

Imaginative, inventive, ingenious – that’s Rehab staff as the recent presentation of Rehab Council’s Innovation Awards proved

An advocacy programme with a difference, a novel awards scheme, a TV series about disability and a sense and stimulus garden – these are just some of the groundbreaking projects from across the Group that have won recognition through the Rehab Council Innovation Awards.

And with a record 50 entries from centres and services throughout Ireland, England and Scotland for the awards, there’s no doubt that when it comes to being pioneering and inventive, Rehab is still up there with the best of them.

Given the wide scope and high quality of the entries, the judges had an unenviable task in selecting the four winning and five highly commended entries.

Gandon Enterprises Access Ability scooped first prize in the National Award category for their innovative and comprehensive Assessment Process which was created, designed and implemented specifically for the O₂ Ability Awards - Ireland’s first business awards recognising and celebrating best practice in the employment of people with disabilities.

Progressive policies on employing people with disabilities, or providing an accessible workplace, haven’t traditionally been high on the corporate agenda – a fact reflected in the latest statistics from the National Disability Authority, which state that 75 per cent of people with disabilities are unemployed in Ireland. However, this situation may soon begin to change thanks to the prestigious O₂ Ability Award scheme, of which Gandon Enterprises Access Ability are strategic partners.

The unique assessment process, designed and implemented by Access Ability, includes several stages and addresses all aspects in the employment of people with disabilities such as environmental accessibility, policies, procedures and attitudes. Under the assessment process, teams of trained assessors, all experts on managing disability in the workplace, travel the country visiting workplaces and talking to management and staff in order to ascertain the companies’ preparedness for disabled employees and customers. Access Ability also manage the judging process, which includes two panels of highly distinguished adjudicators, including many well-known names from the disability and business

Rehab’s Cutting Edge

communities. Following the success of last year’s inaugural awards, the assessment process for the 2006 O₂ Ability Awards is well underway. The winners will be announced at a glittering televised ceremony in early February 2006.

Second prize in the National Award category went to Rehab Group’s Communications Department for initiating ‘Three 60’, the highly acclaimed RTE television series which deals with disability issues.

In addition to promoting the work of the Rehab Group part of the Communication Department’s brief is to promote positive images of people with disabilities generally. The gathering was told that the success of Three 60, which recently completed it’s second series on RTE, was based on “its ability to make important issues surrounding

First prize in the Local Award category at the Rehab Council Innovation Awards went to National Learning Network’s Peer Support and Education programme. Pictured (left to right) Frank Flannery, chief executive, Rehab Group; Dr Mary Boylan, National Learning Network; Liam Hogan, chairman, Rehab Council, Brenda Crowley, mental health resource officer, HSE Southern Region; and Dr Donal McAnaney, director of Research, Innovation and Business Excellence, Rehab Group.





Right: Jimmy Donner and Laurence Byrne accepted a Highly Commended Award on behalf of NRAC's national committee for the NRAC Policy Awareness Project.



Left: Delegates at the Innovation awards ceremony getting first hand experience of the innovative methods used at RehabCare Dundalk, as drama co-ordinator, Sandy Sneddon and service users from the centre, demonstrate their drama techniques on a group of unsuspecting volunteers!



disability of interest and concern to a wide television audience, just by looking at them in a different and sometimes more thought-provoking way.”

First prize in the Local Award category went to National Learning Network’s Peer Support and Education programme, an innovative pilot community-based programme for young people in Midleton, Co Cork. The programme focused on teaching skills that would enable participants to listen and find appropriate services for their peers who may be experiencing difficulties and displaying suicidal tendencies. As a result of the programme, young people feel empowered to make a difference in the lives of others who may be experiencing difficulties and may need support.

Other award winners on the day included Momentum’s Let’s Go service, which won the second prize in the Local Award category. The Let’s Go service offers respite and short breaks to adults with learning disabilities in Glasgow. Unlike traditional respite services which tend to be centre-based and can often be inflexible, the Lets Go service is a flexible, person-centered and goal focused service which works with individuals to develop life skills, social confidence and greater independence.

In addition to the four award winners, five projects were highly commended by the judges. These included The Chaseley Trust’s Sense and Stimulus Garden Project, which

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Rehab Council chairman, Liam Hogan, pictured with Ian Elliott of Access Ability and Ashley Balbirnie, chief executive, Gandon Enterprises. Access Ability won first prize in the National category of the Innovation Awards.

was designed to engage Chaseley's severely physically disabled service users into the outside garden space at the home. According to Chaseley volunteer, Graham Broom, the project was a huge success, with many of the residents discovering hidden talents and green fingers! In the first year that they entered the competition, members of Chaseley's Garden Club won a silver medal in the annual Eastbourne in Bloom competition.

NRAC's 'Making Changes: An Introduction to Policy Making' project was highly commended by the judges for providing NRAC members with the necessary skills to communicate, contribute and negotiate with policymaking bodies in order to ensure that services meet their needs, into the future. Other highly commended projects included National Learning Network's BUA Centre which received recognition for the 'PACTS' project, an Interreg EU funded project that seeks to look at ways of supporting adults with specific learning difficulties in the East of Ireland and West Wales areas.

Also recognised at the awards was National Learning Network Bray's 'Empowering People with Visual Impairment'. Recognising a gap in the market, staff and service users at National Learning Network Bray developed specific courseware to enable a visually impaired person to complete European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL).

Finally, staff and service users at RehabCare Dundalk were highly commended for their programme 'Making Sense of the Charter of Rights'. This innovation comes from the service users at RehabCare Dundalk themselves, and seeks to make their own rights and responsibilities clear to them, using a variety of techniques including an interactive workbook, drama shows

Right: Leonie Lynch and Kathleen Kyle, both from the Department of Research, Innovation and Business Excellence, pictured at the Rehab Council Innovation Awards.



Chaseley volunteer, Graham Broom, accepts a Highly Commended Award on behalf of Chaseley Trust's Sense and Sensory Stimulus Garden Project.

and workshops, and even a picnic quiz which tested service users' knowledge.

Delegates at the Innovation awards ceremony even got first hand experience of the innovative methods used at RehabCare Dundalk, as Drama Co-ordinator, Sandy Sneddon, and service users from the centre, demonstrated their drama techniques on a group of unsuspecting volunteers!

Further details on the awards and this year's winners are available from Kathleen Kyle, Rehab Council Secretariat. Email: kathleen.kyle@rehab.ie





Launching the fourth Rehab Great Investment Race were Ryan Tubridy (centre) with Seamus Magner, Irish Life Investment Managers; Roy Asher; Hibernian Investment Managers; Richard Dunn, Oppenheim Investment Managers; Chris Reilly, Bank of Ireland Asset Management; Lance Graham, AIB Investment Managers; Gary Connolly, Setanta Asset Management.

And They're Off....

The race is on! Six of Ireland's top investment management companies lined up, under the watchful eye of official race starter RTE's Ryan Tubridy, at the launch of the fourth Rehab Great Investment Race last November. This year's race includes six of Ireland's top investment companies, among them Bank of Ireland Asset Management (BIAM), who are the team to beat having emerged victorious for the past two years running.

Devised and organised by Rehab Lotteries, the Rehab Great Investment Race has, since its inception in 2001, raised a staggering €520,000 for autistic children and their families in Ireland. Through 'bull' and 'bear' markets, global catastrophes and economic uncertainty, the thoroughbreds of Ireland's fund managers have given selflessly of their time and expertise to support an extremely worthwhile cause.

At the launch of the fourth Rehab Great Investment race, each of the six race participants were presented with a cheque for €100,000 to invest as they wish in the stock market. The fund managers need to use all their skill and experience to outwit each other, and the markets, in an effort to raise as much money as possible for RehabCare's autism respite services nationwide.

With less than two months to go in last



At the presentation to the winning team (from left) Joe Treacy, chairman, Rehab Group; Minister for Health, Mary Harney TD, and Chris Reilly, Bank of Ireland Asset Management.

year's race, it had looked as though a photo finish was inevitable - only seven thousand euros separated the top five teams. However, a strong performance by BIAM in the final month of trading ensured that they repeated their 2004 victory and emerged once again as clear winners of the Rehab Great Investment Race. BIAM's monthly gain of 9.6 per cent in May meant that it achieved an increase of 47.8 per cent for the year, a remarkable achievement.

The overall profit from last year's race was €152,661 - representing a very impres-

sive 22 per cent gain on an initial investment allocation of €700,000. In addition to BIAM, participants in this year's race includes AIB Investment Managers; Irish Life Investment Managers; Montgomery Oppenheim; Setanta Asset Management, and Hibernian Investment Managers, winners of the very first investment race.

You can keep track of how the teams are performing in the monthly column that appears in the business pages of the Irish Times.