



Volunteer Opportunities

Friends of L'Arche Atlanta has many different opportunities for individuals in the Atlanta community to contribute to the forming and maintaining of a L'Arche community in Atlanta. Below are different areas that are in need of individuals.

Communications Committee Members

Members of this committee will develop articles for the bi monthly newsletter and for the website. Individuals will also help to publicize Friends of L'Arche Atlanta events in the larger community. Members will also help with the distribution of the newsletter and other public information put out by Friends of L'Arche Atlanta.

Fundraising Committee Members

Members of this committee will plan and participate in fundraising events for Friends of L'Arche Atlanta. Individuals will also help in the researching and writing of grants and will meet with potential donors with the help of Board members.

Trustees and Property Committee Members

Members of this committee will help to locate and acquire a house for the Atlanta L'Arche community. Individuals will help to coordinate the building and be over building maintenance.

Government Relations Committee Members

Members of this committee will assist Friends of L'Arche Atlanta in developing relations with and acquire knowledge about government entities necessary to run a facility such as a L'Arche community.

Finance Committee Members

Members of this committee will help with Friends of L'Arche Atlanta with bookkeeping, accounting, and tax preparation.

Committee Recruiter

This person or group of people will assist Friends of L'Arche Atlanta in recruitment of people to join committees and the Board of Directors. They will be part of the Committee and Board Development Committee.

Advisory Board Members

Members of this board should be able to attend annual or semi-annual Advisory Board meetings. Individuals will advise the Friends of L'Arche Atlanta Board of Directors with fundraising and development goals.



History

L'Arche Communities, founded by Jean Vanier in France in 1964, bring together people, some with developmental disabilities and some without, who choose to share their lives by living together in faith-based communities. The first L'Arche community in the United States was founded in 1972, and there are now 16 communities nationwide.

History of Friends of L'Arche Atlanta, Inc.

Friends of L'Arche Atlanta started as a Local Planning Group with a group of 15 people that met once a month from November 2003 until November 2004. The Planning group read and studied the principles of L'Arche, visited L'Arche communities in the United States, and shared in monthly worship and fellowship together. This process helped us to build a firm foundation of commitment to the core values of L'Arche.

Even before we began meeting as a Local Planning Group, many of us helped organize, and others of us participated in, a retreat with Jean Vanier in June 2003. During that time, we met members of the International L'Arche Federation. We also met some of the core members and assistants in the communities in L'Arche Mobile and L'Arche Jacksonville. The retreat sparked interest in how a community could be developed in Atlanta. In September 2003, the Local Planning Group was formed after an initial meeting with Central Regional Coordinator, Jo Anne Horstmann.

After meeting together for a year and a half, the Local Planning Group discerned that there was both a need and the resources necessary to support opening a L'Arche community in Atlanta. In November 2004, three of the Local Planning Group members attended the L'Arche Central Regional Council meeting and presented an application to become a Pre-Project of L'Arche. That group unanimously approved our application and took it to the U.S. Zone Board for consideration. In December 2004, the Local Planning Group was officially approved by the U.S. Zone Board to become a Friends of L'Arche Pre-Project group. A board of directors was formed and in December 2005 we secured our non-profit 501-3 status. We are now in the process of announcing our vision to the larger Atlanta community, raising the funds necessary to support a house, and completing the requirements we have to become a Project of L'Arche and open a house. We are excited to share this vision with the larger Atlanta community.



What is L'Arche?

What is L'Arche? What does L'Arche mean?

L'Arche is a place where people with and without disabilities choose to live together in a faith based community. L'Arche is a French word, and it means "the Ark" and is the name of a world-wide federation of communities in which people with and without disabilities come together to form intentional communities with one another.

L'Arche was founded 40 years ago in France by a philosopher named Jean Vanier, a Catholic priest named Father Thomas Philippe, and two core members named Raphael Simi and Philippe Seux. Since then, over 120 communities have been founded in more than 30 countries across the globe.

What is a L'Arche community?

L'Arche communities offer a space for sharing and celebration. In community, each person contributes their gifts for the common good, and each member also learns to receive from others. L'Arche communities are intentional, because members choose to share, work, and celebrate together. L'Arche communities include people with and without disabilities and recognize that everyone has gifts to share.

Who are the people living in L'Arche communities? What are their roles?

Core members are the people with disabilities at the center of L'Arche. They are the heart or "core" of the community, and often, individual core members are the individuals with the longest relationship with any particular L'Arche community.

Assistants are community members without apparent disabilities. They do just as their name suggests—they assist the core members with the different daily activities within community life such as daily care needs, medical appointments, and household tasks. But beyond that, assistants share their gifts with the larger community, and they are an important link between the core members and the cities and towns where they live and work.

What role does one play if they are unable to live in the L'Arche community?

Friends of the community are individuals who provide various types of support to individual L'Arche communities, but they do not live in L'Arche homes with the core members and assistants. Friends form an important network of support for members of the community, they often volunteer their time and talent to serve on boards or committees, or they may participate in community events including the sharing of holidays, worship, or other community celebrations like birthdays and anniversaries.

Is a L'Arche community like a group home?

L'Arche communities provide safe homes for individuals with developmental disabilities. In addition, L'Arche communities seek to support persons with disabilities and ensure their success in living in the greater community. These concepts are similar to a traditional group home; however, L'Arche communities are places where core members and assistants make choices to live and share their lives together. L'Arche communities seek to support each member of the community regardless of ability, which differs from group homes. In addition, another important difference between a L'Arche community and what is generally thought of as a group home, is that members of L'Arche celebrate and share their lives together.

How are people chosen to live in L'Arche homes?

Most L'Arche communities engage in a discernment process that involves all members of the community including the existing and potential core members or assistants. People come to L'Arche from all walks of life, and each community develops its own way of finding the right role for individuals, whether they are core members, assistants or friends of the community.

What do you mean when you say that L'Arche is a spiritual community?

L'Arche was founded in the spirit of the beatitudes; the movement consists of communities that seek to welcome those who have been ignored or shunned by society. When L'Arche began, it was strongly associated with the Catholic faith, but as more communities have emerged, persons from different faith traditions have been included. All communities embrace the beautiful truth of the beatitudes.



Mission & Identity

IDENTITY OF L'ARCHE

We are people, with and without developmental disabilities, sharing life in communities of faith. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together. We seek to build a world that recognizes the unique value of every person and our need of one another

The **MISSION OF L'ARCHE** is

To make known the gifts of people with developmental disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships;

To engage in our diverse cultures, working together toward a more human society;

To foster community that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and responds to the changing needs of our members.