



Being a volunteer at L'Arche

At the heart of L'Arche communities are persons with disabilities, men and women who desire to share an existence and live authentic relationships that are enriched with confidence and simplicity. Every community is created as a response to this need that all of humanity shares and to this desire for a full life. L'Arche desires to create a home to live in, a space to leave one's belongings, to sit together at the table, to meet others, but also a space to work and to grow in, through a collaboration with others that transforms the world around us and helps make it beautiful.

To be a volunteer at L'Arche is a concrete way for each one of us to contribute to the realization of this project. It means to journey along the road together, to share something of one's story through the gestures of each day, and to discover in the need that we have for others the value of our own life and the value of the life of everyone, no matter what their capabilities or their weaknesses are. It means to help each other to grow and change, to become free to be oneself.

To be a volunteer at L'Arche requires no prior experience, only the willingness to be available and open to learn from persons with disabilities, to let oneself be transformed by them. The practical responsibilities and the types of services might change in response to the needs and desires expressed by the persons living at L'Arche as well as the personal journey of each volunteer.

Concretely it means doing all the ordinary, everyday things of life together

- In the homes: preparing meals, taking care of the environment in which one lives, helping the persons with disabilities to take care of themselves, to wake up, put on their clothes, eat, walk...
- In the workshops: to support the activities of the persons with disabilities, encouraging the expressions and capacities of everyone, eating together, and going out together...
- In community: preparing celebrations and parties, participating in community formation and the meetings which structure the community, going on vacation together...
- In Bologna and the local neighborhood: maintaining active ties with neighbors and friends, promoting an encounter with other associations and collaboration with institutions...

An Experience of Community Life is what is proposed to volunteers who desire to be welcomed in a L'Arche home, sharing this common space of the home with persons with disabilities, through meal times, work, times of relaxation and vacation. Volunteers who do not have this availability can find their own way to help the community. Ironing during the week, mowing the grass when it is too long, going out for coffee together, to the movies, to the park, inviting someone over to one's house, these are some of the ways that open the possibility of friendship with persons with disabilities and that can create lasting, important relationships for the life of everyone.