

CHANGING IRELAND

SPRING '08

ISSUE 24

The National Newsletter of the COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME - funding 180 CDPs & 10 Support Agencies

€2.25

INSIDE



**5 projects
win awards**



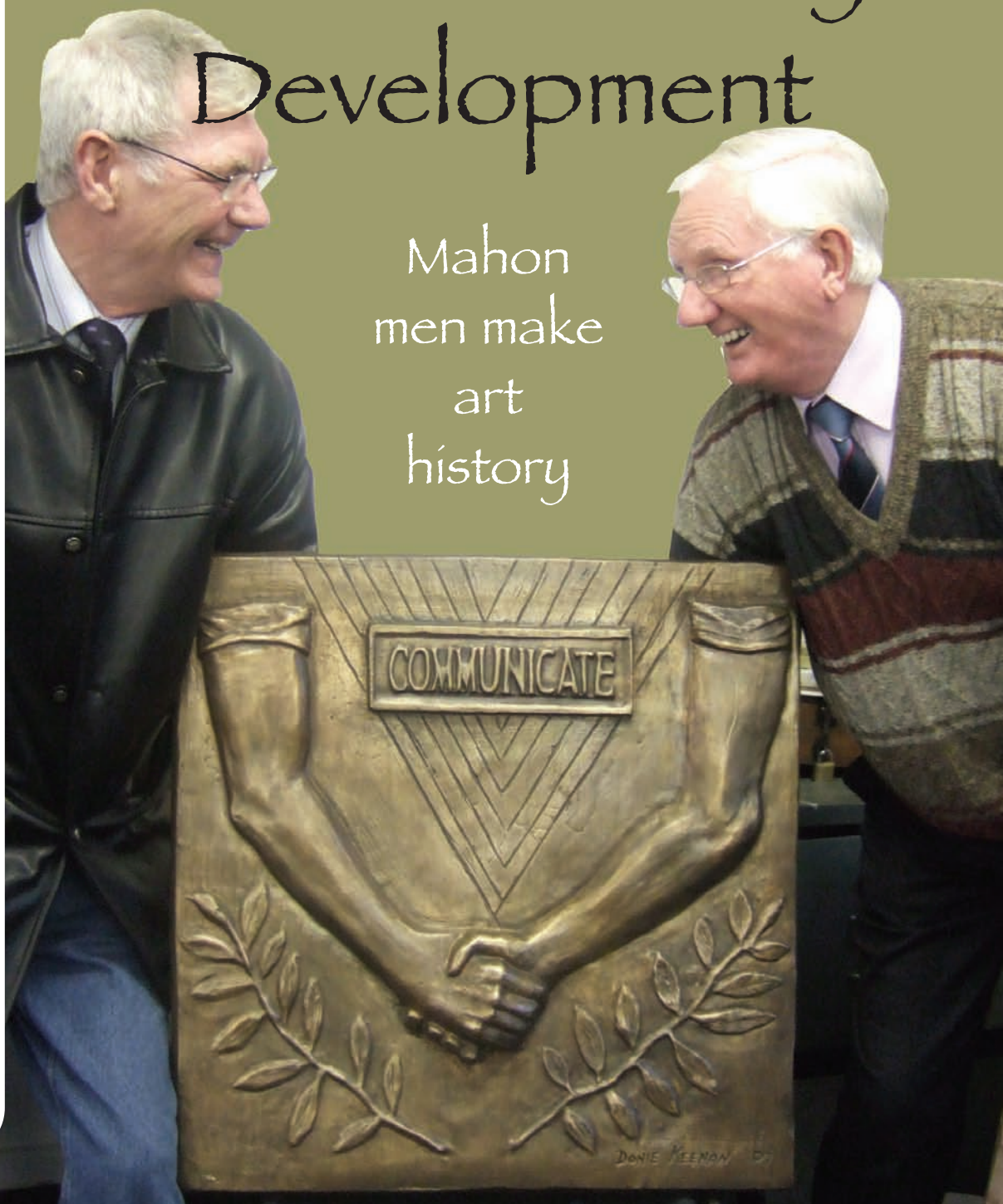
**Morale-
booster
in Limerick**



**Parents
advised to
leave her
behind**

Getting to grips with Community Development

Mahon
men make
art
history



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This publication and most projects featured inside are part of the
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME



Oscars for Volunteers

FIVE Community Development Projects in Dublin, Longford, Tipperary, Donegal and Leitrim won awards from national organisations in the past year.

Three projects collected awards this February from Aontas, the national body for adult education, another CDP won a Media and Multicultural Award in November and a fifth was the recipient of an Irish Times award within that past 12 months for educational work with Travellers.

The latter project – Tallaght Travellers CDP - runs a Homework Club which happens to be the only after-schools homework club for Travellers in the State and its success has attracted a lot of attention, though not sadly a lot of funding. Crucially, if it was not for the volunteers, the Club could not operate at all.

And, recently, Michael O'Donnell, a volunteer from Tallaght, won a national award from Barnardos for his work as a mentor with Tallaght Travellers CDP's Club 2000. There are others whose work is deserving of recognition too.

The volunteers and staff in all the award-winning projects should be proud of their achievements and it is only right that

their work should be recognised. The significance of these awards to the Community Development Programme is that projects won awards from national bodies and in three separate areas of community work.

No doubt, at local level, even more CDPs, volunteers and projects they help initiate regularly win awards.

So, perhaps the time has come for a specific National Volunteer Awards Scheme within the Programme, or a wider scheme recognising volunteer work in the community development sector in general. The scheme could be organised from within the sector. But who would take on the responsibility?

It is not that volunteers are crying out for awards – some like to do their work quietly, but a volunteer awards scheme would serve the dual purpose of providing recognition to everyone who is nominated while also helping to highlight the issues the volunteers and projects are engaged in.

If one was set up, no doubt that the members of Mahon's Men's Art Group, featured on our front cover, would be in line for an award. Up Cork!

Thanks Sharon Browne!

A SPECIAL note of thanks to Sharon Browne. Sharon was a member of 'Changing Ireland's Editorial Team since the magazine was established in 2001. We wish her good luck and success in her new post as Co-ordinator with the RAPID Programme in Tralee, Co. Kerry.

Thank you from all of us!

- Editorial Team members, Allen Meagher, Viv Sadd, Juan Carlos Azzopardi and Niamh Walsh.

Support Agencies going

THE Regional Support Agencies, which provide support across the State to CDPs, will not have their contracts renewed this year by the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. The contracts are due to expire on May 31st.

'Changing Ireland' put two questions to Minister of State Pat Carey on the matter. We asked does he have plans to put something else in place of the Support Agencies, and asked if there had been a change in policy to move away from the independent, integrated support model.

Minister Carey replied: "The arrangements for the provision of support services to the Community Development Projects is currently under review."

"My Department recognises the value of support services to the CDPs and is considering the best way to enable them, at this stage of their development, to access the support services that best meet their needs."

The Support Agency Network has met to discuss the issue and it will be discussed by projects at their regional forum meetings.

Volunteers in CDPs require training and support on issues such as company board of management procedures, employment practice, company law and accounting. They also receive support on how to draw up workplans, set standards, lobby for policy change and implement a community development approach to their work, among other things.

Programme consultation

A TOTAL of 110 submissions were made (as was reported in our last issue) for consideration by the Consultative Committee of the Community Development Programme.

Dates have yet to be set for regional conferences which are aimed at reaching a consensus on the Programme's future direction.

The consultative process is aimed at gaining clarity about the role of the Programme and Projects at the national, regional and local level and to plan for the future.

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THANKS TO . . .

'Changing Ireland' thanks everyone involved in the production of Issue 24.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the author concerned.

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DEVELOPMENT NETWORK



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Estate residents cast year's work in bronze

- Mahon men make art history

ALLEN MEAGHER reports

FOR the first time in Irish modern history, bronze sculptures by non-professional artists will go on permanent display in a public place, the new Loughmahon Park in Cork City. The work will first go on temporary display in Cork's new City Hall.

The work in question is four large pieces sculpted by four men from Mahon's Men's Art Group, Noel Kent, Jim Barrett, Donal O'Regan and Donie Keenan. The sculptures were a year in the making. Each one is quite heavy – it takes two men to lift one.

It is the first time in Cork City Council's 25 year history of supporting the arts that community artists have hit such a high note.

Though they have been asked to do more sculpting work by admirers, none of the men are interested in sculpting or artwork for personal profit.

"It would ruin us, it would change us," commented Noel Kent, the group's spokesperson.

Mahon CDP has supported the group since the outset in 1998 and project co-ordinator, Viv Sadd, says it is "the first time I know of where community artists were used to produce work for display in a public facility."

He marvelled at the fact that "this art will be there forever in the community park."

Each of the amateur (in that they do not get paid) artists chose a theme that related to the word 'community' and worked to reflect their chosen theme in their sculptures. The four themes are:



Mahon Men's Art Group prefab.

Build + Play + Communicate + Express = Community.

Group member, Jim Barrett, looked satisfied with the results, but knew it had taken dedication: "Not one person here missed one night during the year."

SUSTAINABILITY

Mr. Kent has been with the group from the outset: "We got our start from a European Initiative called 'Arts Awareness Intervention II' and have been going since."

Dozens of men of all ages joined the group at different times, but as Mr. Kent says, "It's difficult to get men to do anything in the arts. We've had young lads in the group, but their interest drifts."

However, Mr. Kent and his three steadfast colleagues show that men can indeed succeed through art. Such is the high regard in which

the group are held that 80% of their work sells out. The group has exhibited in the Sirius Arts Centre and Gallery in Cobh, Co. Cork, a place normally only available to professional artists.

On the community development front, they are called on from time to time to help other groups.

"On Tuesday, I'm going up to Glen CDP to help them start up a men's group there," mentioned Mr. Kent.

At the beginning of this ground-breaking art-work, the men wondered how they could become sculptors. It seemed the domain of professionals, but they had patience, determination and support from the CDP and City Hall. They also had hidden wells of talent that sculptor Sean McCarthy worked on for a year to bring to the surface.

"We spent three months learning to sketch, then three months casting sculptures in clay before we were ready for working with bronze," recalled Mr. Kent.

Looking back over a year on, the group now realises their talent: Mr. Barrett has been asked to produce a sculpture for a private collector, while Donal O'Regan has sculpted a piece for Holy Cross Church in Mahon in memory of a deceased parish priest.

"We could also pass on the skills of sculpting to others," said Mr. Kent. "We are very proud of our work."

No doubt their success will soon be broadcast far and wide.

Per Cent for Art Scheme

THE Per Cent for Art Scheme was first introduced in Ireland in 1988 by the Department of Environment. It allows for one per cent (up to a current maximum of €63,486) on a construction budget, either new build or repairs and maintenance to be spent on commissioning art. Funds may be pooled to allow for major commissions and diversity in the nature of art commissioned under the scheme is encouraged.

New worker

MAHON CDP has a new part-time development worker, Lynda Wakefield, who is responsible firstly for intergenerational work and, secondly, for organising the volunteer home visitation service. The position is funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund.



Displaying their ground-breaking bronze-work: Jim Barrett, Donal O'Regan, Donie Keenan and Noel Kent of the Men's Art Group in Mahon, Cork. Second from the right is Viv Sadd, co-ordinator of Mahon CDP who support the group.



Noel's 'Express' bronze sculpture. The sculptures are all deliberately quite flat, to reduce the risk of vandalism.

A first for Cork City Council

"IT'S a first for our office to commission a permanent piece for public display from community artists," admitted a delighted Maeve Dineen, Community Arts Co-ordinator with Cork City Council. Her office, along with the Parks Department, funded Mahon's Men's Art Group to produce artwork for permanent display in the new Loughmahon Park, due to be officially opened this coming summer.

"Normally, public tenders for artwork are only



"The number one focus of any local authority's arts policy should be on promoting access to the arts for all citizens and on an equal basis," says Cork City Community Arts Co-ordinator, Maeve Dineen.

open to professional artists."

It was not planned from the beginning like this, nor did the Mahon group win a tendering process: they were simply in the right place at the right time with the right approach.

"In terms of national policy, I can't see local authorities moving away from employing professional artists to employing community artists," added Ms. Dineen.

"We normally give the Mahon group a small annual grant but because of their potential we asked them in late 2006 to link up with some professional artists. They proposed to learn sculpture, so we called in Sean McCarthy who is with the National Sculpture Factory (based on Albert Road, Cork). Six months of workshops followed and Sean came back saying the group were suggesting they be given a project. It just so happened that a new green area called Loughmahon Park was due to open and the Parks Department agreed to pay the production costs for any sculptures they made for the park."

Asked why City Hall should support an art group with only four fully-dedicated members, she replied: "It's about the quality of the engagement, not about the quantity of this or that. We support meaningful engagement."

"If we started out by asking the group to produce a piece of public art, it would probably never have materialised. It was better the way the project developed over time. What worked

about this project was: the pace, the artist was a good communicator, the commitment from the group and good timing (the park being due to open).

"And one key to our success in Mahon has been the CDP. The co-ordinator, Viv Sadd, is a very dynamic person and great to keep people informed and he has supported the group from the beginning. He makes the funding applications on their behalf which is a huge resource for them."

"I'm a great believer in giving projects time to breath. We let the group go at their own pace and it really paid off as a good investment for everyone concerned."

Cork needed more community arts

EVERY local authority employs at least one arts officer. However, Cork City Council was the first to recruit specifically for the position of Community Arts Co-ordinator/Officer. Maeve Dineen has been in the post for five years now.

"The job was included in the Council's first ever five-year Arts Plan because it was felt that for a city of its size there wasn't enough community arts happening," said Ms. Dineen.

While specifically promoting community art, Ms. Dineen is aware that Dublin City Council employs a Community Development Arts Officer, and in County Roscommon there is a Youth and Education Arts Officer.

Other local authorities employ arts officers whose role includes community arts.

What about elsewhere?

FOUR patient men, Mahon CDP and Cork City Council have succeeded in challenging perceptions in Ireland about what can be achieved within communities through art, but what about other parts of the country?

In Ballymun, Dublin, through the 'Per Cent for Arts Scheme', a lot of collaborative work has taken place between local groups and professional artists under the name 'Breaking Ground', which is the Ballymun Regeneration Company's Per Cent for Arts Programme.

Since 2002, Breaking Ground has launched many public art projects by working with individuals, schools, community groups and local businesses. Check out www.breakingground.ie

Cost breakdown

The €15,860 investment by Cork City Council in the Mahon project breaks down as follows:

Artists fees €4860 paid by the Arts Office;

Production cost €8,000 paid by the Parks department;

City hall display costs €1000 (estimate) to be paid by the Arts Office;

Installation costs €2,000 (estimate) to be paid by the Parks department.

Cork projects engaged in artwork

"I'VE got good feedback from artists who have worked with CDPs in Cork City," reports Community Arts Co-ordinator, Maeve Dineen.

She recalled her first months in the job, when she began by calling around to all the CDPs in the city: "CDPs are brilliant too for young artists trying to make connections with communities. CDPs are good as a first port of call."

Links have become strong with individual CDPs around the city, for example Ballyphehane/Togher CDP.

"There are about three women's arts groups in Ballyphehane/Togher and the CDP there supports a men's group who also do arts work. The CDP there is very enthusiastic and we have worked closely with them," noted Ms. Dineen.

Mahon changing, but disadvantage persists

MAHON was until three decades ago known as a marshland on the outskirts of Cork City. The local authority acquired the land for housing and Mahon earned infamy as a place of social disadvantage where people lived almost cut off from the rest of Cork.

In recent years, the Celtic Tiger swept by and Mahon has become famous as a focal point for shoppers throughout Munster. However, disadvantage persists in the estates and the Community Development Project remains a very important centre-point for residents.

MAMA for Acorn project in Longford

ACORN CDP's chairperson, Peter Clyne, accepted a Metro Eireann Media and Multicultural Award on behalf of his project at a ceremony in Dublin in late November. Acorn CDP, based in Longford town, won the award in the group category for its work in organising a Multicultural Family Fun Day.

"Our approach was one of partnership. We brought together the community and voluntary sector and state agencies to address racism and promote interculturalism in County Longford," said Mr. Clyne.

CDP co-ordinator, Josephine Stroker, explained the background to the project: "Ireland is now a multicultural nation and while the majority of Irish people recognize this as a benefit to our society and indeed our economy there is unfortunately still a significant number of people who would prefer to keep Ireland for the Irish."



Jibola, Shantel and Nike at the Intercultural fun day event that won an award for Acorn CDP in Co. Longford.

It was with this in mind that Acorn CDP and the Nigerian Professionals in Diaspora with the support of many other agencies decided to run an intercultural family fun day last summer. This was also tied in with National Play Day. The programme brought all the communities living

in Longford and its environs together for a festival of music, arts, food, culture and play for the children.

"This is just the beginning of many more collaborative efforts in the future we hope!" added Ms. Stroker.

3 projects scoop awards at adult education Oscars

Report by: NIAMH FARREN*

THE AONTAS Star Awards initiative is now in its second year and this year's awards were presented to 11 adult learning projects around the country on February 4th.

Three of the awards this year went to learning projects initiated by Community Development Projects. These include North Leitrim Womens Centre CDP, (winner in the Connaught Local Category), Letterkenny CDP (winner in the Ulster Local Category) and the Parents Support Programme run by Knockanrawley Resource Centre (winner in the Munster Local Category).

Other winning projects attributed the success of their activities to strong partnerships with CDPs based in their areas. Indeed, more than a dozen CDPs featured in the nominations.

The awards were established to highlight teamwork and award recognition to adult learning projects and this year the number of projects nominated rose to 131 - over three times the number received in 2007.

Berni Brady, Director of AONTAS, believes this increase is due to the initiative gaining popularity within the sector, but also that there is a broader understanding of what constitutes adult and community education.

"Many of the projects nominated were started by Community Development Projects and these awards give us the opportunity to highlight the valuable contribution that the



Breege Newell and Loretta Needham from Tuam CDP receive their STAR award from Dr Hugh Brady during last year's AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival.

Community Development Programme makes to adult learning."

"Community development and community education share common principles such as community ownership and management, local decision making and both have the active participation of local people in all aspects of the work. For many CDPs, community education is the process used to understand local issues of concern and develop locally based responses to these issues.

"The Community Development Programme has played a major role in increasing the level of adult education initiatives on offer and supporting adult learners to engage in a learning experience that is based on their needs. This is particularly important for learners who have experienced disadvantage in their lives," added Ms Brady.

One of last year's winners was Tuam CDP and Loretta Needham summarised how winning a STAR award benefited their project:

"First of all we raised our profile and gained more media coverage. Secondly, I think we were taken more seriously as a group after we were given the award. We developed a particular approach to English classes for immigrants which was highly successful and which has now been replicated by the VEC. Finally it was great for participants in the project to get the acknowledgement they deserve. Sometimes we're so swamped here that we don't get the time to acknowledge the great work that goes on."

The AONTAS STAR Awards ceremony marked the opening of the AONTAS Adult Learners' Festival which ran from February 4th to February 8th.

• Niamh Farren works as Communications Officer with Aontas. For more information, contact: AONTAS The National Adult Learning Organisation, 2nd Floor, 83-87 Main Street, Ranelagh, Dublin 6. T: 01-406 8220/1.

F: 01-4068227. E: mail@aontas.com

Programme's 3 Aontas award winners

CDPs play their part in promoting adult education, as the following award-winning projects show:

In Letterkenny CDP, volunteers organise a number of different training courses - from stress management to cooking on a budget. The project caters particularly to the needs of disadvantaged or vulnerable people in the community.

"We also secured funding from the Department of Social and Family Affairs to implement the Good Morning Letterkenny

Programme, which will see a pool of volunteers make a daily phone call to older people who cannot leave their homes for reasons of ill-health or infirmity. This support makes daily contact with people for a chat and provides emergency support if they need it," a spokesperson for the project explained.

In Knockanrawley, a parent support programme allows local parents to access training on topics such as 'Managing Difficult Behaviour', to take part in support groups. According to Helen Buckley for the group, "The activities of the programme are as

varied as the needs of parents and include parent support groups, parents in education courses, directed activities for parents and children such as summer camps. Over 178 parents and children have participated in our activities over the past three years."

North Leitrim Women's Centre offers a number of training opportunities - anything from feng shui to farm management, which address the employment needs of over two thousand rural women, and the Centre also provides women with the chance to meet up with other women.

Irish Times Award for country's only Traveller after-schools club

MARY Cassidy, Community Education Worker for Tallaght Travellers CDP is delighted the homework club she runs won an Irish Times award last year. Just as thrilling is the fact that an increasing number of young Travellers from the area now aim for third level education.

"Our club, Club 2000, is based in Brookfield Community School where we have 22 young travellers attending every night. In February of last year, we won the Irish Times award for post-primary education and went on to win the Irish Times overall award also for post primary education," says Mary Cassidy, Community Education Worker.

"We had six young Travellers from Club 2000 that did their Leaving Cert and four who sat their Junior Cert. Most importantly, four of the Leaving Cert students were young boys. This was the first time in Tallaght that we had Traveller boys sitting their Leaving Cert. Normally boys drop out in first year or after the Junior Cert. So, we are very proud.

"We also have a young Traveller, Michael O'Donnell, who is a peer worker in Club 2000 and



Mary Cassidy with the 'Irish Times' award.

he has won a top 'Helping Hand' award from Barnardos. We have become very successful over the years.

"Club 2000 was set up in 1999 as very low

numbers of pupils were transferring successfully into post primary education, they would only go as far as the first year and then leave school. The Club runs two afternoons a week from 3-6pm.

"The first hour and a half is home work, then we break for snack, then we do arts & crafts, sports, competitions, Christmas displays, Masses, or work on projects and most of the activities are kept around Traveller culture.

"We have great support from parents in Club 2000. We have two Traveller parents involved, a post-primary teacher, the young peer worker and myself.

"Young Travellers come from three areas in Tallaght; Jobstown, Brookfield, and Killinarden. The Bus picks young Travellers up and drops them at Brookfield school. At the end of the evening, our bus driver, Joe O'Donoghue who is a Traveller man, drops them home safely at their door.

"The most important thing about our club is that it is all run by Travellers and we have achieved great thing over the years. But, as it happens, this is the only post-primary after school in the country for Travellers," adds Ms. Cassidy.

Aiming for Psychology

"I'm going to Club 2000 since 1st year. It's great: you mightn't get the time to do your homework at home, but here you have time and space," says Michelle Cassidy (16) of Tallaght.

"The Club is a laugh. We do our homework, have lunch and do activities - crafts and sports. I'll be doing my Leaving Cert next year and I want to study psychology in UCD. Why? Because I'm very interested in people."



Michelle Cassidy and Charlene Cunningham are members of Club 2000, Tallaght Travellers CDP's homework club.

Bringing people together

ADULT education brings people together. For some people, getting involved in adult education has resulted in the establishment of locally organised interest groups such as historical societies, and has helped others become more technically and media literate. Adult education has increased the number of active voters and helped new immigrants to integrate in their communities. AONTAS estimates that over 300,000 adults participate in formal and non formal education each year in Ireland?

No problem winning awards, but hard to get funding

MARY Cassidy is employed part-time as a Community Education Worker with Tallaght Travellers CDP. She has since 1999 worked voluntary in Club 2000 and is their spokesperson. Funding is a continual battle for the club.

"You'd think the Government would jump at the chance to fund us. They should be

replicating this homework club around the country. We've had visits from Traveller groups in Galway, Tullamore and Clare who want to set up clubs like ours," reports Mary.

"We have no problem getting awards and of course the CDP is funded, but we find it very difficult to get funding for the Club," said Mary. "Apart from €1,500 from the VEC, we don't

receive a cent from Government and are dependent on private funding. The St. Stephen's Green Trust Fund contributed €11,500 this year and a private donor gave us €10,000."

Currently, two Traveller parents Helen Donoghue and Bridget O'Donoghue give their time voluntarily, while post-primary teacher Joan Tiernan is the club's paid worker.

Issue 23 - one question

South West Donegal Communities
Partnership Ltd,
Unit 8, The Carpet Factory,
Killybegs,
Co. Donegal .

Good day,

Your article on the back cover of Issue 23 details funding approval of €575,000 to projects under the Community Development Programme for the recruitment of additional workers to 27 CDPs.

Can I ask if when you say 'additional' workers - do you mean in addition to the two which are funded by the Programme as standard - (which is one and a half full time workers in year one to be increased to two full time workers in year two) or is it simply referring to the projects increasing to two workers in the second year of the project?

It would be great to know that there has been a move to enable CDPs recruit a third staff member to enable them deliver on their workplans.

I would be very grateful if you could clarify that for us . . .

Kind regards,
Margaret Doherty

Editor's Note: The additional project workers are going to projects that employed less than 2 workers and the Department have confirmed that there has been no change in policy to enable CDPs recruit a third staff member through the Programme's fund.

Registering disappointment

Laccamor,
Barntick,
Ballynacally,
Ennis,
Co. Clare
15 Dec. '07

Dear Editor,

I write in relation to the most recent edition of 'Changing Ireland'. It is very welcome that the issue was dedicated to the issue of Domestic Violence.

However, I wish to register my disappointment that during the 16 Days of Action Opposing Violence Against Women the issue of violence against men was such a prominent part of the magazine. I am well aware of the problem of domestic violence against men. However, I question the claim in the editorial that "There are possibly as many male victims as female, or perhaps more male victims."

The interview with Women's Aid on page 17 appeared to me to be very antagonistic towards an organisation which has carried out so much excellent work on behalf of the many female victims. It is fair to challenge any organisation with regard to their service provision, however, if this was to be the tone of the interviews why were Amen not asked why they are not providing services to the female perpetrators?

Domestic Violence against women is a complex issue related to power and control which frequently but not always, manifests

itself in physical abuse. It is not the same as abuse which happens between mutually combative couples. Neither is the same dynamic at play when the victim is male and the perpetrator female. Treating these as a homogenous group will not serve male or female victims well as the response needed by each group are very different.

Yours Sincerely,
Liz Price

Editor's Note: The full sentence referred to in the editorial (which can be read at www.changingireland.ie/Issue23.pdf) reads: "There are possibly as many male victims as female, or perhaps more male victims, depending on what study you read." The fact is that some studies have claimed that men may suffer as much emotional abuse as women. One such study was by the National Crime Council in Ireland.

On the suggestion that Amen should be asked why they are not providing services to female perpetrators, we put the question to them. Amen spokesperson, Frank McGlynn, replied as follows: "We're stretched to the limit as it is. I'm not too sure we would be the right organisation to run a programme for female perpetrators, because we deal with male victims and I don't know how appropriate it would be for us to also deal with female perpetrators." He added that "sometimes" female perpetrators contact Amen and he said it was unfortunate there was nowhere to refer them to.

Development workers graduate from UCC



TWO CDP workers, Thomas McDonagh and James Maughan graduated recently from University College Cork with a Diploma in Youth and Community.

Pictured (left) after the graduation are: Thomas, who works with Tullamore Traveller Movement, in Co. Offaly, Breda Lymer, one of the tutors on the programme and director of West Training & Development, and James Maughan, Parkside Community Development Project, Ballina, Co. Mayo.

Volunteer Profile: Irene Ahern

Irene Ahern is a Voluntary Management Committee member of St. Munchin's Community Development Project which covers the areas of Thomondgate, Kileely, Ballynanty and beyond in Limerick city. She was one of the founding members of the project and its first meetings took place in Irene's kitchen. She was originally from the Strand, Thomondgate, Limerick, and has lived in the same parish all her life.

What are you reading at the moment?

A fantastic book by Malachy Martin called 'Hostage to the Devil'. It's all about possessions and the exorcisms that priests do.

What's the last film you watched?

I can't remember, I'm more into Discovery Channel than anything else. One of my favourite films is 'The Sound of Music'.

Person you most admire?

The person I most admire in my lifetime was my father, the late Frank Fitzpatrick. He was an idealist, a visionary, he loved his country and fought for it in 1916, in the War of Independence and in the Civil War, but he still said it's better to live for your country than to die for it. He came from the city but was one of the founder members of the Co-operative Society of Ireland which managed creameries. He was the first co-op manager in Limerick and later Munster.

The top 4 issues in Ireland today?

1. The health situation – if we don't have health, we can't work for our country.
2. The drugs situation of course, maybe that's number one, and the violence that is in society because of drugs.
3. The bitterness and confrontation in the Dail today, everybody is at each other's throats.
4. The threat of recession.

We need more . . .

People with vision and with the type of vision that would bring the ordinary, everyday person into the forefront when decisions are being made.

We need less . . .

Strife, especially among politicians, all of them. Politicians are no longer what they used to be. And we need less greed, because a lot of people won't do anything now unless there is something in it for them.

How long are you working with the CDP?

I am one of the CDP's founder members. I started in 1953 to get the community to come together, first of all to start up a savings club among neighbours. Later we started up St. Lelia's Credit Union. I helped found the CDP because I wouldn't stop until we got it. I got the CDP its first office premises.

How and why did you get involved?

Because people need to be involved in their own communities and we need to look out for the weaker people among us, those with less resources. At the start, I didn't know I had a talent for bringing people together, but I learnt. If you give people achievable goals, they will work for you. When you achieve your first goal, you strive for a higher goal, and a higher one again. Step-by-step it goes, community building I call it.

What difference has being involved made to you?

I have got a lot of personal satisfaction and am extremely proud of the CDP. It is one of the things I am proudest in my lifetime. Right now, we have the strongest committee we ever had.

Have things changed in St. Munchin's as a result of the Project?

The community centre itself is new, but really there are many many developments.

What motivates you as a volunteer?

Community development motivates me and community development never stops because there are always new challenges cropping up. I am always watchful to see what is going on and more importantly what is not happening, for example if a hall is not being used, I ask why.

Also, there's no snobbery in the CDP, it's all about the people and the wishes of the people.

How do you get new volunteers?

That's the big question. An awful lot of people are too busy nowadays or don't know about the CDP. It's important to talk to people about what the CDP is doing and to send out newsletters about your activities, keep the CDP to the forefront.



Taoiseach applauds Community Development Programme

"LIKE many of the voluntary and community groups funded under the Government's Community Development Programme, Nascadh CDP's great strength is that it is a service developed by local people and run by local people for the benefit of the community."

- Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, in Dublin, at the launch on January 22nd of Nascadh CDP's 'East Wall Older Persons Needs Analysis Report'.



An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, launched Nascadh CDP's 'East Wall Older Persons Needs Analysis Report' on January 22nd.

Dublin may become age-friendly city

NASCADH CDP put in a submission to Dublin Docklands Development Authority to put ageing on the agenda at their annual social regeneration conference held in Killarney.

As a direct result, Dr. Alexandra Kalache, who until October was the Director of the World Health Organisation's programme on ageing and health, addressed the conference.

Dr. Kalache outlined what makes for an age-friendly city and he challenged the Dublin Docklands Authority to work towards making the Republic's capital the first age-friendly city in Europe.



Southill girls performing in the Variety Show at UL.

Morale-booster in Southill draws 1,500 people

A MORALE-BOOSTING event that was three months in the making and involved close to 1500 people was organised by Southill CDP.

Over 100 kids and over 60 adults and school-teachers worked with Southill CDP staff and volunteers in Limerick from September to December to produce a Community Variety Show. Support was strong with many young parents getting involved for the first time in a community event and 1300 tickets were sold.

The show took place in the University of Limerick Concert Hall and, for many people, it was their first time there.

The event was the brainchild of local drugs education prevention worker, Caroline Keane, who is employed through the CDP. She won management approval for the idea three years ago and it was included in the project's masterplan.

"It was such a success we might repeat it every year, it was great for building community spirit," remarked project co-ordinator, Nuala Rennison.

"500 tickets sold on the first night and 800 on the second night, almost filling the hall. When you've children involved, they'll all bring their granny. We were also lucky to have a number of funders," she added.

In an area facing the bull-dozer and depressed in recent years by murder and intimidation and scheduled for a major regeneration, the morale-booster could not have come at a better time. Across the city in Moyross, newly resident monks also saw the value in a dramatic production and held a nativity pageant at Christmas which played out on the street in front of 500 local

residents. Activities that might seem ordinary in most communities can take on an extraordinary flavour in disadvantaged communities.

For Southill's Variety Show, school-teachers got their classes to create different elements for the show and the High School Musical was a central part of the production.

Children were grouped by age, 3-8 year-olds, 8-12 years and 12-14 years. Adults line-danced and a local dance troupe also put on a performance. Carew Park's Darren Shine ran the comedy spots and Mary Fitzpatrick from Kincora Park, also in Southill, was the compere.

John Williams, chairperson of Southill CDP, said, "It was worth the work and time – to build morale." The project hope the Show will be repeated in the future. Southill used to be very involved in Siamsa Tire in years past and is bursting with talent the country never hears about through the crime-hungry mainstream media.

The Southill community are now looking forward to a major regeneration of the area following the launch of a draft 'Vision' document by President Mary McAleese on January 21st.

Mr. Williams commented: "We are really happy to see the Vision on paper and it looks realistic. If everything in it can be developed, Southill will become a better and a safe place to live. We had an €8 million remedial works scheme here but it never got off the ground, but this time seems different and we can already see the extra presence of Gardai on the ground."

Taoiseach launches report on ways to a better life

NASCADH CDP have published a report that lists 23 ways in which the lives of older people in East Wall may be improved.

In launching the 'East Wall Older Persons Needs Analysis Report' on January 22nd, An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, said, "It is very encouraging to note that the overwhelming majority of those surveyed feel happy and safe living in the area. But I also take from the report that people are feeling less connected to their community, which can lead to a sense of isolation and concerns around safety."

He praised Nascadh's 60-page report as "a very practical and successful model of consultation and engagement and it could usefully be replicated in other communities across the country."

"The Government is convinced of the value, and indeed necessity, of involving older



Kathleen talking to Owen Binchy, Nascadh CDP co-ordinator, during a meeting about older people's needs in East Wall, Dublin.

people - in common with all other sectors in society - in discussions, debates and decisions on the design, delivery and monitoring of services which we provide on their behalf. We are committed to ensuring that they are fully empowered and facilitated to do so," added An Taoiseach.

The launch took place, unusually, in Store Street Garda Station, where a number of Community Gardaí who work in the East Wall are based.

Nascadh CDP chairperson, Fran Laycock, is hopeful that all the recommendations will be acted on over the next few years. Better public transport was, for instance, one of the more important recommendations.

He said the motivation for the research "emerged from a genuine fear and concern

that not enough attention was being given to the needs of older people living in East Wall."

"There was a feeling that the voice of older people was rarely heard in discussions and debates about ways in which their lives might be improved."

Stephen Rourke, who compiled the report, said, "Many older people in East Wall are not coming out, are not turning up at community activities and are removed from the rest of the local community in East Wall. The key challenge is to identify the types of activities which will attract the active interest of older people and, then, to encourage the more isolated and vulnerable older people to participate in these activities."

He also noted that older people were pleased to be consulted.



Denis on his rounds delivering meals on wheels in East Wall.

The report says:

The 'East Wall Older Persons Needs Analysis Report' states:

- 97.5% of older people like living in the East Wall area.
- 90.1% of older people in East Wall said that they feel safe living in the area, although a significant number of older people said they do not go out at all during the evening or night-time.
- The best things about life in East Wall are good neighbours and friends, being close to local amenities and being close to the city centre of Dublin.
- The litter and rubbish in public spaces, anti-social behaviour and the poor public bus service are the worst things about living in East Wall.
- Nearly half of the older people in East Wall (49.2%) live by themselves.
- For 23.5% of older people in East Wall there are days during every week when they do not meet any other person. This figure rises to 47.9% of the older people who live by themselves.

Overall 242 questionnaires were filled in for the research.

Bertie describes 'phantom' bus service

THE Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, reports Nascadh CDP co-ordinator, Owen Binchy, "highlighted the need to roll out primary health care units like in Ballymun across Ireland, including of course Dublin's North Inner City. He spoke of how the new community centre would provide many of the services that older people in East Wall need. He also spoke of the

importance of it being properly funded and commended the good work being done by the CDP's voluntary management committee."

"He spoke in detail about what he called 'the phantom 53 bus service' and he questioned the logic and economics of using double decker buses, through narrow streets and with a relatively small population."

Briefly

- **Cohesion** – this year will see the fruits of the work become visible.
- **New CDPs** may be set up in the future. The initiatives will be based on data coming from the CSO's Small Area Statistics.
- CDPs on **islands** – no change.
- When relations between CDPs and **local authorities** break down – call the Department, and if there is no improvement, call either Minister.
- **Limerick's regeneration** was never going to work until the local people came up with a plan themselves and saw the need for change clearly.
- Highlight the blight of **urban deprivation**.
- **Childcare Scheme** changes were not a u-turn.
– Minister

Do we take disadvantage seriously? – asks Minister Ó Cuív

"I KEEP getting labelled 'rural, rural, rural'" complains Minister Éamon Ó Cuív, "when there is a real need to everyday highlight the blight of deprivation and particularly urban deprivation."

"The greatest inequity, particularly for our young people, is in urban deprived communities. It's amazing that the one thing you cannot get society in general excited about, unless there are shootings, is about tackling once and for all urban deprivation. Unless we have a shootings, you can't get a debate."

"Do we as a society take disadvantage seriously? I think the Government do, but do we as a society do so? And how committed are we to dealing with urban deprivation?"

It is unlikely the Minister is for a moment saying everyone should move to the countryside, but he strongly believes a rural dweller has better life-chances.

"I've tried and tried and tried for the last five years to point out that in social terms, rural houses give extraordinary good outcomes for young families, with 70% going on to further (third-level) education."

URBAN PLANNING DISASTER

He said urban planning was a "big disaster" where we create urban communities "where only one in a hundred children have any real expectations of getting to a third level college, where we create the type of situations we find ourselves in Limerick - where we virtually have to knock down half the city and rebuild it."

"It amazed me that some of the major shakers and movers in Irish society couldn't see that the biggest planning scandal in Ireland has been in urban planning - the social segregation is costing us millions in social problems, in prison populations. And it

is causing huge social misery at the human level."

He said it was not a case of putting more money into more CDPs, that the problem needed much more than that.

He welcomed the regeneration schemes that are starting up in Limerick. In 1989, he first visited Southill, on a Senate canvass with a friend.

MINISTER WANTED TO LEAVE SOUTHILL

"I never saw in all of my life anywhere like it. I've been to a lot of places," said the Minister, mentioning the Short Strand and Ballymurphy in Belfast, the infamous Garvaghy Road, and Ballymun and Fatima Mansions in Dublin.

"But Southill was one place I wanted to get out of fast. All the boarded up houses and so on just gave me that feeling."

"Southill was always on my mind after that and I raised the issue of urban renewal relating to Southill and what I was told was 'Unless the Limerick people came with a plan to deal with the social issues, there was no point in knocking down the houses and building new ones.' And what has made regeneration in Fatima Mansions and Ballymun different is that it has come from the inside. To a point, you had to wait until the penny dropped with people themselves or otherwise you were coming in from the outside and doing it and you wouldn't get the results right.

"For some reason, Limerick City has by far the highest number of local authority housing (43%) of any city in Ireland.



The cover of 'CHANGING IRELAND' Minister Éamon Ó Cuív to make a range of community programmes for ordinary members

Include male victims in Code of Conduct

THE Code of Conduct recommended to CDPs and Family Resource Centres (FRCs) on the issue of domestic violence should be widened to include reaching out to male victims, according to Minister for Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, Éamon Ó Cuív.

"My gut would be it should cover all domestic violence victims. I accept that violence against men is not as frequent but it does happen. (The Code of Conduct) should deal with domestic violence for men," he said.

Minister of State Pat Carey agreed: "Instead of having a code of conduct on domestic violence against men or women, it should be one addressing domestic violence against adults."

The Code of Conduct was adopted to guide CDPs and FRCs on the issue of domestic violence. Such groups, notes the Code, have a primary role "to enable individuals in the community to access relevant services and to promote the development of a community-based response." However, the Code was criticised from within the

Disadvantage seriously?



BLIGHT OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION

"In the last 8 years, an awful lot of the really black spots around the country have been knocked down and rebuilt and there has been a genuine attempt this time to build them as communities and to mix public and private development."

While the building boom has slowed considerably, Minister Ó Cuív would go to Paddy Power's to bet that commentators in the future will say that 'Part

V of the Planning and Development Act 2000' was "one of the best decisions made" by government.

He said the new law will only start taking effect now because planning permissions hold for five years, so it will apply to all new building applications from now on.

'Part V' allows local authorities to obtain up to 20% of land zoned for housing development for the delivery of social and affordable housing. There is a buy-out option, if Councils agree, whereby developers can pay cash in lieu of providing reduced-price housing.

"So long as the local authorities use the buy-out option sparingly, I believe that, in 20 to 30 years time, it will be seen as one of the best decisions made to avoid the blight of social segregation which has caused so many of the problems we are now trying to deal with, Limerick probably being the biggest last area needing a mega clean-up."

"But I don't think it's fair either to say that nothing was done for the last ten years. Ballymun and Fatima Mansions and other areas have seen change."

CHILDCARE SCHEME

The question was put: The Government, in the run-up to Christmas, performed a u-turn on the Childcare Scheme. People are saying it wouldn't have happened this way if there had been consultation. Your comments Minister?

"I think Brendan Smith (Minister for Children) did a fantastic job and the end result is a very good scheme. There's no shame in tweaking a scheme because someone makes a few good points to you....When we change something we are accused of a u-turn, when we don't change something we're accused of being arrogant. I'd rather any day to be accused of a u-turn than being called 'arrogant'."

ISLAND CDPs

The Minister was asked will CDPs on English-speaking islands be moved from the Programme to be administered by Údarás na Gaeltachta? He had mooted the idea in the past.

"I made no decision made on it. There was some legal advice which had to do with Údarás na Gaeltachta operating outside the Gaeltacht. It's not top of the agenda."

FULL COVER BY PARTNERSHIPS

"You are going to see Partnership companies covering all of the country this year. I hope to see the Cohesion Process completed in the very near future. It's been a long haul and there were issues for staff members and for boards, but I think that in a few years time, a lot of people will see the benefits of what we are doing."

"One of the ideas of the Cohesion Process is to reduce the number of layers, so we will have the County Development Boards, the Partnerships and the CDPs and I hope for a much closer synergy between all of these, so we get a coherent view of how we're going to tackle disadvantage."



"The most important thing is that it improves people's lives by delivering better services. I'm not one for changing structures for the sake of it. I passionately believe in what we're doing here and I'm delighted with the chance to see it through."

NEW PROJECTS AND NEW WORKERS

The Minister's Department will from now on use Small Area Statistics, produced by the Central Statistics Office, to help point to resourcing needs within communities. The Minister is committed to reaching new communities through the variety of programmes within his remit.

Also, the limit of two Programme-funded workers per CDP could be removed or changed in the future. *(More on these matters in our next issue).*

THE BROAD VISION

"In the next year or two, people will suddenly see that we had quite a broad vision of where we were going, though at times people might not have appreciated the little parts of what we were doing."

"I think we're going to be able to do a much better job in the future than we did in the past. It will be much easier to understand, will lead to better services and because there will be 100% cover by the Partnerships, we won't have to keep setting up new organisations to run new schemes. As the State wants to introduce new initiatives, it just looks to the Partnerships and gives them the job to do. From the public's point of view, the Partnerships will be a much wider one-stop-shop and a more accessible one. Complexity reduces accessibility."

"I hope when I go out the door I'll have left a fair legacy after me," added the Minister.

Men domestic violence - Ministers

Programme by the Men's Development Network and from outside by Amen on account of the fact that it did not deal with male victims.

"Women's Aid has been set up for women and they probably take the view that there is more than enough work for them," said Minister Carey. "In the interim maybe further work is needed in the area of violence against men and maybe the CDP's role might be to enable the emergence of best practice in this area."

He pointed out that there may well be issues around domestic

violence involving "women against women and men against men. We are very much inclined to talk about heterosexual violence – men against women, and women against men. I'm sure there's a level of violence in the gay community as well which needs to be addressed."

"I have just been looking at the latest Garda statistics and they show that the vast majority of brutal attacks are in the home," added Minister Carey.

Minister of State Carey has a volunteering mission

KERRY-BORN Pat Carey could have been sitting under a baobab tree at this very moment. He half-expected to spend this year in Africa as a volunteer. It was a back-up plan he had if Plan A – getting re-elected in last year's Dail elections – fell through.

He quite relished the idea of volunteering abroad, having worked as a teacher for many years and having served as a politician on a foreign affairs committee that had regular meetings about African issues.

However, volunteering will have to wait for another day as he retained his seat in June and was appointed Minister of State with special responsibility for Drugs Strategy and Community Affairs at the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

"Yes, this landed on my lap instead," quips Minister Carey.

He is well-known and indeed respected within the Community and Voluntary Sector and was considered a good choice by many. Now, he shares responsibility for a Department that provides funding support to an incredibly diverse range of community organisations and services. He is viewed as someone who understands the needs of volunteers and of the Sector.

"I spent most of my working life in Finglas in what would be termed an infill housing development of 2000 or so houses built in the 1970s at a time when building standards were poor. They had no chimneys and when



gas and electricity prices went up, chimneys and fireplaces were the first things people campaigned for. There were no community facilities at all. The school I worked in served as more than just as a school – I used say it was a community centre that doubled as a school, but out of it we delivered the best type of education possible, because the parents were forever in and out of the place. There is a great community spirit there, but there was quite a degree of poverty in the place in the beginning and there are still pockets of deprivation and disadvantage."

Naturally, as former Vice Principal of St. Finian's School, Finglas, he saw the schools as having the greatest development impact on Finglas, but said the CDPs also did "huge work" there, particularly when they started up.

"And I see that a lot of the people involved in CDPs in the beginning work in other areas now, such as the Drugs Task Force people – a lot of them cut their teeth with CDPs."

He said that CDPs "have to be able to truly reflect a community's needs," and asked, "How do you get CDPs to reconfigure to suit

new needs?"

He named a number of projects that had really impressed him:

"I've been around the country in my new role and some CDPs, especially Traveller projects, are doing outstanding work. I visited the Traveller Visibility Group in Cork and was very impressed, as I was also with the Kerry Travellers Development Group."

He singled out Tralee CDP as a model of good practice, saying it was doing "incredible work."

"If you could replicate what they are doing around the country, it would be great. The project is a perfect example of what a group with a mission can do."

"The reach of the Department is enormous – I wouldn't be surprised to hear we are funding up to 3000 different projects and organisations. We deal with everything from placenames to farming to drugs and everything in between. My central responsibility is drugs and community."

He said it was notable that every area of the country was now covered by the Regional Drugs Taskforces.

COHESION

"Most practitioners look for a unified approach to local matters and Éamon Ó Cuív is right to push the Cohesion Process. Nobody needs to lose any of their power and it results in really good outcomes for communities.

"And when you go to a place where all the

Department of Craggy

THE Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was established by Government in June 2002 and has some 240 staff in 6 locations. It provides support to up to 3000 local and national bodies around the country. The Department is often referred to verbally as 'Craggy', from its abbreviation DCRGA.

Minister of State, Pat Carey, says the Department has an "enormous" reach. His senior, Minister Éamon Ó Cuív describes the work as "incredibly exciting". The Department was set up to bring together a range of Government-funded programmes effecting communities under one roof and one of the main challenges the Ministers are engaged in is encouraging greater co-operation and cohesiveness 'on the ground'

among local groups and agencies.

The Department has specific responsibility for:

- Community Development Programme.
- Local Development.
- the RAPID Programme.
- Coordination of the National Drugs Strategy.
- Volunteering.
- Rural Development initiatives including CLÁR, LEADER, INTERREG and a number of measures under the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

The Department also retains the responsibilities previously held by the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands for:

rey mind

agencies work together, it gives you great hope for the future," said the Minister. He gave as an example a trip he made to Edenderry in Co. Offaly where all the agencies and groups were working very well together.

2008 HOPES

This year, Minister Carey hopes to extend the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF).

In 1998, the Government established the YPFSF to target young people at risk from substance misuse in disadvantaged areas. By developing youth, sport and other recreational facilities, the YPFSF seeks to attract 'at risk' young people away from the potential dangers of substance misuse, into safe, non-threatening and constructive environments

An extra €12.5 million was budgeted for the National Drugs Strategy in 2008 (bringing the total drugs funding to €64m this year) and a lot of this is earmarked to expand the YPFSF to more areas outside Dublin.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES

"The increased allocation will facilitate increased activity under the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund – including further progress towards the full implementation of the action plans of the Regional Drugs Task Forces," Minister Carey told the Dail in December.

The year should see increased capital funding for drug related projects and



Minister of State Pat Carey.

facilities for young people and new initiatives are promised in tackling cocaine abuse.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"In the Community Development area, I am very anxious that we try to get a clear view of the future CDPs, of the potential they have and of the options that can be pursued, so we can get the best possible value for people's input at local level," said Minister Carey.

"If Community Development means anything, it means you have to have an organic approach to the work all the time. We must avoid this tendency to stultify, by doing the same thing year in, year out."

Should or could CDPs have a national office?

"I personally don't see any huge restrictions (apart from resources) but many of the projects are so busy doing their own

thing that they have gone away from the representative structures.

"It may well turn out like this - in the area of drugs, there are different sectors meet at national level a couple of times a year. The voluntary and community reps meet, coordinators meet, the chairs of the taskforces meet, and so on. And that seems to be beneficial. It's also something that could also be replicated in the whole area of Community Development, but there is no point in us here in Mespil Road saying 'That should be done' if the practitioners themselves don't see any point in it."

Have you any questions for projects?

"No, not now, I'm in listening mode."

Are meetings scheduled for regional conferences connected to the review?

"Those meetings have yet to be arranged."

And are you still a member of Amnesty International?

"Yes, I'm still a member," he added.

has "enormous" reach

- the Irish language.
- the Gaeltacht.
- the development of Ireland's inhabited off-shore islands.

Finally, the following State Boards and agencies discharge specific responsibilities in the community, rural, Gaeltacht and islands sectors under the aegis of the Department:

- Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland.
- Dormant Accounts Board.
- Western Development Commission.
- Údarás na Gaeltachta.
- Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge.
- An Coimisiún Logainmneacha (the Placenames Commission).

- Pobal (formerly ADM), a company established by the Irish Government, in agreement with the European Commission, to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality through local social and economic development. It administers the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, (LDSIP), RAPID and PEACE II Programmes on behalf of the Department.
- Two cross-border implementation bodies - An Foras Teanga (comprising Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulster-Scotch) and Waterways Ireland.

To find out more about the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, or Craggy, visit: www.pobail.ie

Headaches eased by changes to childcare scheme



Minister for Children Brendan Smith.

By MORGAN MEE

IT is certain that new funding arrangements to support community based childcare provision will come into affect during July of this year. What was less certain in the run-up to Christmas was what exactly these new arrangements would look like.

Early November saw the Minister for Children, Brendan Smith, announce the introduction of a new Community Childcare Subvention Scheme to replace the existing staffing grants that allowed not-for-profit childcare facilities provide affordable childcare in disadvantaged areas.

Under the new scheme, as first proposed, community childcare providers were to receive a tiered subvention payment based on the number of children attending their facilities whose parents are in receipt of social welfare payments, are engaged in training and training programmes or receive a Family Income Support (FIS) payment.

Following widespread criticism from community childcare providers the Minister announced that working parents will not be disadvantaged under the new scheme and that the scope of the new scheme would be changed before its full implementation. *(News of the changes are carried on the back page – Editor).*

In the meantime, however, the **volunteers** who run community childcare services were none-the-wiser about the extent of funding they could budget for post July 2008.

For his part, the Minister defended the thrust of the new scheme with some valid arguments. Not all services operating with the aid of the existing staffing schemes had implemented a tiered fee structure. This meant that the benefit of public funding was not always felt by those most in need. The

Minister also believes that under the new scheme greater numbers of children from disadvantaged backgrounds will be able to avail of affordable childcare as children attending private as well as community facilities will benefit.

However, the new subvention scheme – as at first proposed – betrayed a lack of understanding regarding the conditions under which community childcare providers operate.

Community childcare services are located in areas of recognised disadvantage. It did

The nature of disadvantage in rural areas is more-often experienced through isolation or a lack of services than through financial hardship.

not necessarily follow, however, that parents in these areas would qualify for subvention under the new scheme. Take for example services located in rural areas. The nature of disadvantage in rural areas is more-often experienced through isolation or a lack of services than through financial hardship. There may only be a handful of children of pre-school age in some rural communities. Even if every parent of every child qualified for subvention payments, which is highly unlikely, there is no way that services in these small communities could have stayed open without a staffing grant.

Many others living in communities currently serviced by a community childcare scheme

would not have been eligible for subvention payments because they are working. By linking access to childcare services to eligibility for welfare payments, the scheme was in danger of being a barrier to those hoping to take up paid employment.

The proposed scheme would also have posed serious difficulties for the voluntary management boards running these services. Voluntary boards wondered how they could offer contracts of employment to staff members when they were unsure of the amount of funding they would receive after July. At least now that adjustments have been made to the scheme, such voluntary boards are in a better position.

The proposed scheme also clashed with a condition of funding for many community buildings (that funding was made available on the condition that a service be provided). Implementation of the original scheme placed many community childcare services in the impossible position of being unable to provide a service but required to do so all the same.

A host of other difficulties relating to the new scheme were also identified by CDPs and FRCs involved in community childcare. All of them demonstrate the precarious position of volunteers attempting to provide an invaluable service for their communities. However, the real roots of the problem have since been addressed, though the Minister denies he did a U-turn, reminding people he said he would make changes.

Nonetheless, the November announcement gave volunteers a headache they did not need as 2007 came to a close. At least the changes to the scheme were announced in time for them to enjoy Christmas.

Introduction: €60m Knocknaheeny regeneration

- two views, and only one chance to get it right



Growing up in
Knocknaheeny,
Cork.

By ALLEN MEAGHER

THERE are two stories in this issue concerning Cork City Council which demonstrate strikingly different relationships with local CDPs. In the story concerning a community arts project, the relationship between the local authority and the CDP (and an arts group the CDP supports) could not be better. In the other case, which involves a make-or-break €60 million regeneration scheme, neither side shows much empathy with the other's viewpoint.

The Council say they fully consulted with residents over a three-year period, while the CDP - and an environmental group it supports -

say it was all done and dusted in one night.

On the plus side, the council and Knocknaheeny residents and community groups are all happy to say the first half of the physical regeneration has been a success. It is the second half that has come unstuck.

Compromises have been reached, but for the CDP they do not go far enough and so the project fears the City Council may inadvertently build a new "social jungle" instead of a regenerated neighbourhood. Cork City Council sees it the other way around - too many changes would dilute their plan and the existing social problems would not be solved. The counter-argument given back is that the Council - officials and councillors - were afraid to change their original plan too much for fear of losing central government funding for the overall project.

It's probably what's known as the midway point in a regeneration scheme, the time when the question "Will it work or won't it work?" really begins to bite.

In fairness, both the City Council and the CDP are concerned, in their own ways, about getting it right and both would agree that much has been achieved to date. Knocknaheeny is today in a better place than it was before regeneration.

However, spending millions, as we know now from Ballymun's regeneration, does not guarantee improvements all round. The much-touted Ballymun success is turning sour, according to community groups there. New hotels, houses and amenities have been built,

yet anti-social behaviour remains a problem in Ballymun. The regeneration schemes in Fatima Mansions and St. Michael's Estate in Dublin, by comparison, are being viewed locally (the local view being the crucial one) as major successes. Regeneration can swing either way.

In any case, Cork's city councillors have voted for the partly-amended Masterplan, (which takes on board some and disregards other of the concerns raised by the CDP, local groups and residents) and it is going ahead. All the councillors from the Ward that includes Knocknaheeny voted in favour. For the sake of residents, one hopes it achieves its aims of improving the quality of life on the hill.

The bigger picture

"THE Regeneration of an area is not simply confined to remedial works to houses alone. The bigger picture of the entire area has to be addressed, in terms of educational, childcare, sport and community facilities as well as much improved health facilities."

- *Batt O'Keeffe, Minister of State at the the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, which funds regeneration projects, during a visit to Knocknaheeny and the Glen, in December.*

The nature of power

"THERE is a need for the community development sector to reflect on its practice in relation to giving voice to people experiencing poverty... In the debate about people becoming empowered and freeing themselves from power, there has been an absence of discussion about the nature of power."

- *Anna Lee, former chairperson of the Combat Poverty Agency (CPA) and author of 'Community Development: Current Issues and Challenges', published by the CPA in 2006.*

Fears that City Hall is building a “social jungle”

- worried residents and CDP express concern

“KNOCKNAHEENY didn’t just fall out of the sky – it’s got a history and a past,” says Teresa O’Sullivan, chairperson of ‘We The People’, the CDP for the Knocknaheeny and Hollyhill areas of Cork city, where a physical regeneration is midway through.

“This community has settled and there is a great community spirit here. It is an established estate, with a population of around 6000 people between Knocknaheeny and Holyhill.”

“We are proud of our area. Seán Óg Ó hAilpín comes from here,” continues Ms. O’Sullivan. “And the runner Mark Carroll.”

During a round-table discussion involving the local environment group and CDP members, Ms. O’Sullivan said everyone welcomes the regeneration, with one major misgiving: “We welcome the new family centre, the sheltered accommodation and the youth centre. But, to tell you the truth, they are building a social jungle.”

The group is afraid that history might repeat itself: Like many council housing estates in the Republic, Knocknaheeny suffered a serious blow in the 1980s when there was a sudden exodus of people who had jobs and incomes and had purchased their homes from the local authority. (The government, desperately in need of more housing, offered £5000 incentives to people to sell up and move out). More often than not,

“The plan was ‘available to the public’, but only by calling to the planning offices in the city and you couldn’t take it away to have a look at.”

vulnerable young people on low incomes or people with limited life-chances replaced those who left. The policy created ghettos.

“The £5000 grants were terrible for our community,” recalls Ms. O’Sullivan.

“Regeneration is doing the same now,” chimes in Ms. O’Regan. “The City Council are buying people’s houses and leaving them out.”

The City Council builds new houses in the area and buy back some people’s homes from them.

“People are outraged at the City Council unsettling the area all over again,” commented Norma Kenny.

The Council’s masterplan called for the closure of all back-lanes through the positioning of infill housing. However, the masterplan has now been amended and only 29 of 54 proposed infill houses will be built. A success for the community’s environment group and its supporter the CDP? Not quite, they did not want any infill housing.



Knocknaheeny people gather for a meeting. Photo includes: Seamus Ambrose, Norma Kenny, Noreen O’Regan, chairperson of the Environment Group and CDP Co-ordinator, Teresa O’Sullivan, CDP chairperson, Patty O’Brien and John Shinkwin.

They are not against new people moving into “our community” as Patty O’Brien puts it, “but if all the working people move out, you are going to be back to all young families and unemployment and all the social problems will start again. You need the social mix we have.”

Ms. O’Regan noted that the environment group started off having a good relationship with the Council, but that has changed.

“The Council laid out maps and plans on tables in a hall in 1999 and people were invited to come in and look at them, though they didn’t know what they were really looking at. Everyone who came was signed in, so there was a record.

literacy is an issue for an above-average number of people.

“People were adamant that if they go ahead here with what we don’t want, we will protest on the streets,” says Norma Kenny.

The environmental group have picketed City Hall in the past.

“We have no problem doing it again,” says Ms. O’Brien.

“The Council didn’t want to deal with us as a community,” continued Ms. O’Brien. She is the residents’ representative on RAPID’s local Area Implementation Team (AIT).

The RAPID AIT tried to meet with the director of Housing & Community Services “on numerous occasions” without success. Ms. O’Brien also noted that the five local councillors “don’t even turn up to RAPID AIT meetings”, something that is a problem in other parts of the country also.

“The CDP supports residents, gives them a space to meet, a place they can come into to talk about their problems,” continued Ms. O’Brien. “We are always trying to keep people involved, be it through RAPID, Cork City Partnership, the Drugs Taskforce and so on.”

The CDP provides everything a campaign group might want from forwarding queries to councillors to photocopying, typing, literacy support and stationery.

One wonders what Seán Óg, well-used at this stage to wrangling with officials, would have to say on the whole matter, but the hurler has enough on his own plate for one year.

• **For more information, contact: ‘We The People’ CDP, Unit 4 Hollyhill Shopping Centre, Knocknaheeny, Cork.**
T: 021-4399503 F: 021 4399866.
E: wethepeople@eircom.net



President Mary McAleese.

Regeneration builds hope in Limerick

THE biggest regeneration project ever undertaken in this country is beginning in Limerick city following the launch in January of 'Vision' documents (draft plans) by President Mary McAleese.

"The social regeneration aspect represents the biggest challenge, therefore it gets most attention in the plan," says Regeneration CEO, Brendan Kenny. Radical new social measures that may require changes to national policy are proposed. As has been widely reported, the estates will be mostly demolished and rebuilt: such rebuilding forms an important part of regeneration theory.

Already there are more Gardai on the ground in Limerick's housing estates and local residents – including some who fled their homes and hope one day to return – have invested more faith in these plans than in promises made by Government in past decades. Hope has returned for the first time in years.

CDPs across the city were very welcoming of the 'Vision' documents and there is a wide spectrum of support, locally, regionally and it appears nationally, for the city's Regeneration Agencies.

For more information, log onto: www.limerickregeneration.ie

Council strongly defend work in Knocknaheeny

"WE'D say very strongly that there was a three year consultation through which the Knocknaheeny Regeneration began," says Paul Moynihan, Senior Executive Officer with Cork City Council's Housing & Community Services.

"I don't accept that there was only one meeting in 1999 and that served as consultation. We had urban planners and architects engaged in consultation with residents. We have the democratic will of the Council."

"In Knocknaheeny, people are saying it will be a social jungle, it will be ugly, but Knocknaheeny has improved in the last five years and that is thanks to the masterplan. At the same time, I'm not saying we have a monopoly on wisdom."

"We The People' CDP are one of a number of groups representing the people of Knocknaheeny. I don't discount their concerns, but we went through a long process of consultation to come up with what is right for Knocknaheeny."

He said City Hall employs two project liaison officers who "work very closely with the people".

He added: "But you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs."

"The Ward Councillors asked us to go through a certain approach with regard to the consultation. And no matter what we do, someone will come forward saying their voices are unheard."

"We have a council objective which has to be implemented and it is very hard now to go back and change the masterplan because it might endanger the funding (coming through the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government)

"Ask any fair-minded person has Knocknaheeny improved in the last five years. That's how you judge the regeneration. It has improved if you ask me: There is a greater feeling of well-being, there is less crime and there is more confidence in the community."

Initiatives that are on the way (or built) include a new town centre, 48 affordable houses, a Youthlink facility, a Family Centre, the new Barnardos "Brighter Futures" centre (open), a health centre, credit union and sheltered accommodation for the elderly.

"The refurbishment of the housing was just one element – we also planned for childcare, some private housing and for community facilities. Barnardos €3 million centre is one example."

"In general, there is now much greater access in and out of Knocknaheeny. The area had a very big image problem and our idea was to open the

area up and remove the stigma. There are now 50 units of affordable housing in Holyhill Lane, previously a troubled, no-go area, but a place where there is access now."

He said, "It's an absolute fact that poor layout and design of roads and housing directly contributes to anti-social behaviour. Some 'Block D' alleyways are quiet right now, but we see them as potential sources of anti-social behaviour."

At the same time, he accepted that work on 'Block D' was "intrusive".

"We've got a lot of adverse comment on 'Block D' but it doesn't look like a stereotypical local authority estate and it breaks up the monotony of the design. Substantial compromises were made. We met the elected councillors. We have the democratic will of the council."

"The masterplan had very basic principles with regard to Knocknaheeny's backlanes. The idea was to remove the rear access (lanes) and prevent anti-social behaviour and that has been very successful with regard to 'Block D' which was Beirut in its day. Now the residents have secure parking."

He acknowledged that residents were fearful that new roads might do the opposite to what was intended and attract joy-riders.

"The CDP and others – yes, they have a voice and they feed in, but our councillors asked us to make changes (less infill housing, less through-roads) and we made those changes," he said.

The Council has now dropped some road plans and reduced the planned number of infill housing units from 59 to 28.

Mr. Moynihan said the regeneration of Knocknaheeny was "a difficult contract" and praised residents for being "very co-operative". He said the Council encountered difficulties previously with a regeneration scheme in The Glen, but now residents have "better parking and a better living environment and greater security."

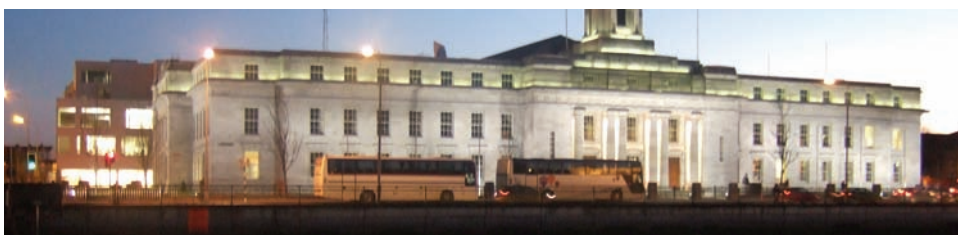
And the hope is that the same will happen in Knocknaheeny.

"You need to be very strong in leadership and the consultation was long and lengthy and included a lot of long evenings in Knocknaheeny. The regeneration cannot be delivered without pain and we are there at that point now, but what we are trying to do is to secure the long-term needs of the area forever."

He recalled an affordable housing project the Council built in Blackrock that was labelled a "monster" by critics and five years on is seen as a success.

"Once the pain of change has been endured, people see the positive," added Mr. Moynihan.

For more information: www.corkcity.ie



Seeking funding

"WE are in the process of identifying funding sources to apply to so the women could embark on another project this year. They have discussed the possibility of doing a film, drama or another piece of art.

"We need funding to cover materials and travel expenses as the 26 women in the team live in different parts of the county."

- Nora Fahy, CDP co-ordinator

Start preparing now for October 17th

SINCE 1948, individuals and groups at local, national and international level have joined in the annual event to honour those who suffer extreme poverty. Local groups have come up with many wonderful ways of doing so. The following links may be useful if you have ideas, need ideas, or in the latter case need funding support:

www.17october.ie

www.atd-fourthworld.org

www.cpa.ie

History of 17th October

OCTOBER 17th is the UN International day for the Eradication of Poverty. On October 17, 1987, in reply to an appeal one Father Joseph Wresinski, 100,000 defenders of human rights gathered together in Paris to honour victims of hunger, violence, and ignorance, to express their refusal of extreme poverty, and to call on mankind to unite to ensure the respect of human rights.

A Commemorative Stone in Honour of the Victims of Extreme Poverty, proclaiming this message, was inaugurated on this occasion on the Plaza of Human Rights and Liberties (formerly Trocadero Plaza), at the place where in 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed. (Note: The Declaration is featured in this issue in our Resource Section).

North West Roscommon CDP aims and objectives:

- Improve the quality of life for older people in the community.
- Facilitate the development and the expansion of services for young people.
- Establish a Community Transport Scheme.
- Support community and the voluntary activity in the CDP catchment area.
- Develop NW Roscommon CDP as a learning organisation that reflects and reviews its activities, policies and procedures and which is inclusive of local communities.

Intercultural Quilting

- Roscommon's multi-cultured quilt goes on

By NORA FAHY*

Q: Why is a quilt touring County Roscommon?

A: To bring together people who want to raise awareness of poverty. Sounds confusing: it's not when you think about the fact that people need to focus on something together for the individuals to merge as a team, as a working group.

THE Roscommon Women's Network CDP and North West Roscommon CDP have brought together 28 women of various cultures and nationalities living in the county to produce a magnificent 24-panel quilt. The quilt is currently on a tour of the county.

The main purpose of the project is to raise awareness of 17th October, UN International day for the Eradication of Poverty.

The finished Quilt measures over seven by ten feet and each panel is designed and created by the individual woman and represents her culture.

The women in the team are from Russia, South Africa, Ghana, Congo, Zimbabwe, Brazil, Pakistan, America, Germany, England together with Irish women from the Travelling Community, local Active Age Groups, and women's groups in the county and the Castle Quilters Group.

Over ten weeks, the team planned, designed and created the quilt and organised the presentation of their finished product.

The team have also produced a book to accompany the Quilt on exhibition. This book



On the left is Ksenia Chizhikova, aged 16, from Russia, and now living in Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. Beside her is Nomgqibelo Gumede, South Africa. Both are asylum seekers living in Ballaghaderreen.



Quilters at work in Roscommon.

n four

contains photographs of each of the 24 individual panels with a few words alongside each photograph which expresses what inspired the individual to design their panel and what it means to them.

The quilt project received funding from The Combat Poverty Agency and the Roscommon County Development Board and the Roscommon Women's Network CDP also contributed funding.

PARTNERSHIP

The two CDPs partnered with the Roscommon Education & Development Centre (READ) to provide support to the women in terms of organising meeting dates, venue, media coverage, transport etc. However all decisions on design, theme, materials, layout, dates, presentation and so on were discussed and agreed by the women themselves.

EMPOWERMENT

The women were empowered at all stages from initiation to presentation and ongoing exhibition of the finished Quilt. The Quilt was on display in Roscommon and Boyle Libraries over the last few months. It is currently on display in Castlereagh Library and will continue to

be exhibited in venues in towns around the county during 2008.

COMMON GOAL

All the women involved have worked as a team: they have discussed, debated, agreed, organised and fully engaged with the work and with each other in pursuit of a common goal. The women are very proud of the end result and were elated by the number of people who attended the unveiling and the response and feedback they have received during and since the unveiling event.

COLLECTIVE WORK

The members of the team have expressed a wish to remain together as a group and to invite other members to join and expand the group. They intend to continue working together, continue to build on friendships while also creating together. As Freha Afran from Pakistan stated at the unveiling event "A little contribution from a number of people can make a big difference".

ANTI-POVERTY

The slogan "Many hands together make the burden less heavy to carry" was adopted by the

group as it was unanimously agreed that these words best express how the women feel about being involved in this project and what together they have managed to achieve while it also communicates that by working together poverty can be eradicated. The team also feel that these words express solidarity with people for whom poverty and social exclusion are daily realities which is the overall aim of this Quilting project.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Roscommon Women's Network together with North West Roscommon CDP and the READ centre will work towards supporting the team to identify opportunities and source funding for a project which they would like to work on in 2008.

CO-ORDINATION

The members of the Intercultural Project team linked with five groups or agencies to achieve their ambitions.

If you would like any further information on this project or on the exhibition venues please contact Roscommon Women's Network CDP on 094-9621690.

* Nora Fahy is Project Co-ordinator of Roscommon Women's Network CDP



Mixed up!

Dear Horace,
I don't understand the American people. A few years ago this Osama Bin Laden was the world's most dangerous terrorist and they went and invaded Iraq looking for him. Now I hear

that Iraq Obama might be elected President of America.

- Terry Rised

Horace Helps:

You've got things mixed up alright: Osama Bin Laden wasn't in Iraq. He was in Afghanistan. Then I think you mean Borat Obama who is originally from Kazakhstan. Obama has nothing to do with terrorism except that his grandmother was from Offaly and was the most feared woman on the GAA fields around Ferbane.

Kidnapped

Dear Horace,

What is the difference between rendition and extraordinary rendition?

- U. Femism

Horace Helps:

Rendition refers to how someone sings a song as in 'that was a fine rendition of that song.' Extraordinary rendition is a better or unusual version of that song. And generally extraordinary rendition leaves people

screaming out for more, or sometimes just screaming. It's big in the West of Ireland for the past few years, particularly Clare. Don't bother with the Willie Clancy Music Festival, head straight for Shannon Airport, where the most extraordinary renditions of all take place.

Strike!

Hello Horace,

The Writer's Guild of America are on strike and so actors can't act because they have nothing to say. Then why do we still have to listen to written speeches from politicians? Are they not actors by another name?

- Terry Blank

Horace Doesn't Help:

I can't say because the person who normally writes this column is on strike.

Write to: Help Me Horace,
'Changing Ireland', c/o CDN Moyross,
Community Enterprise Centre, Moyross,
Limerick.

“Leave her behind and try again”

- The advice Leigh Gath's parents received from the maternity hospital

LEIGH Gath was born with a disability because of the Thalidomide drug. Her life story reads like a good novel, full of twists and turns, broken hearts, romance and sometimes good luck, but her life's journey is especially inspiring because she was dismissed by much of society from birth onwards yet still prospered thanks to her own determination and love shown by others.

Over 300 people listened intently as Ms. Gath addressed a seminar in December organised by Tralee-based CDP, the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities:

“I am 45 years old, a wife and mother. I drive my own car. I have lived in 3 different countries and have always, since I was 17 years old, worked in the disability field to try to further the rights of people with disabilities. Oh yes, and did I forget to mention, I also have a disability.

“I am the youngest of three girls, and when I was born in 1962 my parents were told to leave me

at the hospital and go home and try again. They were told I would never sit or move unaided. I would never feed or dress myself – in fact I would need round the clock care. Thank goodness for me that my parents were stubborn and decided that even if I did need 24 hour care, I was still their daughter. I have two older sisters – the one next to me is 7 years older than me and we get on great. The other one who is 9 years older than me cannot accept my disability and has nothing to do with me – even crossing the street so people in Newry won't think we're related,” she said.

RIDICULOUS EXPECTATIONS

Leigh told the audience that many of them probably had negative experiences as teenagers similar to her own:

“When I was a child and even a teenager I was told by people that relationships were not for me, that I need not worry about working because what could I do, and the thought of me having children, for many, was just ridiculous.

“But my mom always told me to go after my dreams. Even though at times it was very difficult, I went out with my friends to discos, got drunk with them, and even got the odd kiss from a guy. But there were many nights I cried myself to sleep because I began to think those people were right – that I would be alone in my life.

“I have a friend called Maggie who is also affected by the thalidomide drug. I met her when we were both 21. Maggie was brimming with confidence and she lived in Dublin at the time. I would go down to Dublin from Newry on a Friday night after work and we would hit the nightclubs. I had a great time and gained lots of confidence.

“Then Maggie and I decided in 1987 to go on holiday together to Jersey in the Channel Islands. That's where I met my first husband – Declan. He was the chef in our hotel, and once introduced by the manager, we ended up going out together every night.

“At the end of his summer term at the hotel,



Leigh Gath addressed the seminar, telling her life-story.

Declan came back to Northern Ireland and we moved in together. Everyone was stunned, not because we were living together, but because, as he didn't have a disability, everyone assumed he was being my personal assistant as well as boyfriend. But he was not – I manage all my personal care independently.

“In 1991 we got married, and in 1994 I became pregnant with my son. He was born in December 1994, by which time we had applied for American green card visas through the visa lottery and had been accepted on the programme.

CHILDREN AND DIVORCE

“We emigrated to Texas in July, 1995. Declan had always liked a few drinks, but it got totally out of control in Texas after I became pregnant again. I filed for divorce on him in September 1996 when my daughter was 4 weeks old and my son was 20 months old. He took off shortly after the divorce was finalized and we haven't seen him again since. I raised the kids totally alone for 6 months before being accepted on a personal assistance programme there – which gave me a personal assistant for 30 hours a week. As the kids got older I reduced the hours because I enjoy doing the work myself for my family without a stranger there all the time.

“All through my time in Texas I worked in disability rights, and at the end of 2002 decided to start a Bachelors degree online. It was distance learning and meant I could study once the kids were in bed at night. I wanted to get the degree so I could get a better job and give the kids a better life. Because again I assumed I would raise them totally alone.

“My life was really busy then when I met

Eugene – my current husband – through a website designed to let people affected by thalidomide chat to each other, and share problems or ideas.

MARRIED AGAIN

“Eugene works at the University of Limerick. He was also affected by thalidomide and has no legs. He flew back and forth to Texas so many times during our first year that I'm sure he has shares in Delta airlines. We married in 2004, and then made the decision to come home so that he could carry on working in UL. We also decided to come home because acceptance of disabled people in Ireland was much better now, and access was improving which meant I could better take part in my kids lives and activities.

“Eugene is my rock. He has adopted Karl and Aisling and is a great dad and husband. Last year I went through surgery and aftercare treatment for thyroid cancer and he was right there supporting me.”

Leigh concluded with this advice, “So – no matter what other people's expectations are for you – live your dream. Don't ever let anyone take your dreams from you!”

Originally from Co. Down, Leigh now lives with her partner in Newcastlewest, Co. Limerick. She is a board member of the national Center for Independent Living.

310 attend Kerry seminar

THE Kerry Network of People with Disabilities (KNPD) partnered with Kerry Education Services to co-host a seminar titled “Diversity and Inclusion” in December which attracted 310 people.

The seminar was aimed at people with disabilities, education providers, and organizations and businesses that are aiming to be more inclusive.

The speakers included: Noel O'Neill, Chairperson, and Margaret O'Shea, Community Development Worker, with the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities; John Redican, CEO of the Irish Advocacy Network; Dr. Barney O'Reilly, CEO of Kerry Education Services (KES), Bridget Horgan, Equality Officer at KES, and newly elected Fianna Fail TD, Sean Connick, author Kath Gillespie-Sells and psychologist Karen Belshaw. Members of the KNPD, Nora O'Brien and Maria O'Brien also spoke of their experiences on behalf of members of the Traveling community with a disability.

There were 20 information stands at the event.

Equality of opportunity is still aspirational

- says John Redican, CEO, Irish Advocacy Network

THREE national bodies have all recently published research that shows there are still many obstacles that limit opportunities for people with disabilities in Ireland, particularly those with a mental health disability.

John Redican, CEO, Irish Advocacy Network, addressed the issue from a human rights perspective at the seminar held in December by the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities, one of five CDPs in County Kerry.

He said that negative attitudes towards people with disabilities "do not belong in a 21st century society striving towards inclusivity."

He quoted Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (1948) which states: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one

another in a spirit of brotherhood."

SOCIETY DISABLES PEOPLE

However, in research conducted by the National Disability Authority (NDA), 61% of respondents felt that it was society which disables people by creating barriers. An example might be some TV programmes and other media which stretch the boundaries of common decency and influence reckless attitudes.

The National Office for Suicide Prevention asked people to agree (or not agree) with the statement: "People with mental health problems should have the same rights as anyone else"

48% disagreed.

Mr. Redican commented: "Attitudes like this lead inexorably towards discrimination. In Ireland, of course, we are protected by the Constitution. Or are we? In the NDA survey only 45% thought that people with disabilities

were treated fairly."

"Equality of opportunity is still aspirational. There ARE many positive initiatives, but limiting factors are also emerging. The National Economic and Social Forum (NESF) report showed that most employers would neither promote nor give a more responsible position to an employee with a mental health problem.

"Combating this requires us to have laws which promote fairness, equality and social justice. If necessary, they should be used like a whip, to drive people to change.

"This will not be easy. People often become very uncomfortable with some aspects of diversity which challenge their upbringing and received wisdom - their sensitivities are offended. These unconscious attitudes are the most difficult to change.

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

"Stigma still flourishes, despite attempts to reduce its influence. Those with a mental health disability are heavily affected, but it has implications for all people with disabilities and other marginalised groupings.

"Strong leadership will be required, but the reality, however much they may protest, is that political leaders will resist doing things that are likely to be unpopular, particularly if they may diminish chances of re-election and participation in Government.

"It will take particularly imaginative leaders with robust personal integrity to challenge and change public attitudes without fear of consequences," added the CEO.

GENUINE PARTNERSHIP

"One approach would be to forge genuine partnerships with those who have the ability to effect change." Mr. Redican said nothing would change "unless a concerted effort is made by all people with disabilities and their families and friends. We all must stand up, speak out and take control of our own destinies." The leaders we need are here today. All of us must take responsibility for progressive change to ensure that people are not denied opportunities simply because they are "different". We are all different.

"Every human being is unique, and within that uniqueness lies the key to understanding, acceptance and provision of universal citizenship," he added.



Michael Shindler, John Redican and Billy Power at the KNPD seminar. John is CEO of the Irish Advocacy Network.

What is peer advocacy?

PEER advocates are people who have personal experience of mental health difficulties who have achieved a sufficient level of recovery to complete an accredited training course in peer advocacy. Once they are qualified they can complete a period working with an existing peer advocate before engaging with clients on their own. This puts them in a unique position in understanding the problems faced by people with mental health difficulties.

The Irish Advocacy Network has peer advocates in place in most old health board areas in Ireland, north and south, who regularly attend acute units and day centers. Sometimes they meet people in the community.

Their main job is to give support and information to people with mental health difficulties by befriending them and offering a confidential listening ear or peer advocacy.

- www.irishadvocacynetwork.com/

Honour killings

By Siobhan Cattermole *

What began as an article on the theme of violence against women soon developed into something much more sinister as I started to research the controversial topic of "honour killings." Indeed I found myself delving deeper and deeper into a sinister world in which not even the closest member of family could be trusted - brother, father, mother or grandmother. The image I had of a sweet and frail grandmother gradually vanished.

Let me give you an example: a 70-year-old British grandmother was jailed for 20 years after she ordered the murder of her daughter in law, Surjitt Athwal who was supposedly unfaithful to her husband.

In the case of so-called honour killings, the murder is usually carried out by a brother or father who cannot accept some life decisions made by their sister or daughter and thus kill them to 'preserve the family honour'. It is important for me to note in this article that honour killing does not stem from religious conviction, more from closed communities where there is unwillingness or an incapability to examine their values critically. The authorities find it extremely difficult to deal with these murders because many family members consider them a form of punishment.

Hina Jilani, a lawyer and human rights activist from Pakistan states that "The right to life of women in Pakistan is conditional on their obeying social norms and traditions." In Pakistan, women live in constant fear of their life; they face death by shooting, burning or killing with axes if they are thought to have brought shame on their family. They are even murdered if they have experienced rape, their consent or lack of consent being irrelevant as she is considered to have still brought shame upon the family. For all of these women the truth does not matter, the fact that there is an allegation is enough to bring shame upon the family and so in the eyes of the family and community their murder becomes a just punishment.

Yasmeen Hassan, author of *The Haven Becomes Hell: A study of Domestic Violence in Pakistan* states: "The concepts of women as property and honour are so deeply entrenched in the social, political and economic fabric of Pakistan that the government, for the most part, ignores the daily occurrences of women being killed and married (off) by their families." (Hassan, 'The Fate of Pakistani women'). The majority of honour killings are recorded as having died in accidents or



committed suicide.

Of all the stories I have researched, the most horrific was that of Zahida Perveen from Pakistan, who felt the wrath of her husband 16 months ago when, in a fit of rage over her alleged affair with a brother-in-law, bound her hands and feet and slashed her with a razor and knife. She was three months pregnant at the time of the attack. Her comments on the attack as she awaited a court hearing were; "He caught me and tied me up, and then he started cutting my face. He never said a word except, "This is your last night." (Constable, "The Price of Honour", *The Gazette* (Montreal), May 22, 2000).

Her husband also subjected Zahida to an acid attack which made her eyes into empty sockets of unseeing flesh, her earlobes have been cut off and her nose is a mere stump of bone.

These women who were killed in an unjust, inhuman way did not commit any immoral or illegal act. Certainly, even if they did, they did not deserve to die. Awareness of this issue needs to be raised.

It seems that as we fight for human rights we forget that women must first be guaranteed the right simply to live.

** Siobhan Cattermole is a development worker in Tralee Women's Resource Centre CDP and this article first appeared in 'The Women's Voice'.*

UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1984



THE United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is 60 years old this year. While the Declaration is not legally binding, it has been used to apply moral and diplomatic pressure on governments. The Declaration gives human rights precedence over the power of the state. It is the world's most translated document according to the Guinness Book of Records.

The following text is a slightly shortened version of the UN Declaration. While all of the wording printed here comes from the original document, the introduction (called a preamble) and some of the secondary clauses have been edited out. The full text is available on: www.ohchr.org

- 1 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.
- 2 Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.
- 3 Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
- 4 No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
- 5 No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
- 6 Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
- 7 All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of the Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.
- 8 Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.
- 9 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- 10 Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
- 11 Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
- 12 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.
- 13 Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- 14 Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy

- in other countries asylum from persecution.
- 15 Everyone has the right to a nationality.
- 16 Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
- 17 Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
- 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
- 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
- 20 Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- 21 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
- 22 Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realisation, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organisation and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.
- 23 Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
- 24 Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.
- 25 Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
- 26 Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
- 27 Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
- 28 Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realised.

- 29 Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- 30 Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Vocabulary: Declaration

A **DECLARATION** is a document whose signatories express their agreement with a set of objectives and principles. It is not legally binding but carries moral weight. The Irish Government has signed the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

A Declaration in every pocket

IN 1998, during the Declaration's 50th anniversary year, everyone who could was encouraged to make one-page copies of the Declaration available in every public place (post offices, libraries, polling places, schools). They were encouraged to include the Declaration in official mailings and to reproduce the Declaration using various formats (bookmarks, brochures). People were even urged to print the Declaration on buses, trains and (what they could fit) on milk cartons. Imagine your community bus pimped out with the human rights treatment!

Also, community groups were urged to establish local community human rights awards for local contributions to human rights. For the 60th birthday of the Declaration, it is an opportunity once again to highlight human rights.

There are 50 ideas on promoting the Declaration at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/50ideas.htm>

UN's Cyberschoolbus

THE United Nations Cyberschoolbus is the online education project which includes an Interactive Declaration, where each article in the Declaration is introduced with a plain language version, an exploration of key issues, definitions, and suggestions for activities and discussions:

www0.un.org/cyberschoolbus/humanrights/index.asp

Declaration on Responsibilities

IT'S not all about rights you know – we each have responsibilities too. There is a 'Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms'.

You will find it on the web at: www.interactioncouncil.org/udhr/udhr.html

Tralee women launch new glossy magazine

By JOAN COURTNEY*

THE Mayor of Tralee, Miriam McGillicuddy, launched a new-look glossy magazine, 'The Women's Voice', in December. The magazine is published by Tralee Women's Resource Centre, on of four CDPs in the Kerry town.

The Mayor noted there are plenty issues that need to be put under the spotlight, for instance women still are under-represented in politics at national and local level, wages are still lower on average for women and they are significantly under-represented in upper levels of management and structures of power.

"People who have the power do not give it away easily and they simply are not going to take on board in a meaningful way issues that are important to women like childcare, flexible work practices, education and wages, unless they are lobbied."

"At the end of the day women have the vote and it is important that 'The Women's Voice' says what the needs of Tralee and Kerry Women are and that it is sent to all the politicians to make them aware of the issues and needs of the female population of Kerry."

She said the magazine's predecessor, the Tralee Women's Resource Centre Magazine had "metamorphosized into this glowing,



bright, pink flame from the chrysalis of the packed informative newsletter that it once was."

"This new magazine promises to generate from the empathic listening ear that is the Tralee Women's Resource Centre," continued the Mayor.

The first edition devoted most of its 8 pages to highlighting the area of domestic violence

at home and abroad and the need to combat it.

Since Tralee Women's Resource centre opened their doors in 1995, it has striven to identify, acknowledge and celebrate the role of women in society and seek parity of participation. It aims to do this in a way that is inclusive, participative and action orientated.

"I know that you at the Tralee Women's Resource Centre have helped countless numbers of women by phone and in person by providing the listening and empathic ear and support at times of crisis, that you have provided work experience for college students, educational opportunities, organised countless workshops and seminars," said Mayor McGillicuddy.

'The Women's Voice' will be published quarterly and it is available for free from Tralee WRC.

An article from the magazine on the issue of 'honour killings' is republished in our International Section in this issue and on this page Marie Duffy asks 'Has real freedom for women been won?'

• **Joan Courtney works as a development worker with Tralee WRC. She is also a member of the board of management of Tralee CDP.**

Has real freedom for women been won?

asks MARIE DUFFY*

RECENTLY, SIPTU delegate Marnie Holborow gave a talk in the Grand Hotel in Tralee. The topic was "Has Real Freedom for Women Been Won". To my surprise the males in the audience outnumbered the women. Can it be that women nowadays believe that freedom for women has been won so no need to fight on? Or is it that so many women are still the main family carers that they hadn't given themselves the time to go to a talk so specifically directed at them. Issues raised that night.

From an African male "Why when many women in the west have attained financial security do more of them not enter the political arena? In certain cases there is a higher percentage of women in parliament in Africa than in Ireland."

Two further comments made by members of

the audience:

"Women in Ireland are not drawn towards politics in Ireland because they think politics is a dirty business."

"There's not enough awareness of local issues, or a feeling of citizen obligation to society generally, taught in schools."

One of the biggest issues facing women working outside the home today is child care. In Sweden for example the government provides child care facilities. We are now being told daily what a richly developed country financially we are on a world scale. So where is the government's child care plan for the women who are hugely instrumental in creating the Celtic tiger in the first place?

I think it is nowhere to be seen because each successive government have sent a message loud and clear: "If you need something then YOU had better go and get it for yourselves."

When their solution to the problem was, to give tax credits for child care, once again that in practise only benefited the people who already had a bigger salary than the average woman in low paid employment.

Is it the situation that when many women became financially rich that they pulled up the ladder for those following them instead of giving a helping hand to the others as was the whole original idea of the Women's' movement in the 70's.

Where has the revolution gone amiss sisters? Please write email or phone us your opinions to..... 'Changing Ireland' (editor@changingireland.ie) or to Tralee WRC's 'The Women's Voice' (twrc@iol.ie).

• **Marie Duffy works in Tralee Women's Resource Centre CDP and this article first appeared in their new magazine 'The Women's Voice.**



Who is Patrick O'Sullivan?

FOR 25 years, Patrick O'Sullivan worked in community and voluntary activities in his home city of Waterford, then suffered a near-fatal brain haemorrhage. Depression often follows a near-fatal illness, as Paddy discovered. He also faced having to learn how to walk again. He thought he had finished with volunteering and was quite bitterly opposed to the idea of ever doing so again. It is only as he looks back that he sees the things that helped him to recover and volunteering with Larchville/Lisduggan CDP and the Men's Development Network in Waterford are among them. He writes extensively now:

Trying to get life back

By PATRICK O'SULLIVAN

IT'S not easy to get your life back on track after a very bad illness. Take it from me.

I was the oldest of a family of eight and I left school when I was 12 years old and looked after myself from then on.

(After marrying his sweetheart and together raising a family) I suffered a brain haemorrhage that left me in a coma for four weeks, after which the life support that was keeping me alive was switched off. Somehow I survived, but what followed was a very bad case of depression.

A friend of mine had been on to me to join a group in our parish, I was saying NO, as I did not want to get involved anymore, I had given 25 years to the community and they

had done nothing for me or my family when I had nearly died. That's how it felt like. I did not know at this time that getting involved was the very thing that was going to help me over my depression. I was only to realise that later.

I told my friend that I would go to one of their meetings, and my volunteering all started again from there when I joined the Larchville/Lisduggan Community Development Project. From that, I then got involved with the Men's Development Network. It was the Men's Group that gave me the confidence to go back to school. I wanted to make a go at writing. So I took a chance and signed on at Waterford Institute of Technology.

(Since then Paddy has written his life-story in a book).



Volunteer management and staff from Larchville & Lisduggan CDP in Waterford. Paddy O'Sullivan is pictured in the top right. In the frame are: Mattie Sheridan, Chairperson, Director; Maureen Dower, Vice-Chairperson, Director; Paddy O'Sullivan, Director; Breda Farrell, Company Secretary, Director; Tina Gordon, Community Development Worker; David Cullinane, Treasurer, Director; Mary Byrne, Project Co-ordinator; Stella McEnery, Management Committee Member.

Be your own hero!

WE often set standards for ourselves that we just cannot live up to, and although it's an excellent idea to have high ideals and to always aim for the summit, nevertheless there are times when being your own hero is the most sensible and encouraging thing you can do for yourself.

Be your own hero, march to your own drum, go at your own pace, just be really happy being who you are – Yourself.

When you open yourself to your own wisdom, listen in silence to your own inner voice, Can you not then make ground-breaking decisions to become the person only you know how to be: Yourself.

Being your own hero means drawing encouragement from everything you put your mind to. Each effort made is a success. Comparisons are unnecessary. Guilt is unheard of. Every enterprise undertaken will just be a succession of positive efforts in the total enjoyment of who you are, on every single day that has been given to you.

So, just be yourself!

Talk to people!

YOU are sitting in your own home, very ill, and everyone is talking around you, talking about you, but not talking to you. They (your family) may not realise that you can hear them. Don't ever talk around people who are sick or in a coma: talk to them.

Don't blame the dog!



Patrick O'Sullivan and his dog Suzs.

SUZS, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier pup, came into my life when I was recovering from a brain haemorrhage and I had only just begun to walk again, so we went together for walks each day.

She lived for nine years and gave me a new lease of life. Those that say that dogs like her are very dangerous are right, but only in the wrong hands. Dogs will only do what you teach them.

Suzs died of old age last year and I miss her and our daily walks.

Remember, there are lots of people like me that get great joy and happiness from our pets, they become our very good friends. My dog gave me one extra reason to get up in the mornings.

So, don't blame the dog!

Millions saved by us volunteers

I WISH that you and all at 'Changing Ireland' go from strength to strength in the coming years, you and your team are doing a sensational job.

I honestly think that your newsletter is a masterpiece the way it covers all aspects of community work and the millions the Volunteers

are saving the Government.

I wish all volunteers in this country and beyond the best of health for the future.

God bless and keep up the great work for us volunteers.

I remain just one of the many.

- Patrick O'Sullivan

Today's abusers will be apprehended, promises KNPD chairperson

THE Chairperson of the Kerry Network of People with Disabilities, Noel O'Neill, recounted incidents of abuse reported to his project recently and promised the abusers would one day be apprehended by the authorities. He told of his concerns at the CDP's annual seminar in December:

"You would like to think that abuse is a thing of the past, but unfortunately it is not as we found out over the past few months."

"Two incidents of physical and mental abuse have been reported to the Network one of a man been pushed up against a wall and punched in the face and head several times by his supervisor."

"It took three of his colleagues to pull him off the victim who suffers from mental health difficulties."

"The second was a man being locked into a freezer with the supervisor saying that that will



Noel O'Neill

cool his balls down, he was left in the freezer for between fifteen and twenty minutes, again the victim suffers from mental health problems.

"Other abuse reported to us such as people

being told they were stupid and thick, people been told they were useless and worthless, yes folks the abusers are saying today's society we have not gone away you know."

"We at the Network have to tread very carefully with the information we have, and this is taking its toll on the staff with stress levels very high amongst those that know the intimate details of the abuse."

"When we are ready - if it takes one, two or more years - we will reveal the identity of the abusers and see that they are brought before the authorities and that justice is served," promised Mr. O'Neill.

The Kerry Network of People with Disabilities is an issue-focused CDP, one of around 60 such projects within the Community Development Programme. Further reports from KNPD's seminar on pages 22/23.

Substantial changes made to childcare scheme

- changes made as promised, insists Minister

IN late, the Government announced new funding arrangements for the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme which will allow working parents on low incomes to continue to receive subsidised childcare.

This marked a revision of plans announced some months before whereby it was proposed that only parents on social welfare or availing of the Family Income Supplement were guaranteed entitlement to subsidised community-based childcare facilities.

The original plan announced by the Minister for Children, Brendan Smith, attracted strong resistance from crèche operators, including many CDPs and Family Resource Centres. Along with parents and politicians, they all warned it would reinforce welfare dependency among parents, cause hardship for working parents on low incomes and stigmatise the poor. And they warned it could also mean crèche staff layoffs and possible closures.

The Minister protested that the plans announced in November were never intended to be final, that he was completely open to suggestions. He also addressed the widespread misunderstanding that support for community childcare services is being withdrawn:

"This is absolutely not the case and all services which currently receive Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) grant support, will continue to be paid funding in the same regular way under the new Scheme and not directly to parents, as has been suggested in some quarters."

While the EOCP funding could be used only



towards staffing costs, the new funding can be used against any of the operational costs.

The changes announced by the Minister mean there will now be further increases in subvention rates for parents on welfare and a new band of subvention aimed at low income parents.

The tiered system of charges which will operate in community childcare facilities means that:

- Parents on social welfare will receive a €100 a week subvention for childcare, up from €80 a week;
- Parents on Family Income Supplement will see the benefit increase from €30 a week to €70 a week;
- Low income parents who are above the threshold for the supplement will receive €45 a week.

These new tiered payments must be introduced in community childcare providers from July of next year. The money will go directly to childcare providers.

Some 40 per cent of community childcare

providers will receive significant increases in direct funding under the new scheme while others may receive either similar or lesser amounts.

Vulnerable communities have been afforded extra protection:

A minimum subvention of €20,000 per year which will be of particular benefit to small providers, especially in rural areas and the islands.

Special provisions will apply in the case of some childcare services (e.g. women's refuges, special services for children of drug misusers).

Minister Smith said that "transitional funding" guaranteeing current grant levels will continue to be supplied to providers until July of 2008. Subsequently, grants for some may fall to not less than 90 per cent of their current level between July and December 2008; not less than 85 per cent of that amount in 2009; and not less than 75 per cent of that amount in 2010.

Mr Smith insists that the announcement is not a U-turn: he had stated that changes would be made to the scheme.

There are more than 800 services currently in receipt of staffing grant support and the government is committed to spending €1.1 billion in childcare from 2000 to 2010.

INSIDE: On page 16, Morgan Mee explains how the scheme, as it was first announced, worried the life out of community groups and there was a collective sigh of relief when amendments were made.