— CORE MEMBER INTERVIEW: ERIN WHEELER WITH FREDI GUERRERO —

Fredi: Hey Erin! How was your day?
Erin: Good.
Fredi: What did you do today?
Erin: Need more water. Need more water. Watch.
Fredi: Did you watch a movie today?
Erin: Yeahhh...
Fredi: What movie did you watch?
Erin: Harry Potter. I want more so full.
I want soak.
Fredi: So this weekend, it looks like you have a lot going on. What are you excited about?
Fredi: You been talking about baseball game lately. Do you want to watch a game?
Erin: Yeah!
Fredi: Who would you like to go with?
Erin: Katie
Fredi: Are you confusing baseball game and the Buddy Walk?

You like the shirt?
Fredi: Are you going somewhere?
Erin: Yeah!
Fredi: What are you packing for?
Erin: Go Camp!!!
I consider one of the many gifts that L’Arche brings to the world to be freedom. After being with the L’Arche Portland community for a year, this idea has taken on depth and feels newly tangible and dynamic. Making space for the varying interests of each individual; interacting with, between, and among differing communication styles, and engaging places of growth, areas of conflict, or fears and anxieties rather than avoiding them. These are things that I have only ever experienced first hand in bits and pieces in the past, but are all lived out on a daily basis at L’Arche.

Going on bike rides with Adam is one of my favorite things in the world to do. We had the privilege of doing this together one warm, sunny afternoon recently. Adam was hoping to get a treat somewhere, so we biked down the road to a nearby coffee shop that sells tasty cookies in addition to coffee. As we locked up our bikes on the rack, a gentleman sitting outside looked at us and asked, “You two must be from that home down the road?” We said, yes, we are from L’Arche. “Come on in! Let me buy you your treat” he exclaimed without hesitation as he motioned us inside. The look on Adam’s face when I explained to him that he could put his wallet away and didn’t have to pay radiated exuberant joy. So much so that when he entered Bipartisan, he began applauding, his hands held in the air.

Before ordering his cookie, Adam walked up to the kind man, a complete stranger, and gave him a bear hug. The baristas were smiling by now, patient with us as we picked our treats: Adam a molasses cookie and me a gluten free chocolate chip. The gentleman laid hands on Adam’s shoulder and gave him a bear hug. The baristas were smiling by now, patient with us as we picked our treats: Adam a molasses cookie and me a gluten free chocolate chip. The gentleman laid a $20 bill on the counter and told the lady behind the counter to keep the change. The three of us proceeded outside with our snacks. In conversation, it turns out Matt has a sister in Chicago who experiences Down syndrome. They had visited a L’Arche home before and the community holds a special place in his heart. It also turns out Matt used to teach at George Fox. The beautiful, interconnected surprises of life demonstrated through simple and random acts of kindness astounded and humbled me that day. Thank you, Matt. And thank you Adam for sharing that sweet moment with me and in doing so, inviting the whole of Bipartisan to partake in our surprise and joy.

Did you know? You can transform the lives of people with and without intellectual disabilities and reduce your federal taxes! Important new legislation recently signed into law permanently extends the Charitable IRA Rollover Donation into future years. This special provision allows taxpayers age 70.5 and older to make tax-free charitable contributions up to $100,000 per year from traditional Individual Retirement Accounts and Roth IRAs.

For those who qualify, your donation will be paid directly to L’Arche Portland from your financial institution and will not be subject to federal income taxes. For more information, please call Tamara at 503-381-4281 or email her at tamara@larche-portland.org.

Leave a legacy at L’Arche Portland and help us establish a permanent community where people with and without intellectual disabilities can grow and thrive together.

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**EXCERPTS FROM “A REFLECTION ON GRATITUDE”**

by Hannah Kunde, 2015-16 QVS Fellow, from her blog On The Road

In 2017, L’Arche Portland celebrates 30-years as a community and will use this time as an opportunity to celebrate our past and look to our future. Over the next 18-months we actively explore and plan for the future growth and increased impact of our mission and community. Please keep a look out for opportunities to participate in this process.

**Exploration**
September 2016 – December 2016

This is a time of curiosity and creativity to invite all community members, friends and partners to help us express our dreams, explore possibilities, and identify potential partners & opportunities as we plan for future growth and increased impact.

**Focus & Research**
April 2017 – August 2017

Identify the research and information needed to establish the feasibility and impact of our potential growth plans and goals. It will be during this time that we begin narrowing our focus and identifying specific plans.

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**OUR CALL TO GROW**

by Andrew Noethe, Executive Director | Community Leader

Join L’Arche Portland for an evening of inspiring music, auctions, raffles, food & drink, stories, and friendship on October 15. Proceeds directly help us transform the lives of people with and without intellectual disabilities by creating home, sharing life and building intentional community. Recording artists Julianne Johnson and Michael Allen Harrison join performers with intellectual disabilities, including pianist Jeremy Doney and vocalists from United By Music North America, for an unforgettable night of music and mission support.

Tickets are on sale now through October 8. Call 503-251-6901 or visit www.larche-portland.org.