



## General Overview of Assistant Role

Requirements and expectations vary by community

### WHAT IS L'ARCHE?

We are people, with and without developmental disabilities, sharing life in communities belonging to an International Federation. Mutual relationships and trust in God are at the heart of our journey together. We celebrate the unique value of every person and recognize our need of one another.

L'Arche communities are places where people with developmental disabilities, called core members, and those who share life with them, called assistants, live together in community. The role of the assistant is diverse, and most people find their time in a L'Arche community to be life-giving, challenging, and joyful. Experience with people with disabilities is not a requirement. For us, some of the most important criteria are an open heart, willingness to learn, commitment to personal growth, and belief in the unique sacredness and value of every individual.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- To build a relationship of mutual care and support with persons with disabilities
- To foster a home life of unity, mutual respect and participation by all members
- To provide direct care supports and skill building for core members in
  - Personal care needs (clothing, hygiene, etc.)
  - Money management
  - Medical care, appointments
  - Family and work connections
  - Household chores, laundry
  - Medications
  - Meal preparation
  - Transportation
  - Documentation related to core member care and the running of the house.

## **The Role of L'Arche Assistant:**

***“The daily rhythm of an assistant is quite simple and varied. It revolves around relationships and it includes helping in many practical ways. It also includes the enjoyment of simply being together in a family-like setting, and taking some time for oneself or with other assistants.” – L'Arche Assistant***

The prime task for the assistant is to create 'home' in the household. The specific responsibilities may include helping someone with their personal hygiene, including shower, toileting, and dressing. It may also include teaching new skills like cooking, using public transit, shopping, etc. Assistants accompany core members to medical appointments, social outings, church and church activities and share in house-cleaning and maintenance. In addition, an assistant is expected to attend and contribute to various community meetings, times of prayer and events. Much of the community's well-being depends on gratuity, of freely giving of oneself, one's talents and energies.

## **Qualifications and Requirements:**

- 18 –20 year old minimum, depending on locale of L'Arche community
- Must be proficient to fluent in English
- High School diploma or equivalent GED
- Interest in living in a faith community and exploring your personal spirituality
- Desire to work with individuals with disabilities
- Creativity, flexibility, attention to detail and ability to organize time
- Verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Valid driver's license required by most communities
- May be required to assist core members in attending religious services of their choosing
- Able to lift/transfer individuals (varied lbs) and move wheelchairs (approx. 50 lbs)
- Some core members' physical needs require more intensive physical assistance
- Once fully trained, assistants will at times be the primary person responsible for the assistance needed for an adult with a developmental disability
- Must complete and pass medical administration test (government) and then be willing to administer medication as instructed
- Must meet state requirements for caring for people with disabilities, including CPR & First Aid certifications
- Able to work 40 - 55 hours a week
- Welcome is subject to employer references, criminal record review

## **Benefits:**

- Remuneration and benefits varies between communities, but full-time, live-in assistants from the US joining for a year or more generally receive room and board and hourly or stipended compensation and health insurance coverage. Vacation and scheduled days off vary by community.
- International volunteers on a B1/B2 visa who commit to a year receive room and board as well as reimbursement for basic expenses. Vacation and scheduled days off vary by community
- All applicants should speak to a community representative about their specific offer before accepting a position.

## HOUSE RHYTHM

The routine of each home/ community may change day-to-day depending on the events and needs of that day. This is what a typical day MIGHT look like.

6:30 – 8:00	Rise and prepare for the day's activities. Assistants help the core members with personal care, tidying their room, and preparing breakfast. Assistants dispense medications as needed.
8:00- 9:00	Core members leave for day programs or employment. Some core members attend sheltered workshops; others are employed in the community with part-time competitive employment jobs; some stay home; others attend a L'Arche Day Program.
9:00 - 11:30	Household cleaning, doctor visits, shopping, paper work, meetings
11:30-2:30	Varies depending on the needs of the community
2:30 - 3:00	Core members return from day activities. This is a time of welcoming and checking in on how people are and how their day was.
3:00 – 5:00	All members participate in household or community activities. Some core members will do laundry, cook, shower, errands, exercise, or take walks at this time.
5:00	Dinner, followed by evening prayer
6:30- 9:00	Each house participates in individual activities. Often, a house will choose a group outing. Evening routines include bathing, dispensing medications, and preparation for the next day activities (making lunch, choosing clothes, etc.).

Additionally, most communities gather regularly for evening prayer and celebration, as well as for a planning meeting. Some communities have expectations related to attendance at community gatherings. Live-in assistants will have personal time each day along with two days per week away from the community, and vacation time.

Some communities may have core member or community needs that require evening and overnight care. You may also share responsibilities with live-out assistants.

Though not listed, the work of growth in friendship is interwoven throughout the day. As you live the simple daily rhythm and discover the mutuality of the relationships, you have an opportunity for transformation.

Community life in L'Arche varies widely. Questions regarding the rhythms of a specific community can be directed to the community.

Assistants generally have personal time each day and two days away from community each week.