

Donor dollars help make memories at L'Arche Clinton

By Devin Land
Community Leader

The L'Arche Clinton community is blessed by the network of friends who help to support our cause in Clinton. Your donations are important to us, to continue to live our mission and provide excellent care for our core members. I'm often asked where our donor dollars go, and it's easy to point to the special things we do like supporting travel to gatherings and events for our core members and staff. For example, just before COVID changed our lives, we sent a group of two core members and two assistants to a college in the Chicago area for a multiple-day visit to talk about L'Arche, an exchange which gave the students there an opportunity to learn about us, and gave our group a really fun trip and memorable experience! Since COVID, our expenses and challenges have both increased, and your donor dollars have helped us to respond, with increased staffing hours, with costs for coronavirus prevention supplies, and with expanding ways of meaningfully engaging our core members.

But there are many underlying stories that represent how your donor dollars are spent - stories about everyday life at L'Arche Clinton that don't get told enough. These stories often come from our staff, such as the stories I heard recently from Tammy and Jaime.

Tammy joined L'Arche Clinton in the Fall of 2019 after moving to the Clinton area from Mason City, where she had a career working in a similar agency. Tammy described to me how some core members at Arch II wanted to start riding bikes this summer since they were home all day due to COVID. Tammy was able to help get the right bikes in place, and assist with re-learning bike skills. Over time, as everyone grew more comfortable on their bikes, the length of rides increased, and by

now have become a routine and fun way of getting some exercise, and having fun together! Tammy describes this as a rewarding experience the core members and for her as an employee - and an experience that would not have happened at her previous employer.

Jaime joined L'Arche Clinton in the Fall of 2018 after a career in the nursing home industry. Jaime described to me how she had been able to assist one of the core members at Arch I with his library visits since the COVID pandemic started. Just as the pandemic has created stress for us all in different ways, for this core member, not being able to go to the library every week to check out favorite books and movies was going to be a major life-changing event. Jaime made sure that those weekly library exchanges could go on with curbside service, ensuring our core members' safety and helping him maintain as normal a routine as possible during the pandemic. Jaime also noted that the individual attention and relationships that are encouraged at L'Arche would have never happened in her previous career.

These are just two of the many stories like this that I've heard since I've been with L'Arche. To me, these stories represent the mission that differentiates L'Arche from others and makes it special - that we provide the conditions for our core members and the staff who support them to share life in meaningful ways every day! At L'Arche, we go out of our way to ensure that the core members who we serve are not simply clients - and that our staff are not simply employees - but rather that all of our community members are celebrated as part of the L'Arche family! **And most importantly - we would not be able to do this without the generous support of our friends and donors. Thank you!**





Arch 1 core members enjoying a **“Social Distancing”** outing in the park for bingo and root beer floats.



Nothing better for Kent than a burger, fries and drink at the park on a sunny day.



Kenney, Jeff and Mark spending a beautiful summer day at the park in Fulton, Illinois.



Arch IV core members take a walk by the river to enjoy the beautiful Iowa weather.



Down on the riverfront. Mark and Jeff loved their afternoon exploring the riverfront in LeClaire.



Gretchen shows off her hat as the Arch II gang had a picnic and took a walk at Rockwood Park.



Brenda (above) and Becky (below) had a great time visiting with the dogs and cats on Assistant Tammy's farm.



L'Arche Clinton Assistant, Deanna, shares some free time while attending a "Sacred Story Retreat" in Pennsylvania at the Villa Maria (pre-COVID). This retreat was put on by L'Arche USA and coordinated by Mary and Sharon from Washington DC. The retreat was an opportunity for her to connect with other assistant's and core members regarding their calling to L'Arche. Deanna says, "I really enjoyed how open and loving everyone was and it really felt like home away from home. Being able to experience this trip was a blessing and it provided me memories I will never forget. Core member Jeffery from Jacksonville, Florida earned a special spot in my heart as he greeted me every day with a good morning hug."

What is L'Arche USA?

L'Arche Clinton (also known as The Arch) is an independently operated organization that was founded in - and still adheres to - the mission and vision of L'Arche.

L'Arche is an *international* federation of communities providing services as L'Arche Clinton does, following the mission of L'Arche. L'Arche was started in France in 1964, and now numbers over 150 communities worldwide.

So what is L'Arche USA? L'Arche USA represents the national operations of L'Arche in the United States. L'Arche USA works to support the growth of L'Arche in the United States, provides a wide array of retreats, trainings, and resources for member development, and is involved in public engagement to share Larches' mission on a national level and to advocate for persons with intellectual disabilities.

We at L'Arche Clinton are proud of our history as one of the first L'Arche communities in the United States when founded in 1974, and one of only 19 L'Arche communities in the U.S. today (and still the only one not in a major metropolitan area). Those who are familiar with L'Arche will tell you that L'Arche communities are special places wherever they are around the world – and they will also tell you what a unique and special thing it is to have our own L'Arche community in Clinton, Iowa!



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CONNECT WITH US

JOIN A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY NIGHT

Interact with core members and staff as we celebrate each others anniversaries and birthdays. Email ddc@larcheclinton.org to find out details.

SHARE A MEAL WITH US

Prepare, buy take-out or purchase a gift card to share a meal with a home. You can also schedule a video chat to get to know us or reconnect with our community.

DONATE TO L'ARCHE CLINTON

Make a tax-deductible financial gift, enabling us to provide relationally centered companionship, personalized healthcare coordination and a community of belonging for people with intellectual disabilities. Go to <https://app.etapestry.com/onlineforms/ArchInc/donate.html>

For more information contact Jean Bormann at ddc@larcheclinton.org or 563-249-2569.

Don't Quit

by John Greenleaf Whittier

When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high
And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns
As every one of us sometimes learns
And many a failure comes about
When he might have won had he stuck it out;
Don't give up though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.

Often the goal is nearer than,
It seems to a faint and faltering man,
Often the struggler has given up,
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.

Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell just how close you are,
It may be near when it seems so far;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.