



# Signs of Hope

## Winter 2026

### Your Support, Our Shared Future

It may be February, but the warmth of the L'Arche Calgary community has made this winter anything but frosty. The holiday season was one to remember, highlighted by our phenomenal Christmas Pageant at St. Mary's University, where a packed room gathered in celebration. Alongside these larger celebrations were many intimate gatherings, where we paused to reflect with gratitude on the moments, both big and small, that make this community so special.

This season has also been marked by extraordinary generosity. As 2025 came to a close, we were deeply moved by the steadfast support of long-time donors and the welcome of new ones into the L'Arche family. Your generosity allows us to look to the future with confidence, hope, and bold plans. Run for L'Arche 2026 is already off to an unbelievable start, with more than 230 participants registered as of February, the highest number ever at this point. We are also excited about the continued progress of our rebuild project. Plans are moving forward, and our team is eager to share more in the months to come.

Your support enables us to dream big, especially of the next 50 years of L'Arche Calgary and all that lies ahead. As we step into 2026, we do so with renewed energy: to share our mission more widely, to ensure the long-term strength of our community, and, above all, to continue building a world where everyone belongs.

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## What Ada Teaches Us About Community

At Haeremai, one of L'Arche Calgary's homes, care often begins with slowing down. Instead of asking how to stop a behaviour, Assistants ask why. What is being communicated? What is being asked for?

For Ada, a Core Member who has lived at Haeremai for nearly eight years, this way of listening has made all the difference. Ada is autistic, and while she is verbal, she doesn't often use words to communicate. Instead, she speaks through routine, movement, repetition, and action. When something feels off, she lets people know, just not always in expected ways.

"This is her routine, and she loves to keep her routine," explains Sui Wing, House Leader at Haeremai. At L'Arche Calgary, respecting someone means honouring how they communicate, not insisting they change to fit others. Over time, Assistants have learned that Ada's actions are rarely random. They are purposeful, thoughtful, and deeply connected to her sense of safety and independence.

Sui Wing began to notice patterns. "Whenever she opens a door, she is looking for something," she says. Ada would sometimes enter rooms that were not her own, raising concerns about safety and privacy. Rather than focusing on simply restricting the behaviour, the team chose to watch more closely.

"She's looking for the nail clippers, she's looking for her monthly bus pass, she's looking for a wipe to clean her room," Sui Wing noticed. Ada likes to clean, it's part of how she cares for her space and herself. By responding with patience instead of restriction, the team introduced baby wipes she could keep in her room. "She can use as many as she wants," Sui Wing says. Once Ada had what she needed, the searching stopped.

The same attentive listening reshaped how Assistants understood moments that once felt puzzling. One evening, Ada entered another Core Member's room while they were away visiting family. Instead of reacting immediately, Sui Wing paused. "I suddenly think that because the Core Member is not around the table during supper time, she wanted to check if the Core Member was here." Ada had noticed someone missing.



Haeremai Assistants and Core Members at L'Arche Calgary's 2025 Christmas Pageant

## What Ada Teaches Us About Community

This is how I found that when Ada went into or opened a door, she has a reason. Every time with a reason,” Sui Wing reflects.

Sometimes, understanding comes from the smallest details. During breakfast, Ada often appeared unsettled, moving around and vocalizing. When Sui Wing watched closely, she noticed Ada always transferred her drink into the same cup. “I found the mark there,” she says. Now the cup is labelled with Ada’s name, and mornings are calmer, a small change that honours her preferences and dignity.

Ada’s sister Kitty has always known her this way. “I always think that she’s a bit of a puzzle,” she says, not something to solve, but something to understand with care. “She likes her pattern... you cannot force her. If she wants to learn something, she can learn it really quickly.”

That patience is what Kitty sees reflected at L’Arche. “We were really impressed, the Assistants spending time with the Core Members,” she says. “It’s a very good environment for her.”

Kitty knows how Ada can become frustrated when she isn’t understood. “If you just tell her, ‘No, you can’t do that,’ she doesn’t understand... she can’t tell anyone what she’s trying to do.” However, when people take time to listen and redirect with respect, “that works best for her.”

At L’Arche Calgary, care is not about fixing or finishing. “Just because Ada has her routine doesn’t mean that she is fixed,” Sui Wing says. When plans change, Assistants write them down so Ada can read them, repeat them, and add them to her notebook. “This is communication,” Sui Wing explains. “She wants to let you know what is on her mind.”

Ada’s story reflects the heart of L’Arche Calgary: a community where people with and without intellectual disabilities journey together, where every voice matters, and where behaviour is met with curiosity instead of judgment.

“Any unusual behaviour hides a message inside,” Sui Wing says.

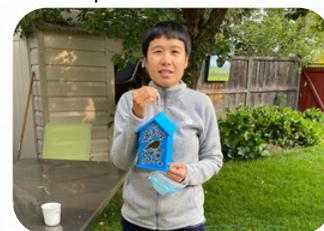
Sometimes, all it takes is noticing a mark at the bottom of a cup and choosing to listen.



Ada, a talented artist, with rocks she painted



Ada’s cup



Ada with a birdhouse she painted



# Fundraising Update

## CREB® REALTOR® Transformation Grant

L'Arche Calgary is deeply grateful to the CREB® REALTOR® Community Foundation for their generous \$16,000 Transformation Grant, an affirmation of their long-standing commitment to safe, dignified housing in Calgary.

This support comes at a pivotal moment as we prepare to rebuild three aging homes into fully accessible, inclusive spaces where people with and without intellectual disabilities can continue to share life together. We thank CREB® for their generosity, partnership, and belief in building community that lasts.



The CREB® REALTOR® team presenting L'Arche Calgary with the Transformation Grant cheque

## Run for L'Arche Registration

We're ecstatic to share that Run for L'Arche registration numbers are the highest we have



Run for L'Arche 2025

seen at this point in the event's history. With more than 230 runners registered by February, enthusiasm continues to build as we look ahead to April 11. Thank you to everyone who has registered so far, it's shaping up to be a very special year for our 16th annual Run for L'Arche.

## Jim and Vicki Wilson Family Fund at Calgary Foundation

L'Arche Calgary is deeply grateful for the generous \$5,000 donation to the Jim and Vicki Wilson Fund at the Calgary Foundation. This meaningful gift reflects a shared commitment to strengthening community and supporting inclusive spaces where everyone belongs. We extend our sincere thanks for choosing to support our community and the work we do together.

## Christmas Through Community

December was filled with moments of connection, celebration, and shared joy, many of which we're grateful to share with you through the photos below. From large community gatherings to quiet, meaningful moments in each of our five homes, the season was marked by togetherness and the simple gift of being present with one another.

Early in the month, hundreds gathered at St. Mary's University for our Christmas Pageant, where our Core Members and Assistants brought the nativity story to life in a way that was both beautiful and deeply moving. A week later, our Community Christmas Dinner offered another opportunity to celebrate the season together, with good food, lots of laughter, and even a visit from Santa Claus.

These moments, made possible by your generosity, reflect the warmth, dignity, and sense of belonging that define our community, especially during the Christmas season.





# A Word from Christian Andres

February is a unique month. Though it's the shortest, it offers a vantage point; one that allows us to look back on the milestones of the past year and begin scoping the path ahead.

Looking back on 2025, we can take inventory of shared victories and meaningful moments. We renovated the smallest of our homes to better accommodate increasing needs and to create more space to gather, thanks to continued partnerships with CREB® and the Calgary Foundation. After a five-year hiatus, we brought back L'Archetoberfest. We welcomed a new title sponsor for our Run for L'Arche and celebrated alongside friends and supporters at our Christmas pageant.

We also celebrated the progress of Core Members like Shula and Ada, who continue to teach us that communication doesn't always require words — sometimes it simply requires attention. These moments don't happen by chance; they come from acknowledging one another's needs and the consistent care of our team, from the frontline to leadership.

On a more somber note, we also said final goodbyes to long-time friends who were called home — friends with whom we shared countless meals, laughter, and life together.

I entered this community as an open-eyed teenager nearly fifteen years ago. Through shifts in funding, moments of victory, and seasons of struggle, one thing has remained constant: we lean on one another, and without fragility, resilience cannot exist.





# A Word from Christian Andres

When things feel too heavy to carry alone, I have watched strangers become volunteers, supporters, and allies — offer a helping hand just in time. To our donors and supporters, these moments and milestones would not have been possible without you.

This year, we will begin rebuilding the first of three homes, replacing existing capacity with accessible spaces that allow Core Members to age in place, while also welcoming new faces into our community.

The destination is set, and the road may be bumpy, but we move forward with confidence. As our “Home Is Where Everyone Belongs” project continues to take shape, we are grateful for the many ways our community shows up, day after day, to ensure that L’Arche Calgary remains a place of belonging today and for generations to come.

Thank you for your unwavering support and for walking alongside L’Arche Calgary.

Sincerely,



*Christian Andres*

Fundraising & Development Coordinator



L'Arche Association of Calgary  
307-57 Ave SW  
Calgary, AB T2H 2T6

[www.larchecalgary.org](http://www.larchecalgary.org)

T: (403) 571 0155

F: (403) 255 1354

E: [office@larchecalgary.org](mailto:office@larchecalgary.org)

Charity registration # 132707787RR0001

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