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## L'Arche, Ottawa

**Feb 15 - 22, 2025**

ISL Leader: Jenny MacDonald (Coady)

Fee: \$800 (ISL bursaries available)

*L'Arche is a network of communities for people with developmental disabilities. In 1964 the first L'Arche home was founded in France and today there are over 100 communities in 30 countries worldwide. The aim of L'Arche is to create communities that reflect a belief that everyone is unique and of sacred value having dignity and fundamental rights. L'Arche communities are also communities of faith, rooted in prayer and trust in God.*

L'Arche Ottawa is comprised of 7 houses, 2 apartments, 32 core members, and 25 assistants and offers a recreational day program for seniors. The L'Arche Ottawa community was founded in 1972. Life within L'Arche communities is shared with Service Learning students through their participation in the day to day lives and activities of L'Arche community members.

### **Transportation**

Participants fly from Halifax and travel by ground transportation to their host community. Transportation outside the L'Arche community to other sites in the Ottawa area involves the use of car rental or public transportation.

### **Housing**

Each Immersion group member stays in one of the houses that make up the L'Arche community. As a resident of the home, the student becomes a new member of that house during their stay. Alongside staff who live and work there long-term, they assist with daily tasks taking place in that home. All meals are provided.

### **Service Placements and Group Sessions**

Service Learning participants are incorporated into the daily routines associated with the working, recreational and spiritual lives of residents and assistants. Students assist in the daily chores around house management and sharing life together to create a home. They are assigned to help with one of a number of daytime programs and work settings for L'Arche core members in the broader community. Evening and daytime reflection sessions led by L'Arche leaders help participants to understand the meaning and purpose of L'Arche communities and how they function. Service Learning students will find their assumptions of what a 'disability' is are challenged and their understanding of the meaning of personal relationships is broadened.

- Feb 15** Depart Halifax for Ottawa. Once in Ottawa, Students are assigned to the L'Arche home where they meet core members (men and women with intellectual disabilities), assistants (staff), and settle in. Review of program and guidelines with L'Arche coordinator.
- Feb 16** Assist with breakfast preparation, breakfast. Join seniors group for art activities and lunch preparation. Brown bag lunch at community centre with members. Afternoon information presentation about L'Arche and its values. Assist with activities and evening meal prep. Community night at the community centre. Evening group reflection.
- Feb 17** Breakfast with home. Day spent at work program with core members. Work programs allow opportunities for members to engage in satisfying work while others learn of the positive impact that comes with having persons with disabilities included in their daily routines. Dinner, and evening activities in homes. Group reflection meeting with L'Arche coordinator.
- Feb 18** Free Day for the group to explore Ottawa – Historic/Cultural activities to be discussed by group and approved by Service Learning staff. Dinner out and evening reflection.
- Feb 19** Breakfast with home. Spend day with core members at Day Program. Dinner, and assist with preparations for weekend community retreat. Group reflection meeting.
- Feb 20** Breakfast with home. Spend morning assisting members with continued preparation for retreat. Afternoon spent at Community Retreat
- Feb 21** Participation in the Community Retreat continues. Dinner and closing group session and review with L'Arche coordinator.
- Feb 22** Breakfast with home. Travel to airport for return flight.



*Please note this schedule is a guideline for typical activities and is subject to change based on a number of factors. Flight delays, community schedules and holidays, staff at facilities and core member needs to name a few, all play a role in the scheduling process. Students should be prepared to be flexible.*

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