

Soundings



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NEW COMMUNITY LEADER ANNOUNCEMENT

by Bill Hoskyn, LTH Board President

After several weeks of interviews, multiple meetings, and lots of discernment, the Community Leader Search & Discernment team and the L'Arche Tahoma Hope Board are thrilled to announce that we have selected a new Community Leader: our very own Katie Miyakado!

Katie has been a committed and passionate member of our community for the past 8 years, most recently as our Residential Director, and we are thrilled that she is going to become our next Community Leader. Our community has experienced a lot of changes over the last several years, which have not been limited to the pandemic, the closing of Anawim, the revelations about Jean Vanier, and the shift from mostly live-in assistants to mostly live-out assistants. We as a community have survived these shifts and thrived thanks to Laura Giddings's leadership, and we feel confident that our community will continue to weather these changes and grow even stronger with Katie at the helm. We have been most impressed by her vision to "heal, unite, and transform" the community. Katie knows our strengths and challenges, she has a deep heart for our mission and our core members, and she will no doubt help us live into our mandate of growing deeper, stronger, and wider.



Discerning our next Community Leader has been a fun but tough and time-consuming process. Thank you to everyone for attending and supporting the community interviews with our final Community Leader candidates. Your questions and feedback were immensely helpful. I also want to especially thank all of the members of our Search and Discernment Team for their time and intentionality: Chris Harrison, James Bentley, Tree Hershberger, Micah Buff, V. Tischler, Linda Bringer, Julia Hild, Peter Borne, and Lori Moore. If you see them around, give them a high five for a job well done! And please give Katie a fist bump to congratulate her on her new role!

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What do you love best about L'Arche Tahoma Hope?



I've always been most enchanted by the openness and acceptance of the community—of a space where we can be our full and sometimes messy selves. When I first arrived in 2015, I found the level of acceptance here striking in its contrast to the demand for conformity in many other parts of our world.

Through my years at L'Arche, I have seen this welcoming space created and recreated, for the core members and for every community member here. Some of my favorite memories include Mark's excitement when we went to soccer games in Seattle and the way that Nancy patiently waited for her newer assistants to figure out how to operate her lift. These stories are a part of the thread that has been woven through the fabric of my life and of our community.

While my memories are sweet, I have also repeatedly heard that we are now ready to turn a page and step with confidence into 2024 after the struggles of the past few years. I'm ready too!

I believe we can do this best by engaging each other, by getting curious about each other, and by embracing all who come to the table. We can even do this with a cocoa run with Shann or singing Michael Jackson music with Stacie!

We can build our future as we heal from past hurts, unite with one another, and transform our community while we move forward. We can take the threads of our stories and weave them together to create a newly transformed place that continues to generously accept and embrace people living with and without intellectual disabilities. A place where we share this ever-changing life together.

Thank you so much for being on this journey with me. I could not do it without you and your own stories.

The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.

- Alan Watts

With a Grateful Heart,

Katie Miyakado

FAREWELL TO PAT

After over 25 years, Farm Manager Pat Toohey has stepped away from his work with L'Arche Farm and Gardens. When asked, he said he is not sure what will be next for him but is certain that he will not be far away when we need him.

The entire L'Arche Tahoma Hope community came out for his blessing in early November and spoke about his generosity, his ability to build meaningful connections, and his love for core members. He responded by inviting everyone to participate in a meal, which is a way he has shared love with this community hundreds of times over the years. He will be dearly missed.



"I sit with the many emotions that 26 years of faith filled service brings. I hold equally to the grief, sorrow, and challenge as I do to the love, joy, and abundance. They all have brought me a great gift of experience. Gratitude is what I have for all that has been given and all that I have been blessed to be a part of throughout my time."

- Pat Toohey



ON LEAVING

by Laura Giddings, former Community Leader

My welcome and blessing into the role of Community Leader took place on a pleasant afternoon in May, in Greenhouse 4. Flower baskets bloomed overhead, and resident hummingbirds swooped between blossoms. There was a sense of summer, just around the corner.

This was in 2015, in the "before" times. Before the death of L'Arche's founder, Jean Vanier; before a worldwide pandemic; before ugly truths about Jean Vanier and others involved in the founding of L'Arche emerged, exploding our founding myth; before #MeToo, gender fluidity, and Black Lives Matter became important in our shared social consciousness; before we could no longer find enough live-in staff—or enough staff, period; and before the closing of Anawim. We've lived over and over together the reality that, at first, change always feels like loss.

But this is only part of the picture. Here's a snapshot of accomplishments: we built the Welcome Center with over \$3 million in privately-donated funds, and then we fostered a non-residential community of people with and without intellectual disabilities and widened our circles of belonging. We wrote and launched a new mandate and strategic plan and documented the personal and spiritual growth that often comes with time in L'Arche through our Impact Report. We kept core members safe and Covid-free in the first and most dangerous wave of the pandemic. We've welcomed hundreds of new staff, Board members, donors, and volunteers along with church, community, and immersion groups. We've said goodbye to quite a few people whom we miss, even while understanding that it was their time to go.

We hit a new high in farm income and began growing as much food as we do plant starts and flowers. We held our first all-staff training exploring identity and learning in the stretch zone. We've adjusted pay, benefits, and schedules to attract and retain more staff, ending our long residential staffing crisis. We've nurtured many young leaders. We've put on new roofs, remodeled bathrooms and the barn, upgraded crawl spaces, torn down yurts, installed cabinets and countertops, bought furniture, repaired and replaced vehicles, power-washed and painted, pulled thousands of weeds, unclogged numerous toilets, hauled away yards and yards of junk, and replaced God only knows how many appliances. Most importantly, we still celebrate birthdays, L'Arche anniversaries, spiritual observances, brags and appreciations, joys and losses, blessings and goodbyes, because those are the natural fruits of growing in mutual relationship together.



Yes, we have navigated a lot together in these past 8 years and 8 months. Here are a few things that are different for me, as a result of my time with you:

- I'm better at knowing when and how to lean into emerging molehills before they become mountains although I still get it wrong a lot.
- I go easier on myself and others when mistakes are made.
- I've grown in my appreciation of both silence and laughter.
- I have a higher tolerance for a wider range of human behaviors.
- I understand boundaries better, my own and others'.
- While my primary love language will probably always be getting things done and making things run, I have a deeper appreciation and desire for moments of simple human connection.

Your differences and what those differences mean to who you are becoming as individuals and as L'Arche together continue to unfold. So it is both a difficult, and a good time to leave. It's difficult to leave in the anticipation of renewal and new growth. And it's good, because the last several years have taken a toll on me. It's time for new leaders to bring new energy and creativity in the face of the inevitable challenges. There is a sense of spring, just around the corner.

I have been honored to offer my time and leadership to support what we've accomplished together. This community and all of you will continue to hold a place in my heart and prayers as I transition to my new role as National Leader of L'Arche USA. Thank you.

"Walk This Way" and "Express Yourself" with us as we make **March 2nd** truly a

Prom for All

An '80s Starry Night

March 2nd, 2024

McGavick Conference Center
Clover Park Community College

Doors open at 5pm

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