



## Getting Involved in L'Arche Belfast

### **BE A LIVE IN ASSISTANT/VOLUNTEER...**

Together with the Core Members the 'Live In Assistants' are at the heart of our home life in the community and their contribution is invaluable.

We welcome applications from anyone over 20 years of age, from anywhere in the world; however, an applicant must seek and receive the appropriate UK Visa once a place is offered. We expect that an assistant will be able to speak English with some confidence. We ask prospective assistants to visit their nearest L'Arche Community, if possible, so that they can experience L'Arche in their own culture before applying to L'Arche Belfast.

Choosing to be an assistant in L'Arche Belfast is to choose an interdependent lifestyle that is inspired and shaped by the teaching gifts of people who have 'learning disabilities' and rooted in Gospel values. Some people join us for one or two years while for others L'Arche becomes a way of life.

During their time with L'Arche Belfast, many assistants develop a clearer sense of direction based both on their strengths and also on the transformative power of their own fallibility and need. Through the relationships formed in community, assistants discover in themselves compassion, empathy, and leadership—gifts that welcome difference and include new possibilities and perspectives. Often assistants are surprised by the depth their experiences in community and by the power of the 'Core Members' to touch their lives, influence their thinking and lead them into a whole new way of seeing the world. Community life encourages assistants, shapes their actions and gives them hope for our common future.

*What you can expect if you choose to become a Live in Assistant...*

What makes a L'Arche home distinct from other residences where adults with learning disabilities live is that L'Arche is home to both the 'Core Members' and the 'Assistants' and life is shared together in all its aspects. As a member of the household you will accompany core members in their activities of daily life, helping them as needed, discovering who they are, and developing a

relationship with them and with other members of the household and the community. You will also be expected to participate in and assist the core members with all the activities associated with 'homemaking'--shopping, cooking, laundry, cleaning, and preparing celebrations.

While previous experience is desirable but not essential, you must have a willingness to learn from and be changed by the Core Members, to embrace the training that L'Arche provides to new assistants, to work in a team, and to support the members of your household to live into their full potential, to offer their gifts, to participate in the activities of the community and to contribute as members of their local community.

As a faith community, prayer in all its forms is a natural part of the daily life and you will be expected to respect this and to participate. You will also receive induction and training in your role and formation in the vision, values and practices of the community. You will be paid a modest monthly 'living allowance' and receive your board and lodgings free. You will have a period of rest and recreation time each day and days for personal rest and recreation each week.

Assistants usually make an initial commitment of a year, with the first three months being a period of orientation and a time for the assistant and the community to discover whether your choice to come to L'Arche is beneficial for you and the community. If you and the community agree to proceed, you will be given a contract outlining your role and responsibilities and the terms and conditions of your involvement with the community.

If you require further information please contact us at [volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk)

### **BE A DONOR ...**

***Every gift counts:*** The financial support of individuals, foundations, corporations, churches and other faith-based organizations enables L'Arche Belfast to create a space of welcome, friendship and belonging for all who come particularly those who have learning disabilities whose presence is central to our community life. Your support will make a huge difference to our lives.

If you wish to make a donation please contact us at:

[finance@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:finance@larchebelfast.org.uk)

### **BE A VOLUNTEER ...**

One way of being connected to the community and to get to know us better is to commit a little time on a regular basis to lend a helping hand and support us in

our work. There are many ways of doing this according to your desire, your gifts, your skills, your experience and your availability.

If you have experience in issues related to governance such as legal, financial, business, and care provision expertise and are committed to the vision and ethos of L'Arche you might consider eventually becoming a member of our **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**. If this is something that you would be open to exploring further please contact: [leader@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:leader@larchebelfast.org.uk)

If your particular interest is fundraising we would welcome you with open arms to be a member of our **FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE** or alternatively to organize an event to benefit L'Arche in your own home, work place, church or community. For further information please contact [finance@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:finance@larchebelfast.org.uk)

If you are interested in the daily life and the relational aspect of the community you might consider becoming a **REGULAR VOLUNTEER**, coming once a week, once a month or however best fits the community and your own schedule. Regular volunteers participate in activities inside and outside of the home such as cooking a meal once a week, going to church with a Core Member, helping in our garden, doing the ironing, meeting a Core Member and an assistant for coffee ... etc. If this possibility interests you, please contact, [volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk)

Alternatively you might prefer to be an **OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEER** and share a skill such as gardening, house cleaning, art, music, sewing, carpentry, plumbing, reading or any other professional services. You could cook for special events or organize a group to help with seasonal cleaning, painting, gardening, house maintenance and/or an arts & crafts project. You could also create an outside activity for the community - we love anything that involves food, fun and friendship. If you have any ideas that you would enjoy doing with the community, please contact, [volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk)

As **A FRIEND** we are always happy to welcome you to any event that we organise, to include you on our mailing list and to attend any event that you might invite us to in your own neighbourhood. You could also befriend an assistant by showing them around Belfast, inviting them to dinner or offering them a room in your home when they have rest days and weekends.

To become a volunteer or friend please contact us at [volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@larchebelfast.org.uk)

Finally you could **INVITE US TO SPEAK** to any groups that you are involved in (your youth group, church, school or community group) if you are interested

in spreading the vision of L'Arche and discovering how we can work together to create the world we believe in and a future that is worth living into. Please contact us at [info@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:info@larchebelfast.org.uk)

### **BE AN EMPLOYEE ...**

Occasionally we have vacancies for employed roles in the community. Currently we have employed management, administration and care support staff. Vacancies are advertised in the local press and on the NICVA website - <http://www.nicva.org> Online application forms for can be downloaded from our website - [www.larchebelfast.org.uk](http://www.larchebelfast.org.uk)

### **WANT TO FIND OUT MORE?**

Further Details about L'Arche Belfast may be had from our website [www.larchebelfast.org.uk](http://www.larchebelfast.org.uk)

You can contact us directly at: [info@larchebelfast.org.uk](mailto:info@larchebelfast.org.uk) or by writing to us at: The L'Arche Belfast Office, 563 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3JA, Northern Ireland.