

L'Arche Clinton welcomes new core member, Madonna

By Devin Land
Community Leader

One of the highlights of our year, thus far, at L'Arche Clinton has been welcoming new core member Madonna. Madonna moved into our Arch I home in late April, and she brings many gifts to our community: she is independent, sociable, has a great sense of humor, and as I like to say, "keeps us on our toes." Moving into a L'Arche Clinton home did not change the lifestyle Madonna has kept as a Clinton native. She still holds her job at Mercy North, where she has worked over 30 years. She also volunteers at the Victory Center and Bargain Bo-

nanza, rides her bike for exercise, and maintains her network of social connections in Clinton.

At Arch I, Madonna has demonstrated a natural ability to lead by example. She regularly helps with dinner preparation and clean-up, puts together the house shopping lists, and ensures that the recycling is separated appropriately and taken care of. In one instance she took the initiative to call the city to get them to come and pick up the trash that was not picked up on the regular trash day. Madonna is truly a blessing for the Arch I home!

A celebration was held on July 20 to welcome Madonna to our community. By Madonna's choice, the decorations were purple (her favorite color) and the menu consisted of pizza and salad. Combining Madonna's guest list with our normal community attendance led to the best attended L'Arche celebration I've witnessed in my time as community leader: a testament to Madonna's nature as a "social butterfly." It was a great party!

Thanks Madonna, for being you! We're glad you're part of the L'Arche Clinton community!



Annette Lyons, one of L'Arche Clinton's pastoral ministers, blesses Madonna's hands as part of the welcoming ceremony.



The L'Arche Clinton community, along with some of Madonna's friends, offer her a blessing as she is welcomed by all, to our community.



Madonna and her sister, Molly, are all smiles at the welcoming ceremony held in Madonna's honor.

Summer picnic and open house at Arch IV: Blessing the new deck



Arch IV new deck. The new deck (left), constructed at Arch IV, gives the core members a safe space to enjoy the outdoors. Brenda Connell and Jeff Schuetzle, members of the L'Arche Clinton Spiritual Life Committee, offer a blessing for the deck and all who choose to use it. The deck was partially funded by a grant from the Clinton County Development Association. More photos on page 3.

To Northern Ireland and back: the travels of a core member and her friend

By **Bethany Luzny**

Community Life Coordinator, L'Arche Clinton

"We'll have to do this again sometime," Sarah-Jane said aloud while sitting in the middle of the Keflavik International Airport, outside of Reykjavik, Iceland. "Do what?" I replied, scrolling through the Facebook app on my phone for the umpteenth time, not prepared for the answer Sarah was about to give: "Go on a trip!"

I immediately felt my eyebrows furrow as I attempted to understand what had just



Tea anyone? Sarah enjoys a cup of tea outside of Queen's University in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

been said. At that point in our travels, we had gotten off to a slow and unexpected start. First, there were the extra four hours we sat in Chicago O'Hare due to a rain delay that grounded all planes. Next, was the six-hour flight to Iceland where we missed our connecting flight to Paris due to the storm back in the United States. Here, we found out that we would eventually make it to France, but only after sitting in Iceland for another 6 hours and then spending a night in Amsterdam, putting us in Paris an almost full 24-hours after we had planned. I wasn't sure which part I would want to relive.

"We haven't even left an airport," I finally fumbled out, not sure how else to respond. "I know," Sarah said with no hesitation. "But it's never too early to start planning." There wasn't much to do then, other than have an exhaustion-fueled laugh together.

I didn't know it then, but Sarah had already tapped into what became a theme for our international adventures to Pierrefonds, France for a L'Arche community visit before heading to Belfast, Northern Ireland for the 2017 L'Arche International Federation Gathering. This theme is the Irish notion of "having the craic," pronounced like "crack." What this means, we learned, is always being up for a bit of fun and banter, in the midst of whatever life mixes up.

While we didn't have a word for this concept until a week into the trip, there were plenty of opportunities in France to lean into the idea. Two examples include not being able to verbally communicate with most of the community members in Pierrefonds, as our French was as limited as their English, and being invited to drink our morning coffee and hot chocolate from bowls, rather than mugs. Sarah found this practice particularly eyebrow raising at first. We also had to go with the flow on the

Unlike in France, where our days were loosely structured with plenty of time for sitting and reading on the couch in the foyer or taking a walk among some pet chickens with our 12 temporary housemates, our week in Belfast was filled to the brim with activity. Alongside opportunities to connect with the 500 other international delegates during small group exercises and times of prayer, we also had the important work of voting for our new International mandate and federation leaders. And while our obligated commitments usually ended around 6:30pm, Sarah and I were always up for some extra fun: exploring the area with the guidance of a local new friend, leading to some late nights out seeing the sights and having a pint. In true L'Arche style, we also took in an Irish *ceili*dh— similar to a barn dance, with fast-paced music and the chance to cut loose.

By the end of our two-week trip, we had done and tried everything offered and some things we explored on our own, ensuring that "the craic was ninety" or rather "the fun



Enjoying the scenery. Out for a walk in Pierrefonds, France.

day we flew out of France for Belfast, as we didn't know who was taking us to the airport, an hour away from the L'Arche community, what time we would be leaving, or how we were getting there. Everything did, however, work out and we made it through security and customs onto our flight without a hitch.

never ended!" While we were ready for our own beds and some American delicacies, such as Kraft Mac N' Cheese, we both agree we would do it all again. As Sarah said about getting stamps in her passport, which is good advice for anyone, "Might as well fill it up! [You] have to get a new one in ten years anyway!"



Once you've experienced L'Arche, it's in your heart

Editor's note: Meredith Gursky and Julia Huber, assistants at L'Arche Mexico visited our community on their way home.

I had the privilege of getting to know L'Arche during my years at Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania. It all started with a simple invitation and a hesitant but curious "yes" to attending a community dinner and prayer service. Like many other folks when first experiencing L'Arche, I felt a little uneasy and unsure at first but was soon overcome by an overwhelming sense of "home." Although I never became an assistant in Erie or really became a close friend for that matter, the feeling of belonging in L'Arche strengthened when I had the opportunity to travel to the community in Mexico City with a group of university students. After graduating I decided to return to Mexico to share life for a year as a live-in assistant.

Having the opportunity to get to know L'Arche Clinton was a blessing for me. Witnessing the rhythm of life in Arch IV, chatting with new and long term assistants, listening to Sarah's stories about Belfast, joking with Gene and Kenney over a game of Uno, and seeing supporters, family, and friends gather in gratitude for the open house/deck blessing helped to reaffirm my love for the simple things in L'Arche. I am grateful for L'Arche Clinton's hospitality and willingness to share with me and am heartened by the interconnectedness of L'Arche in the United States and around the world. Thank you for the opportunity to meet your community as Julia and I explored the United States and L'Arche USA.



More photos from Arch IV Summer Picnic and Open House



Photos (top) People gather on the deck waiting for the dedication and blessing. (Middle) Devin Land, L'Arche Clinton's Community Leader, and Jerome Burken, Clinton County Development Association board member, visit in the garage at Arch IV. (Bottom) Another peaceful view of the new deck.



Meredith and Kenney sharing life.



Julia and Gene playing UNO.



SAVE THE DATE!!
L'Arche Clinton Trivia Night
 Saturday, October 28 • 6 p.m.
 Moose Lodge, Clinton



Costume contest
 Watch for details!

**L'Arche Clinton
ARCH INC.
P.O. Box 0278
Clinton, IA 52733-0278
563.243.9035**

Return Service
Requested

Non-Profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
Clinton, IA 52732
PERMIT #5



Thank you to those who donated April 1-June 30, 2017

Bethany Luzny, Clinton, IA
Dan and Jan Kness, Clinton, IA
Danielle Miller, Fulton, IL
Dave and Lindsey Simmonds, Iowa City, IA
Dr. James A. Sweeney, Bloomington, MN
Florian and Karen Steffen,
Deerfield Beach, FL
Frances M. McDonald, Clinton, IA
Frances Rita Burke, DeWitt, IA
Gerald and Marcia Jane Land,
Pleasant Hill, MO
Laura Giddings, Tacoma, WA
Jamie and Adam Ploog, Charlotte, IA
Jean and Ron Bormann, Charlotte, IA
Jean Roeder, Fulton, IL
Joe and JoElla O'Connell, DeWitt, IA
John and Cynthia Roth, Clinton, IA

Karen Marshall, Clinton, IA
Karen Martensen, Clinton, IA
Kelli and Eric Totemeier,
Columbus Junction, IA
Larry and Carolyn Kramer, Clinton, IA
Lewis University, Romeoville, IL
Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, IL
Marilyn Mahoney, Kansas City, MO
Mark and Carla Hopkins, Pella, IA
Mr. and Mrs. C. Arthur Ollie, Clinton, IA
O Thompson Construction Inc.,
Camanche, IA
Paul Henry, Pittsburgh, PA
Pizza Hut, Mark Klahn, Clinton, IA
Scott and Laurent Spalding, Maquoketa, IA
Sister Karen Bucco, OSF, Pittsburgh, PA
Sister Maria Zeimen, Chicago, IL

Career Opportunities

Become an Assistant. At L'Arche, individuals with intellectual disabilities are known as "core members," and "assistants" are those who come to share life with them. Assistants accompany core members in their activities of daily life, such as creating homes and supporting core members in sharing their gifts within the house and the larger community. Live-in and live-out positions available now.

Please email resume to

Devin Land at communityleader.larcheclinton@gmail.com

or mail to L'Arche Clinton Attn: Devin Land, PO Box 278, Clinton, IA 52733-0278

Please mail your donation to:
L'Arche Clinton
PO Box 278
Clinton, IA 52733-0278
Attention: Jean Bormann

Please accept my donation of

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100

Other _____

Please, use my donation for

Any community need

A specific need _____

I would like to be a L'Arche

Sponsor by donating \$ _____

per year

Donor name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email address: _____

Phone number: _____

Birthdate: _____