

Signs of Hope

FALL 2024

Empowering Accessibility: Our Pledge to Enhance Inclusivity in our City and Province.



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A Guide to Driving Social Transformation in Alberta



Michael and Christine

"Michael has been at L'Arche Calgary for the last 9 years. There, he engages in different community events, sports and creative activities. He has developed a wide network of friends and enjoys a supportive connection with his family.

Christine has been the Regional Leader in Western Canada for the last 4 years and lives in Comox Valley with her family, where she was the L'Arche Comox Valley community for 10 years.

From the beginning of the year until May, Michael and Christine have been learning together about public policy advocacy and how to bring about social change in Alberta. Through the Max Bell Foundation's Public Policy Training Institute, which assists non-profit organizations from many different sectors, Michael and Christine joined a cohort group of 35 participants in January and have been meeting in Calgary two days a month. Their training ends in May.

Through the program, they have learned from government policy experts and were assigned a mentor from the University of Calgary. They also benefited from an external learning circle, including John Rietschlin, the board chair of L'Arche Ottawa. John has also worked at the government level in policy development. Michael and Christine have been working on a public policy advocacy plan to approach the Government of Alberta asking for the creation and implementation of accessibility legislation that does not currently exist in that province. Michael is very motivated to participate in this undertaking as he often experiences disruptions and frustrations when trying to use accessible public transportation. His request is to have the same level of access to transportation services as anybody else as well as, in the immediate future, being a part of crafting and developing these accessible transportation standards. "Nothing about us without us" is the guiding principle in advocating for the direct involvement in decision-making and design of policies, programs, and actions that directly impact Michael. In Michael's words, "I don't want to be a burden. I just want to get around like anybody else and do the things I love to do." Christine said it is exciting to work on a project to effect social change at this practical level. She comments, "It's important that we change the world one heart at a time, but we are also called to work on a larger scale, working actively to build a society where everyone belongs."

Kichiyak's Role in Transforming Meadowlark Park.

Meadowlark Park is undergoing a transformative project aimed at rejuvenating its central green space.

The initiative, bolstered by the proactive involvement of local community members like Kichiyak, underscores a heightened commitment to accessibility, community inclusion and enhanced safety measures.

Kichiyak has consistently provided insights during the design phase of the project at town hall meetings. Their contributions have proven invaluable, as the design team has eagerly incorporated feedback from Kichiyak and others to ensure the plan effectively addresses the diverse needs of Meadowlark's residents.



Meadowlark Park Green Space Revitalization

- > location
- > vision & guiding principles
- > project need
- > final concept design & rendering
- > how you can help
- > fundraising

✓ Complete Concept Design | 2023-2024
Obtain Approvals | 2024-2025
Complete Fundraising | 2024-2025
Build | 2026-2027

Solidarity Bottle Drive

At the close of August, we conducted our Solidarity Bottle Drive, which proved to be a remarkable event. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with one another as we went door-to-door collecting bags of bottles, making four trips to the bottle depot, and raising **\$939**.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their generous contribution.

Special thanks go to the organizing team for coordinating this event and for facilitating an incredible gathering around a barbecue, which fostered community spirit.



New Fence at Marymount

We sincerely appreciate the Rotary Club of Heritage Park for generously contributing their time and expertise to reinforce the Marymount house fence, which had been leaning toward our neighbor's property.



Fall Cleaning in Cenacle and Villa Maria Yard

We extend our sincere appreciation to the volunteer team from **exp REALTY** for their generous contribution of time and effort in preparing our yard for the upcoming winter season.



Our Christmas Pageant

Join us to meet our extraordinary troupe of performers, both with and without intellectual disabilities, as they bring the Christmas story to life.

You are invited
To our Annual Christmas Pageant

Friday, December 6th at 7pm



📍 St. Mary's University
McGivney Hall
14500 Bannister Road SE.
Calgary AB

Our Acera Run for L'Arche

15 years of turning Possibilities into Reality!

This year marks the 15th anniversary of our Acera Insurance Run for L'Arche, symbolizing a decade and a half of dedication to our community, striving for positive change in our city, and enhancing the quality of life for our Core Members while raising awareness about disabilities.

Please mark your calendars and join us in making this milestone year even more remarkable!

An invitation to build a more compassionate world

As a community, we extend an open invitation to you to join us in the shared mission of creating a more compassionate world. Compassion, at its core, means "to suffer together." It is the deep and empathetic understanding that arises when we witness another's pain and feel moved to ease it. While sympathy makes us feel sorrow for someone, compassion compels us to act in meaningful ways to alleviate their suffering.

This daily expression of compassion can be seen in the way core members and assistants interact with one another in our community. It's reflected in the way we share life—not just the moments of joy, but also the moments of hardship. Through this shared experience, we find that joy becomes deeper and more enriching, while pain becomes more bearable.

Perhaps the greatest example of compassion ever shown, is in the life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God sent His Son to save the world and to enter into the suffering of humanity. Jesus welcomed the outcast, lifted up the rejected, and gave dignity to those who had none. In doing so, He set the ultimate example of selfless love, urging us to care for "the least of these."

When we extend kindness, understanding, and love to those who may be marginalized or overlooked—whether it's someone living with a disability or someone who is shunned by society—our acts of compassion have the power to transform lives. And the beauty of compassion is that it also transforms us. As the Dalai Lama wisely said, *"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."*

Together, as a community, we can build a world where compassion is not just a word, but a way of life—a world where we recognize the humanity in each other, reach out in love, and act with intention to make a difference. When we do so, we find that the very world we hope to create is the one that also shapes and heals us in return.

Let us embrace this call to action, and together, let's create a more compassionate world for all.

With gratitude,

Ani Hynes



*Enjoy a wonderful
holiday season.*

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