

GRATITUDE & IMPACT REPORT 2023



ROOTED IN RELATIONSHIP





LETTER from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As we close another great year at L'Arche Atlanta, I'm filled with gratitude for what we have accomplished and learned together. This 2023 Annual Report is not just a collection of highlights and numbers; it is **a celebration of another year of being Rooted in Relationship**, the theme of this year's annual report. That doesn't mean everything was roses and rainbows though.

In 2023, we joyfully welcomed three new Core Members (Milo, Laura, and Amber), each bringing their unique light and gifts to our community. Their arrival has been a source of celebration, reminding us of the ever-expanding circle of welcome and inclusion that defines L'Arche. We're also learning new ways of caring for our people, which has been exciting and challenging at the same time. Amidst these moments of joy, we also faced the bittersweet farewells to two of our Core Members. We miss them very much and grieve that in the end, L'Arche couldn't be for them what they needed. Being Rooted in Relationship means sometimes you have to honestly say "I'm sorry, we couldn't do what we hoped to do." We learned some vital lessons, and while these two Core Members no longer live in the L'Arche community, the roots of relationship still connect us.

That said, there were genuinely lots of roses and rainbows(!) and you will see those stories told through word and image in the following pages.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey. Here's to another year of being Rooted in Relationship at L'Arche Atlanta.

With deepest gratitude,

Tim Moore
Executive Director / Community Leader



Programs & Services That Enrich **RELATIONSHIP**



Home-Based Professional Services

At L'Arche Atlanta residential life is centered around our two homes:

Mead Road and Clairemont. These

homes are where people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), known

as Core Members, live to form the heart of the

community and organization. Core Members and Assistants

(Direct Support Professionals) learn and grow in family-like home environments which foster choices, self-determination, independence, and opportunities for community integration.

We are committed to providing high-quality living environments, individualized healthcare coordination, and authentic mutual relationships so that Core Members can thrive as vital members of the community. L'Arche Atlanta's unique residential program provides stability and support for people who otherwise lack safe housing choices while enabling adults with and without I/DD to live together in community and celebrate one another.

Community Events

L'Arche Atlanta events continue to bring **connection, spirituality, celebration, and deeper relationships** lived out in our homes into the broader community. L'Arche provides events throughout the year for people with disabilities, their families, and friends to enjoy a uniquely inclusive experience. Each of our various events are so successful because of our dedicated volunteers and staff!!

L'Arche's virtual **CONNEXIONS** program launched during the pandemic, and it connects our larger community of people with and without disabilities through Zoom. Participants meet every other Tuesday for multiple-choice **Trivia** and every third Wednesday for **"Y'all Belong Here" Sacred Space**, a gathering with our friends at L'Arche North Carolina.

Advocacy

L'Arche Atlanta advocates for people with disabilities to have the right to decide where they live along with resources and support to thrive in the community of their choice. We lead the **Storytelling Project**, a statewide initiative to educate and motivate state legislators to act on issues that affect Georgians with disabilities by giving people with I/DD a voice to share their stories. Thanks to our second contract awarded in spring 2022, **we can continue this critical work for another five more years!**



GROWING STRONGER TOGETHER

In the vibrant neighborhood of Oakhurst, nestled amidst the hustle and bustle lies a unique partnership that transcends the ordinary. **FitWit, a local gym known for its commitment to community**, embarked on a journey that would forever change not only their approach to fitness, but also their understanding of inclusion and belonging.

“It started with a simple idea,” says **Josh Guerrieri, owner of FitWit**, “we wanted to extend our reach beyond the confines of our gym walls and into the hearts of those who may not have access to quality health and exercise programs.”

Thus began the Friday workout with the Core Members of L’Arche Atlanta. For our Core Members this Friday class at FitWit is more than just physical fitness, **it’s a time to connect with friends and be a part of a community that enriches “relationship.”** Our newest Core Member Laura said, “Josh makes sure when we workout that our favorite songs are playing and it makes exercising together more fun and you’re not thinking about all of the reps you have to do.”

For Josh, this partnership holds a personal connection as well. With a sister who has Down syndrome, he intimately understands both the joys and challenges of navigating life with disabilities.

“Every week, the Core Members show up ready to give it their all,” he says. **“It’s a reminder that no matter the obstacles we face, there’s strength in unity and courage in perseverance.”**

The partnership between FitWit and L’Arche Atlanta stands as a beacon of hope and inclusivity, a testament to the transformative power of being “rooted in relationship” made through sweat, laughter, and continued support.



FLAMES OF UNITY

During a rather quiet and brisk day, a powerline, worn by age and weather, dropped onto the front lawn of our L'Arche Atlanta Mead Road home, igniting a fierce blaze. It happened right in the middle of dealing with a furnace that just died. Panic rose as our Assistants rushed to ensure the safety of the Core Members in the home.

As flames continued to burn on the lawn, emergency services arrived, with sirens piercing the air. The Assistants worked together with the responders, coordinating efforts to contain the fire and secure the area. Despite the intensity of the situation, **a sense of unity pervaded as everyone worked together towards a common goal: ensuring the safety of all residents.**

With the fire put out and the immediate danger brought under control, attention turned to providing shelter and comfort to the Assistants and Core Members disturbed by the incident. Temporary accommodations were arranged with L'Arche Atlanta's strong network of support ensuring that each Core Member had a safe and secure place to stay for the night.

The swift and coordinated response by our Assistants had averted potential disaster and demonstrated the strength of community and compassion in times of crisis. As each Core Member settled in their temporary lodgings, they were surrounded by the support of the Assistants and the broader L'Arche Atlanta family, finding solace in the knowledge that they were not alone in facing adversity.

This incident serves as a strong reminder of the importance of preparedness, teamwork, and unwavering dedication to the well-being of every individual under L'Arche's care. **It's the spirit of unity and compassion that continues to shine brightly, no matter the adversity.**





VALENTINE DANCE (FEBRUARY)
 ◁ 90 community members danced the night away at our first in-person dance since 2020

Y'ALL BELONG HERE (ALL YEAR)
 69 individuals attended interfaith prayer service gatherings

MORE 2023 HIGHLIGHTS...

We had **681** in total participate in our community events, with **311** participants being unique, & **64** of those unique participants being people with I/DD



◁ **PAINTING IN THE PARK (APRIL)** ▷
 39 community members participated with a talented art instructor



WALKING TOGETHER (JUNE) ▽
 85 walkers & volunteers gathered at Legacy Park
 11 vendors & their supporters sold crafts, baked goods, & organic juice





◁ L'ARCHE HOUSE HOSPITALITY (ALL YEAR)

101 dinner guests were hosted by Clairmont & Mead Road

MOVIE TRIVIA (NOVEMBER)

▽ **53** trivia players competed in our first in-person Trivia night



TRIVIA! (ALL YEAR)

- 676** trivia questions were asked during
- 26** Tuesday Zoom trivia meet-ups with a unique participant total of
- 71** players (*many players participated in multiple games!*)

HOLIDAY PARTIES (DECEMBER)

- 24** gifts exchanged between the two homes during the Secret Santa party
- 70** people sang & made crafts at the Karaoke Party ▽

STORYTELLING PROJECT

- 10** Changemakers contributed to
- 7** Published Stories &
- 3** Powerful Short Films, showcasing I/DD Advocacy in GA





WELCOME THREE NEW CORE MEMBERS

L'Arche Atlanta is thrilled to introduce three new Core Members: **Amber, Laura, and Milo**. Each brings a unique story and spirit that enriches the fabric of our community.

Amber's journey to L'Arche began through our Storytelling Project, where she found connection and solace through the power of narrative. She reminds us of the beauty and resilience found in sharing our stories. **Laura has been a familiar face in our community for quite some time**, having been a dedicated participant at our community events. Her warm presence and genuine kindness have touched the lives of many. **Milo's path to L'Arche was serendipitous**, as he was introduced to our community through a friend of his mother. From the moment he arrived, his natural curiosity and willingness to make new connections, illuminates the spirit of openness and acceptance that defines L'Arche.

As we welcome Amber, Laura, and Milo into our L'Arche family, **we celebrate the diversity of experiences, talents, and perspectives they bring**. We are united in our shared humanity and the bonds of relationship that transcends all barriers.

Story Weavers Workshops

L'Arche Atlanta partnered with Cow Tipping Press to produce our fifth collection of stories, *Remember the Octopus*. Members of the L'Arche community gathered virtually for five weeks of creative writing workshops, where they learned about different genres of writing and shared their own stories for publication. Cow Tipping Press creates the opportunity for adults with I/DD to share their stories with the world in their own words. Learn more about their published pieces on the L'Arche Atlanta Facebook page.

SPECIAL THANKS to our 2023 Annual Benefit & Auction Sponsors

11th Anniversary Benefit & Auction

L'Arche Atlanta enjoyed a fun day celebrating 11 years of transforming lives by building community among people with and without disabilities. Our **amazing supporters and generous donors** continue to help L'Arche make a lasting impact in the I/DD community.



Presenting Sponsors

Shayla & Chip Rumely

Community Sponsors



Ann Glendinning & Dale Kelly

Advocacy Sponsors



ATLANTIC HOME MORTGAGE



Robbie Harris
ATLANTA



Kristen M. Lewis



Marilyn & Dean Hammond
Gué & Bill Hudson
Jane & Alan McNabb

Companion Sponsors

Pat & Jim Barlow
Tiffanie Barriere "The Drinking Coach"
Elizabeth Eaton
Gayle Gellerstedt

Elizabeth Pearce
Guy & Charlotte Pfeiffer
Ann & Steve Rushing
Lizanne Stephenson & Alan Kendall



Please SAVE THE DATE for 2024!

12th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION BENEFIT & AUCTION



Sunday, October 6, 2024

3:00 - 7:00 p.m.

The Trolley Barn

963 Edgewood Avenue, NE

Atlanta, GA 30307

L'Arche Atlanta's 12th Anniversary Benefit & Auction will be a day of celebrating and connecting. So mark your calendars and stay tuned for additional details coming soon.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

L'Arche Atlanta has been able to transform lives for 11 years because of generous supporters. Your kindness is recognized each day by the members of the L'Arche Atlanta Community. You are appreciated! *In 2023 ...*



566 individuals, families, businesses, faith communities & foundations donated to L'Arche Atlanta



138 volunteers brought meals to the homes, helped with events, assembled furniture & much more!

\$701,000 given by L'Arche Atlanta donors

23 donor families formed the Heart of L'Arche Society

131 households belonged to the L'Arche Luminaries

JOIN US IN CREATING A PLACE OF WELCOME!

By joining the Heart of L'Arche Society, members fund our most vital initiatives. These beloved donors pledge \$1,000 or more per year for three consecutive years which supports our long-term goals. By committing to the Heart of L'Arche Society, you are helping to ensure the future of L'Arche Atlanta.



L'Arche Atlanta Luminaries are a special community of people dedicated to creating a place of belonging for people with disabilities. Your gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 each month helps adults with

disabilities become valued members of their local communities and beyond.



2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

- > **Chair:** Marilyn Hammond – *Communications Consultant*
- > **Treasurer:** Ray Krawczyk – *MIMEDX Group*
- > **Secretary:** Brandon Maxwell – *Henri Consulting Group*

Members at Large

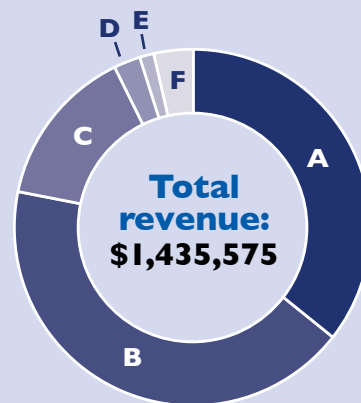
- > Haqqa Bolling – *Retired Educator*
- > Robbie Harris – *Robbie Harris Atlanta Real Estate*
- > James Howle – *Community Volunteer*
- > Alan McNabb – *Georgia Heirs Property Law Center*
- > Jasmine Terry Okafor – *ACPE: The Standard for Spiritual Care & Education*
- > Jamillah Stephens – *City of Atlanta, Director of Budget & Performance*
- > Jody Stephenson – *SitterTree, Founder & CEO*
- > Rev. Mary Anona Stoops – *North Decatur Presbyterian Church*
- > Alan Yorker – *Immediate Past Chair of Decatur Rotary Club*

2023 ADVISORS

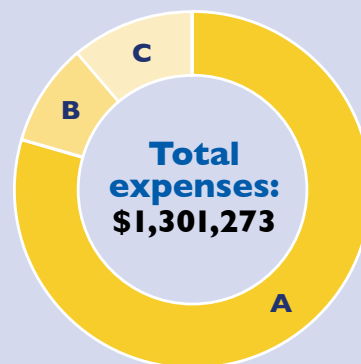
- > Trace Haythorn – *Association for Clinical Pastoral Education*
- > Gué Hudson – *Retired Educator & Core Member Parent*
- > Mary Margaret Oliver – *Georgia House of Representatives*
- > Elizabeth Pearce – *The Lovett School*
- > Shannon Powell – *City3Sixty*
- > Lizanne Stephenson – *Community Volunteer*



2023 FINANCIALS



- A** → Contributions: **35%**
(Individuals, Foundations, Businesses, Faith-Based Organizations, & Civic)
- B** → Medicaid Agency Funding: **43%**
- C** → 11th Benefit & Auction: **14%**
- D** → GCDD Storytelling Project Grant: **3%**
- E** → Government Grants: **1%**
- F** → Other: **4%**



- A** → Program Services: **80%**
- B** → Management & General: **9%**
- C** → Fundraising: **11%**





L'Arche Atlanta's mission is to transform lives by building community among people with and without disabilities. We envision a world where everyone belongs. The L'Arche Atlanta philosophy of caregiving begins with the premise that **people living with disabilities are a gift to society** and that **expressions of care must honor their dignity, humanity, and gifts.** We work with friends, partners, and leaders to **imagine community differently** and establish opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to **thrive.**

