

# Full-time live-in Volunteer Programme in L'Arche Ireland / Northern Ireland

*"L'Arche stands for the possibility of a world where people, whatever their race, religion, culture, abilities or disabilities can find a place and reveal their gifts"*

Jean Vanier

## WHAT IS L'ARCHE?

*We are people with and without intellectual disabilities, sharing life in communities of faith. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our life together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need for one another.*

## The Mission of L'Arche is:

To make known the gifts of people with intellectual disabilities, revealed through mutually transforming relationships.

To foster an environment in communities that is inspired by the core values in our founding story and that responds to the changing needs of our members.

To engage in our diverse cultures, working together to build a more human society.

At the core of L'Arche is the relationship between persons who have an intellectual disability and those who chose to support them. We believe that these relationships are mutually transformative, a sign of hope and a powerful witness in our world.

Each year we welcome a number of **full-time live in Volunteer House Assistants** to come to L'Arche to share their life with our **residents** or **core members** (i.e. people with intellectual disabilities) and other assistants in community.

## Requirements to be a Volunteer Assistant:

Minimum of 18 years (some communities require you to be 19 or 20)

Free to commit and live full-time with others in community

Flexible and willing to respond to the needs of the community

Physically, mentally and emotionally balanced

Able to communicate in English

Open to the spirituality of L'Arche & willing to participate in the faith life

Tolerant and appreciative of differences in background and culture

Choosing to come to L'Arche implies a willingness to enter into relationship and share life with everyone – disabled and able alike. You will be living with people of different faith and cultural traditions and with people who have a very different personality to you. Some of our residents, because of their previous life experience, can have quite challenging behaviour at times. It takes courage, flexibility, openness, warmth and generosity of spirit to live in a L'Arche Community.

## **Role of Volunteer House Assistant:**

The main role of a house assistant in L'Arche is to live and build community by creating home with people who have an intellectual disability and with the other assistants in the house in which you are living. As an assistant you are asked to enter into real, respectful and meaningful relationships with both the residents and assistants in your house.

### **The responsibilities of an Assistant include:**

Building relationships of mutual trust and care with all those with whom you live and work.

Supporting personal care of some of the residents – bathing, dressing etc.

Caring for the household needs – cooking, cleaning, shopping etc

Fostering the spiritual life of the home

Nurturing a spirit of welcome and celebration in the home

Supporting the Residents to develop the personal skills that will enable them to take as much responsibility as possible for their own lives

Facilitating appropriate use of residents' leisure and holiday time.

Attending meetings – house, community, regional etc & writing reports for same.

All those particular responsibilities are exercised as part of a team of assistants working together in mutual respect and care under the leadership of a house leader.

### **Terms & conditions**

Assistants receive full board and lodging plus €250 / 298 per month stipend for personal expenses, rising to €350 / 398 in the second and subsequent years. (This varies slightly in different communities)

Volunteers from the EU are entitled to request a European Health Card which entitles one to free emergency treatment in hospitals.

Volunteers from outside the EU must provide their own private Health insurance

Volunteer assistants may apply for a student card.

Assistants have 5 hours free time each day plus an average of 1 to 2 full days free per week

Each assistant is also entitled to 4 weeks holidays in their first year. These are taken at times agreed by the community - approximately one week every 4 months.

This is not a paid position therefore our volunteer assistants do not require work permits.

Different communities have different openings for volunteering – please see relevant sections in [www.larcheireland.org](http://www.larcheireland.org)

### **For further information on volunteering in Ireland see:**

<http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/visa-long-volunteer>

<http://www.inis.gov.ie/en/INIS/Pages/volunteering-in-ireland>

### **Length of Service**

Volunteers are normally welcomed for 12 months of which the first 3 months are probationary followed by an evaluation.

Extension of the agreed time is not automatic but at the discretion of the community.

The maximum stay for non-EU volunteers is 3 years.

There are a very limited number of places for 3 – 6 month volunteers e.g. students

This is a full-time commitment and cannot be combined with either study or part-time work.

### **Support structures**

Volunteer Assistants receive ongoing Formation and Training.

Volunteer Assistants are supervised and supported in their role.

Volunteer Assistants are accompanied by an experienced L'Arche member.

### **L'Arche - A Place to Grow:**

Our Charter states:

*"We seek to create an environment in the community which fosters growth for all members".*

### **L'Arche Volunteers grow in their personal journey:**

Understanding the L'Arche Identity & Mission

An appreciation of the gift of difference.

A deeper appreciation of the gift of people with disabilities.

Interpersonal skills – listening, sharing, welcome, communicating

Peace-making & relationship building skills.

Team skills – cooperation, negotiation, patience, tolerance

Caring for one self - physically, emotionally & spiritually. Coping with stress.

A deeper appreciation of one's own spiritual journey.

Deeper self-awareness & self-reflection

Understanding of one's own identity & discernment of one's own mission.

### **L'Arche Volunteers develop and improve skills:**

First aid, Manual handling, Crisis Prevention & Intervention

Nutrition & meal preparation. Food safety and Hygiene

Housekeeping, Cleaning & laundry skills;

Budgeting & shopping

Basic medical care, Record keeping and writing reports

Fire safety

Emergency procedure

Driving

**There are many opportunities in L'Arche to reflect on one's personal journey:**

Accompaniment with the Assistants' Coordinator or another long-term member,

Times for reflection, community prayer and pilgrimages.

An evaluation process

Volunteers who stay for a year usually get the chance to attend a retreat or L'Arche gathering.

Volunteers are encouraged to make time for personal prayer/reflection and journaling.

**How to Apply:**

If you are interested in applying for this volunteer programme please make contact with the community of your choice telling us about yourself and why you wish to volunteer in L'Arche.

Each community has its own application process which may include:

An application form – particular to each community

Contacting referees

Interview by phone or in person

Police clearance

Medical report

For more info visit [www.larcheireland.org](http://www.larcheireland.org) or contact [admin@larcheireland.org](mailto:admin@larcheireland.org)

This programme applies to communities in the Republic of Ireland – see L'Arche Belfast's website for information about volunteering in their community: [www.larchebelfast.org.uk](http://www.larchebelfast.org.uk)

**L'Arche Ireland**

'An Siol'

42 West Street

Callan

Co. Kilkenny

Ireland

T: +353 56 7755494

[admin@larcheireland.org](mailto:admin@larcheireland.org)

**L'Arche Dublin**

'Seolta'

Warrenhouse Road

Baldoyle

Dublin 13, D13 RR72,

Ireland

T: +353 1 8395460

[louise.shiels@larche.ie](mailto:louise.shiels@larche.ie)

**L'Arche Kilkenny**

'Cluain Aoibhinn'

Fairgreen Lane

Callan

Co. Kilkenny

Ireland

T: +353 56 7725628

[assistants@larchekilkenny.ie](mailto:assistants@larchekilkenny.ie)

**L'Arche Cork**

'Le Cheile'

Togher Road

Cork

Ireland

T: +353 21 4318880

[info@larchecork.org](mailto:info@larchecork.org)