

L'Arche Clinton: 2019 – The Year in Review

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Community Leader

Whenever I'm asked to pause at times like this and think about the notable events in our community in the past year, my thoughts naturally go first to our core members. This year we were thrilled to welcome Gretchen into our Arch II home in mid-November. Gretchen is an avid Cubs and Packers fan, and brings great new energy and character to our community.



We were also saddened by the loss of our dear friend Gene, who taught us all so much in the three years he was part of our community and our Arch IV home. We mourned Gene's passing and celebrated his life in early November.



The milestone event, however, that set 2019 apart occurred in June when we hosted the L'Arche USA Midwest Regional Gathering in conjunction with celebrating L'Arche Clinton's 45th Anniversary.

The story of this event for our community really started in the fall of 2018, as we began to think about how we would celebrate L'Arche Clinton's 45th anniversary. L'Arche USA had just reorganized their national structure, and L'Arche Clinton was part of the newly formed Midwest Region of L'Arche in the USA. The community leaders of the Midwest L'Arche communities were discussing how to facilitate regional gatherings, or times when our whole communities could be together. I floated the idea of having the other communities travel to Clinton for our first ever Midwest Regional Gathering to help us celebrate our 45th anniversary. As I recall, our leadership team was cautiously optimistic, liking the idea, but wondering how we would actually accomplish this. The other community leaders said they would discuss it with their communities and get back to me. Time passed and when I met again with the



council of community leaders, their answer was a unanimous "yes," they would all love to bring their communities to Clinton to help us celebrate our anniversary. Suddenly it was "game on" for our community, as we began figuring out how we would host over 100 out of town guests for a long weekend in Clinton the following summer!

The hard work of planning and preparing for this milestone event brought our community closer together, and brought us closer to our roots as we delved into our community history with longtime community members and past leaders. The first half of 2019 for our community was characterized by the dual emotions of prideful anticipation and sheer terror. On one hand we felt pride in preparing to host 100+ out of town guests and show them what a great place Clinton is and how great our L'Arche community is. On the other hand we were very anxious about hosting 100+ out of town guests!

But the hard work we did together paid off! When the anniversary weekend finally brought the arrival of our guests it was a beau-

tiful weekend of togetherness with our fellow L'Arche community members from the Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City L'Arche communities. There was great food, lots of laughter, a cruise on the river and local sightseeing adventures, dancing, a talent show, L'Arche formation times and prayer together, and much more! Most of all, it was great to witness our L'Arche Clinton community members making new friends and connections with their fellow community members from Chicago, St. Louis, and Kansas City, and we're all looking forward to seeing them again at the next Midwest Regional



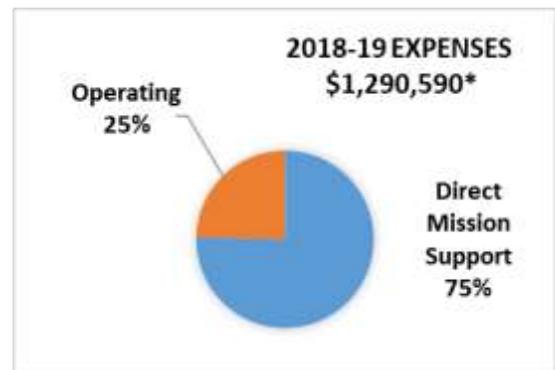
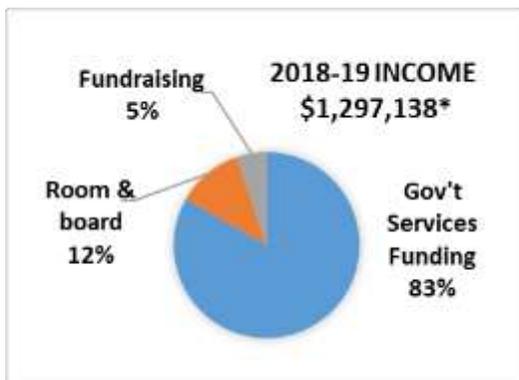
Gathering (as long as the next one is not in Clinton!).

A look ahead for L'Arche Clinton

As the community leader I tend to approach challenges with an attitude of "how can we get this done," (as opposed to an attitude of "here's why this won't work"). The story of how our community came together to host the first ever L'Arche regional gathering in the city of Clinton illustrates how our community can accomplish great things when we work together with a "can do" approach toward a common goal.

L'Arche Clinton's future will depend on a "can do" partnership with our community's friends and supporters. As can be seen in our year-end financial summary, we were once again dependent on donations to help us successfully live into our mission in the past year. Looking ahead to next year and beyond, we anticipate the portion of our mission requiring the support of our friends and donors will increase annually for the foreseeable future. As our friends and supporters already know, L'Arche Clinton provides much more than housing and services for our core members: We provide homes and a community of joy, love, faith, friendship, celebration, and family. We celebrate everyone's gifts, and recognize the value of every person. In a world all too often characterized by division, L'Arche provides a shining example of acceptance of diversity, and practice of inclusion. L'Arche communities are special places, and we want to ensure that Clinton, Iowa remains the home of our L'Arche community for years to come.

As we celebrate the end of 2019 and the beginning of a new year, we want to thank our friends for supporting our mission, and we look forward to our continued relationship to help L'Arche Clinton thrive into the future!



*Based on a pre-audit financial revue



Support L'Arche Clinton

Donations can be made on line at www.larcheclinton.org or mail your donation to **L'Arche Clinton**

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