



Rehab Goes Behind the Scenes on RTÉ's *Nationwide*

Pictured: Norman Dungan films the scene as Gary Langton harvests vegetables while being interviewed by Nationwide's Valerie Waters.

REHAB NEWS HAS GONE behind the scenes of a recent visit by RTÉ's *Nationwide* programme to National Learning Network's "Choices" programme in Athy, Co. Kildare.

"Choices" is a rehabilitation training programme aimed at people who may be experiencing a range of mental health difficulties. As part of the programme in Athy, participants grow their own produce on local allotments facilitated by the Health Service Executive and take a healthy cooking course. *Nationwide* journalist Valerie Waters and cameraman Norman Dungan came to the centre to film the participants harvesting, cooking and enjoying the fruits of their labour.

Luckily, after a week of almost continual rain, the day of filming dawned bright and sunny. The *Nationwide* crew arrived at the centre at 9.30am and met everyone involved in the project. After a consultation with lead instructor Colm Walsh and a quick cup of tea, it was showtime.

Everyone donned Wellies and headed to the allotment at St Vincent's Hospital,

where leeks, potatoes, cabbages and gooseberries had been cultivated by the group. Valerie and Norman directed the stars of the gardening section, Gary Langton, Mark Reid and Aidan Day, and a hush fell as filming began. Gary and Aidan were filmed weeding and digging up vegetables and brave Mark was the first on camera to talk about "Choices".

The next sequence involved Gary, who was filmed picking apples for his pie. Then it was Colm's turn and he gave an overview of "Choices", though the noise from the nearby supermarket nearly stopped filming as trolleys were collected!

The crew then moved to Athy Community College, where the large kitchens afforded space for Norman to film the cooking process. The menu featured home-made soup, ham with colcannon and mashed potatoes, and a choice of blackberry mousse or apple pie.

Clodagh Ryan was first up and Norman hovered around her with his camera as she carefully poured the soup. Next, Anthony Pratt prepared the main course of ham, colcannon and mashed potato and a moment of comedy ensued when the masher broke in

his hand! With true showmanship, he didn't bat an eyelid and the show carried on. Over at the dessert counter, with a flourish that would have become Gordon Ramsay, Mark Reid placed the garnish – rose petals and grated chocolate – on a beautiful blackberry mousse, elegantly served in cocktail glasses.

It was now lunchtime and everyone sat down to enjoy the results of their hard work as Colm showed off the team's other production, *The Walking Distance Cookbook*. The book celebrates food that is local, seasonal and affordable and features many recipes traditional to the Athy area.

The unseasonal good weather held as Norman took the group outside to film incidental shots of the participants chatting as they walked along the banks of the river. At 4pm, the crew declared themselves satisfied and called it a day. Then it was a wrap! ■

You can view the programme online at www.rte.ie and copies of *The Walking Distance Cookbook* are available from: Colm Walsh, Lead Instructor - 00353 59 864 0024