



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 17, 2015**

## **L'Arche Portland Celebrates 28 Years of Service**

Portland, OR, – [L'Arche Portland](http://www.larche-portland.org) celebrated 28 years of support for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities sharing life together at a Community Picnic on Saturday, July 11.

### **About the Community Picnic:**

The L'Arche Portland community gathered at Montavilla Park on Saturday, July 11 to celebrate 28 years of service together.

The afternoon was a community-building celebration with over 60 supporters, volunteers, friends and family, residents, board members and staff in attendance. Cindy Leonard, a core member with an intellectual disability, led the group in prayer before a picnic lunch, and ten founding members with and without intellectual disabilities presided over a community blessing complete with birthday cake. Andrew Noethe, L'Arche Portland's executive director and community leader, finished off the gathering by inviting the community to bless new members of the leadership and support team: Teresa Badel (Office Manager), Michael Bjornstad and Corrine Montana (Community Coordinators), Amy Geoffroy (Director of Development), and Grace LeChevallier (Director of Care).

*"It was wonderful to spend time with some of the folks we had been with 30 years ago when becoming L'Arche was just a dream,"* said Erin Weisensee, one of the community's founding members. *"I reminisced with the mother of one of the first people we welcomed to L'Arche Portland, both of us sharing stories about the challenges and joys of those early days. And then we gathered to meet, celebrate and bless the newcomers who are just beginning their journey with this dynamic community."*

### **About L'Arche:**

The Portland L'Arche community is part of the L'Arche federation, with 147 communities in 35 countries. **At L'Arche Portland people with and without intellectual disabilities work together to create home and build community.** Those with intellectual disabilities form the heart of our shared life and invite others into mutual relationships. We welcome each person's unique gifts and challenges, and offer opportunities for personal transformation. We trust in God and live as a sign that love, respect and interdependence are the path to a peaceful and just world. Our model of sharing daily life creates a culture of equality, founded on a belief in our need for one another and the importance of belonging.

For more information about L'Arche Portland, please visit [www.larche-portland.org](http://www.larche-portland.org). You can support our community by attending an event; providing in-kind donation; inviting our [Speakers Bureau](http://www.larche-portland.org) to present at a community group, church or school; volunteering; or becoming an assistant.

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*People With and Without Intellectual Disabilities Sharing Life Together*

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