What is L’Arche?

Who We Are

The secret of L’Arche is relationship: meeting people, not through the filters of certitudes, ideologies, idealism or judgments, but heart to heart; listening to people with their pain, their joy, their hope, their history, listening to their heart beats. – Jean Vanier, L’Arche founder

History

The beginnings of L’Arche (French for “the Ark”) stirred in 1964, when Jean Vanier became aware of the struggle of thousands of people with intellectual disabilities who were institutionalized in France.

Through his friendship with a Catholic priest, Father Thomas Philippe, he felt moved by God to invite two men, Raphael Simi (pictured with Jean) and Philippe Seux, to leave the institutions where they resided and share their lives with him in a real home in Trosly-Breuil, France.

Having begun with that first home in Trosly-Breuil, France, and through the support of many, L’Arche grew around the world.

Today

Now operating in 40 different countries round the world, L’Arche works closely with people with an intellectual disability so that each person can play their full role in society.

Turning dreams to reality, each of our communities is a springboard of opportunity where members with and without disabilities get customized support to discover, develop and share their unique – and often hidden- talents. Individuals are invited to share fully in community life, in both residential and non-residential settings, as suited to specific needs and hopes. More than just inclusion, it is about making the most of life! We hope you enjoy knowing more about our history, mission, leadership, structure, and life together.

THE L’ARCHE DIFFERENCE

L’Arche is a way of life, but it’s also a model of care that is unique. In our communities...

People with intellectual disabilities are at the heart of L’Arche. They’re not clients, patients, or recipients of services, but rather they are friends, teachers, and companions.

People without intellectual disabilities grow through their encounters in L’Arche. Through daily acts of care, trust, and friendship, they develop into ambassadors of compassion and leaders of social change and the common good.

A divided society is mended through inclusivity where people with many differences – socio-economic status, race, religion, and intellectual capacity – live and work together.

Source: http://www.larcheusa.org