting. We are now beginning to see the other end of this as, one by one, we are attending our vaccination appointments, eventually allowing us to become physically as well as emotionally closer.

Making an Impact

IN LIGHT OF COVID-19



During COVID-19 pandemic, Shula learned to do some beading at home. Shula started by putting 2 or 3 beads on the string at the time and she would walk away. Sometimes she would make 5 to 10 beads at a time and she became so good at making beads that she would make an entire string.

After a few month of beading, she decided to make a best gift ever for her mom's Birthday. Teresa and Shula spend time together looking for suitable beads. They choose glass beads with a lot of different designs which are real pieces of art. Shula made a fancy necklace and a bracelet for her the one and only mom.

On the actual Birthday, Shula drove along with Manoj, Shirisha and few core-members to deliver the gift to Rachelle. They sneak by the front door and left the gift on the steps. They drove away and phoned Rachelle to wish her a HAPPIEST BIRTHDAY day and asked her to open the front door.....

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RACHELLE and MANY MORE from all of us at VILLA!!!

During the pandemic, many of our core-members have been able to learn new valuable skills such as Curtis who blossomed as an artist this year. Prior to the pandemic, Curtis hadn't expressed much interest in art, but with the encouragement of our Day Program Arts Coordinator Lidia, he began growing in confidence and art skill.

Curtis' extraordinary artwork was especially popular and much in demand for the opening day of day program art sale as all five of Curtis's art pieces were quickly sold out! Lidia observed, "I think Curtis always had a passion for art, but his hidden talent needed to be tapped into. Curtis needed to find the right technique for his unique style and in the creative process of mixing colours and creating his own world on canvas he found that he loves to paint! Now when Curtis arrives to Day Program he always asks to do art..



LIDIA: HOME, PEACE & JOY

Despite the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Lidia and her team continue to fulfill L'Arche Calgary's mission. On a daily basis, they share their lives with core members, providing them a family-base, a support system, and most importantly, an enhanced quality of life. "We are there for each other, through the good times and the bad."

Lidia was asked what three words best describe L'Arche Calgary. She paused thoughtfully. "Home," she said. "Peace," she added. And with a smile, she said: "Joy."

Possibly the best example of this was Lidia's first day at L'Arche. It was February 14 – Valentine's Day. To celebrate, the assistants and core members threw a party. The day home, adorned with pink and red decorations, vibrated with music and dancing. It was here that Lidia met the assistants that would be on

her team: "There were so many characters," she recalls with a chuckle.

Since 2007, Lidia has shared her life with her team and the core members. But her career has gone far beyond those 14 years, and far beyond the city limits. Before she moved to Calgary, she worked with youth living with developmental disabilities in Montreal. When reflecting on her career, Lidia notes, "Disability work is a close-knit community." This, she explains, is because those living with developmental disabilities face rates of social isolation much higher than that of the general population. Friendship and community are their greatest tools to fight this isolation.



On an average day at L'Arche, you may find Lidia reading horoscopes with core members over a cup of coffee, or elbows-deep in paint and glitter while making crafts. You may also find her teaching a life skills lesson or playing music alongside the core members.

Though her day-to-day routine has been uprooted and complicated by the pandemic, Lidia holds onto those three words: home, peace, joy. "It's a gift to be able to work here," Lidia remarks. She adds that it is a gift to be able to be together again, safe and happy, despite the obstacles that the pandemic threw at them.



2020-2021 Highlights

RACHELLE: A PLACE OF LOVE

"When I walked in for the first time, I could see Shula living there," Rachelle recalls about her first time visiting the L'Arche home 14 years ago. Shula is her daughter, who was 30 years old at the time, and as Rachelle puts it, "profoundly autistic." She and Shula had reached a moment of transition in their life, and a chance opening in the L'Arche home offered a glimpse at a new chapter.

What initially struck Rachelle about the home was how it felt true to its name. A home. The smell of food cooking lingered in from the kitchen, voices and laughter bounced off the walls – the house was alive.

What Rachelle did not anticipate was the level of growth she would see in her daughter in the coming years. Not only would Shula be able to sit at the dining table and enjoy meals with the other core members, she would become more assertive, improve her communication skills, and even take up hobbies, like beading.



With the emergence of COVID-19, many of our core members with developmental disabilities such as Shula faced high levels of social isolation, for a time Rachelle and Shula could only exchange smiles and waves on either side of a window.

It has been different for the two of them, but every visit is that much more meaningful. As Rachelle attests, "I could breathe for the first time." She could trust that L'Arche was a place where her daughter would be embraced with love and kindness and provide a community through the assistants and other core members.

L'Arche Calgary's impact reached far beyond Shula. Even now, Shula continues to thrive with her found family at L'Arche. "People think someone like Shula needs a psychologist, or a specialist..." Rachelle said. "When what she really needs is patience, calm, joy and routine."

Throughout Shula's 14 years with L'Arche, she has never been alone in her fight. She has always had the support of the L'Arche team in her corner. People think someone like Shula needs a psychologist, or a specialist... Rachelle said. "When what she really needs is patience, calm, joy and routine."

For Rachelle and Shula, L'Arche is a home, but more importantly it is a place that provides love.

A Year in Review **REFLECTIONS** *From Our Volunteers*

KATIE, *Annapurna Volunteer*



I have been volunteering at Annapurna weekly since the beginning of April - cooking dinner and just spending time with the core members and assistants. I would read a lot of Henri Nouwen's work and was moved by his experiences at Daybreak in Ontario; I wanted to see what that kind of intentional diverse community looked like in Calgary! The welcome I received from everyone was so warm and accepting - I felt immediately like an important member of the community. Through my weekly visits to Annapurna, I am seeing a loving community lived out well-members and are quick to ask for and offer forgiveness, celebrate with one another, stand up for and support each other. It is a true pleasure to spend time in this community, and I look forward to continuing to grow in these relationships.

JULIE, *Rogers Run Volunteer*

I was one of the original crew who trained for our first marathon back in 2010 to raise money & awareness for L'Arche Calgary. It was "just an idea" during a conversation at the office one day, which turned out to be one of the best experiences in my life, that taught me about friendship, acceptance and commitment at a new level. The gifts that the L'Arche members bring to our community combined with the running community are truly remarkable.

Thanks to group of determined people, the race gained great momentum and knew it had to continue, even during a pandemic! Most years I've contributed to promoting the race & fundraising, and then with social media to connect with the running community at large & the amazing sponsors. I love hearing the participants share their stories and what keeps them coming back!



2020-2021

DONOR RECOGNITION

Benefaction Foundation

Berkhold Family Foundation

Calgary Foundation

CCA Truck Driver Training

Christ The King Friary

Christian Stewardship Services

Economical Insurance Calgary

Enterprise Holdings Foundation

Franciscan Missionaries of Mary

Government of Alberta CIP Grant Program

Government of Alberta PDD (Persons with Development Disabilities)

Holy Trinity Anglican Church

Knights of Columbus - St. Bonaventure #7432

Lyceum Society of Calgary, Knights of Columbus Council 1186

Nickle Family Foundation

Rogers Insurance Ltd.

Sisters of Charity of Providence

Sisters of Providence

Spartan Controls Ltd.

St. Luke's CWL

Teknion-BMO

The Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus

United Way of Calgary and Area

Valentine Volvo

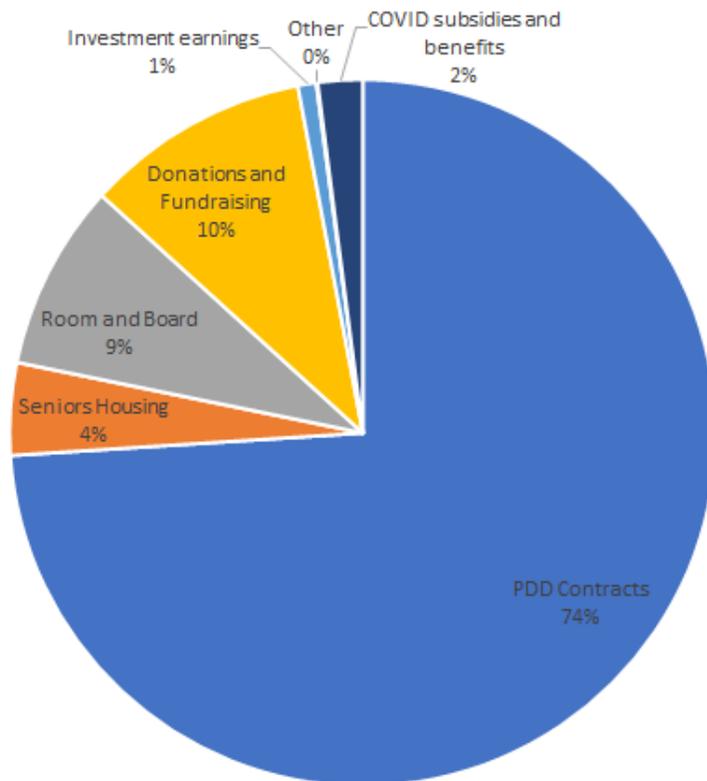
Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, remarkable people, organizations (like Calgary Foundation, Nickle Family Foundation, Berkhold Foundation and Kinsmen Club of Calgary), community groups, small businesses and corporations have all stepped up to support our L'Arche Calgary mission.

Thank you for your generous support!

Breaking Down the

FINANCIALS *for 2020-2021*

Revenues



Revenues	2021
PDD Contracts	\$ 3,103,456.00
Seniors Housing	\$ 177,124.00
Room and Board	\$ 358,116.00
Donations and Fundraising	\$ 432,351.00
Investment earnings	\$ 35,351.00
Other	\$ 2,725.00
COVID subsidies and benefits	\$ 85,804.00

Expenses

Expenses	2021
Salaries, Benefits and other Personnel	\$ 3,302,250.00
Building Expense	\$ 260,486.00
Program Expenses	\$ 255,432.00
Property - Amortization	\$ 90,740.00
Memberships and training	\$ 91,803.00
Professional fees	\$ 95,073.00
Administration	\$ 87,673.00

