

Dear Friends,

Strange...unprecedented...new normal. These words have been used a lot to describe life in a pandemic. We are living these at L'Arche Calgary, but we are also living our values: building community, sharing our gifts, trusting in God.

We are not untouched by COVID-19. Our core members are vulnerable and many are high-risk if they contract the virus. We are very conscious of this and have made significant changes to how we operate in order to reduce risk. Also, as a licensed service provider we are subject to the same restrictions and protocols as long-term care facilities, which change frequently. It has not been easy. We are deeply grateful to our Team Leaders and Assistants in our homes and programs who are diligent in keeping themselves and our community members safe and healthy.

There is a financial impact as well. Per regulations, we have had to purchase protective equipment such as gloves, masks, gowns, and eyewear, and we are waiting for more. We need to hire more staff in order to ensure we can meet the needs of our community members, particularly in the event that current personnel need to self-isolate.

Fred Rogers (Mr. Rogers) once told the story of his mom saying, "Look to the helpers" in times of crisis. We have been blessed with many helpers: people sewing masks and gowns, picking up groceries, entertaining our members, and reaching out with donations.

If you can help, let us know. If you are in a position to make a financial contribution, you can do so directly through our website [HERE](#). We are grateful for any and all support.

This special "Pandemic Edition" of our Signs of Hope newsletter gives you a glimpse into life in our L'Arche community these days. Thank you for your prayers during this challenging time. Our community is praying for you and your families as well.

Robyn Jackson  
Community Leader

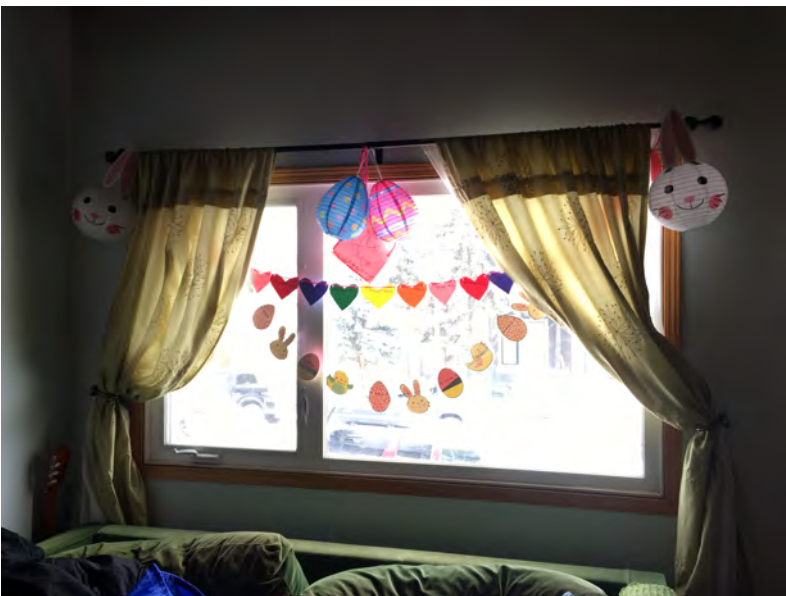


# Life in Homes - Pandemic Style

By Annie Ruckdashel, Day Program Assistant and Spiritual Life Committee Chair

These days we spend most of our time with the same people under the same roof! It is in being with one another, day in and day out, that we have a unique opportunity to deepen our relationships. We can ask for help when we need it and say sorry when we miss the mark. It's not easy and yet we still encounter joy in the ordinary of this 'new normal'.

We are creating and we are resting. We are cooking and enjoying food, walking and talking, and we are quiet. We are sanitizing a lot! We are singing, dancing and Zoom-ing often. Some of us are waving out our windows while others are emailing, phoning and delivering goods. We come to realize we are continuously connecting beyond the four walls of our homes, though we don't leave very often. What if this 'new normal' is building a stronger community... us staying present to the movements of love in the ordinary, everyday moments? Let's keep building...





# Maintaining Community

The pandemic is a challenge for us all, but it can be especially isolating for our core members who live outside L'Arche homes and are currently physically cut off from the community.

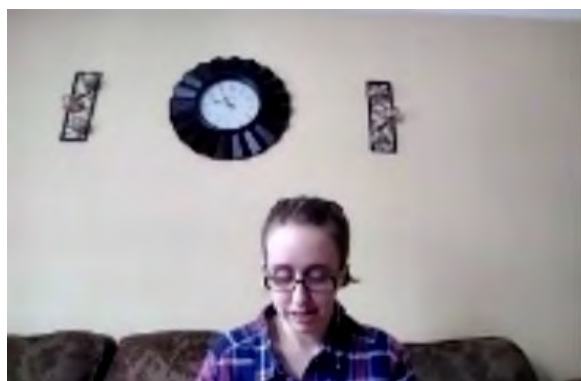
To bridge this gap, one of our Day Program Assistants, Mai, is connecting daily with them. Using online technology, she ensures they still participate in activities such as music therapy, dance and creative movement sessions. Mai also works with them on craft projects and life-skills, and sometimes simply checks in, chatting or reading a story together.

The SILP (Supported Independent Living Program) core members have also felt more isolated. They lost their Day Programs, Employment, and Community Recreation and can't pop into the L'Arche homes for dinner and go to community gatherings. As a result, the SILP team quickly stepped up to create a Day Program at the L'Arche office to keep them active and occupied daily. These core members are busy with projects such as gifts for an SILP Assistant who is stuck in her home country due to a travel ban. While watching hockey reruns on Youtube and drinking drive-thru "Double Doubles" they are making over 300 appreciation cards and they're also busy creating birdhouses and paintings for friends and loved ones.

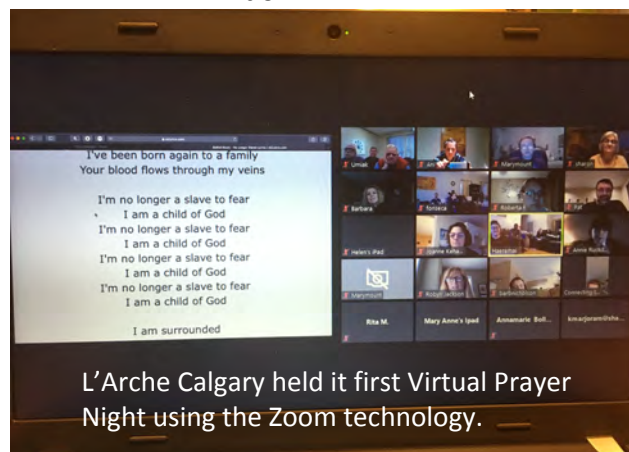
All of these core members are tapping into technology and the phone to stay connected to the community. We are grateful for our teams, volunteers, and friends who connect with them to remind them that they belong and they are never alone.



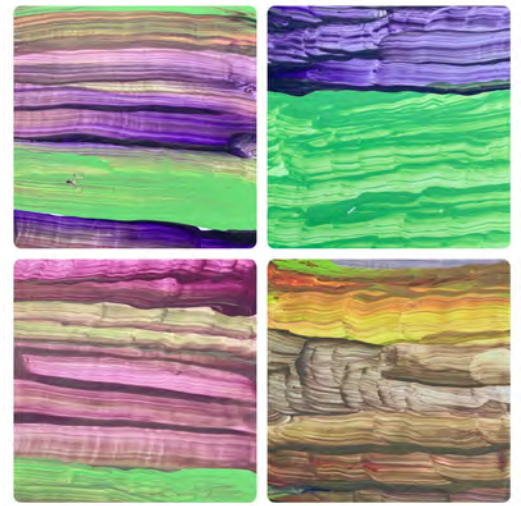
Duncan made a dream catcher for an assistant who is stuck in another country due to Lock down.



McKayla working on a project via Zoom



L'Arche Calgary held it first Virtual Prayer Night using the Zoom technology.



We are grateful for our wonderful volunteers Lynn, Cathy and Lisa from the Adult Recreational Choirs for sewing isolation gowns and masks for us!

Art work by our Core-members for cards.

## Ways to Support L'Arche Calgary

- Donate: financial contributions are much needed at this time. You can do so by cheque or credit card [HERE](#).
- Give gift cards to our homes who are in isolation: Wal-Mart, Superstore, pizza places, Tim Horton's, etc.
- Send or drop off cards, letters, craft kits, activities to our homes and SILP members. Address: L'Arche Calgary 307 57 Ave SW Calgary AB T2H 2T6
- Share your musical talent with our community! We host regular video gatherings and welcome people who would like to entertain us. Email Ani Hynes at [ahynes@larchecalgary.org](mailto:ahynes@larchecalgary.org) for more information.

## L'Arche Calgary WestJet Raffle

In celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Rogers Insurance Run for L'Arche, we are raffling off 2 Tickets anywhere WestJet flies worldwide – and yes, personnel and members of L'Arche can purchase tickets to win. [Click Here](#) for details

**Draw Date: April 30, 2020**



**L'Arche Calgary**

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