



# NEWS

RehabCare Newsletter

and Views...

## Programmes Department Workshop

On the 25-26th February 2003 RehabCare Programmes Department held it's first National Programme Workshop. The venue was The Red Cow Complex and a total of 49 staff attended the day and a half long event, representing 34 RehabCare services and departments.

The workshop was designed to work on a number of levels. Firstly, it is intended to provide practical information and examples on how to give a positive and practical focus on programme design, delivery and evaluation. Monica Macnamara facilitated the workshop; Monica has worked in the area of Training and Programme Development for 15 years and has written extensively on the subject. It gave people an opportunity to hear the views, experiences and opinions of someone outside RehabCare, as well as practical advice in developing our own skills.

Secondly, it provided time for people to reflect on their own impact of their work during the session. Participants had an opportunity to ask how ideas put forward can be practically implemented in their centre. This gave people a chance to share experiences, ideas, and successes on all aspects of their work with people who have experienced the same joys and frustrations.

Thirdly, it was a chance to meet new and old friends and acquaintances. It develops and enhances our network for supporting each



other and spreading information and good practice across RehabCare. The workshop has been arranged so that people had an opportunity to meet on a social level as well as working hard in a relaxed atmosphere.

Programme Facilitators, Programme Supervisors, Production Supervisors and Community Service Managers all attended the workshop, together with members of the Programmes team based in Roslyn Park. Topics included: Your Style of Interaction, How to improve your style of interaction, Developing a successful approach to programmes.



The feedback received both formally and informally was very positive. People found Monica to be clear, informative and practical in her approach and the location and organisation enhanced the learning experience. Some of the comments included;

*"excellent got everyone involved in an informal manner"*

*"Re-motivated me"*

*"I plan to share the information with my colleagues at staff meetings"*

*"It has given me a greater understanding of the value of programmes to service users"*

*"Our centre has been in existence for five years but there is always room for improvements"*

*"...will increase the cooperation between production and programme staff"*

*"All staff should attend this workshop"*

The challenge is to build on the understanding, motivation and enjoyment experienced at the workshop. Regional Programme Forums have commenced and the level of participation and involvement has been excellent. The task will be to move on from the workshop in terms of increasing understanding and delivering on gaps identified.

It is hoped that this will become an annual event. It will be extremely difficult to match the high standards we have set for ourselves. A big thank you to all those people who attended, the workshop, without your energy and participation it would never have been the success that you made it.

## The Gym

By Margaret Lyons, Service User, Heather Grove Galway

Three of us in the Centre go to the gym in Galway every Thursday. We exercise on the rowing machine, exercise bikes and treadmills. It is very good for our hearts and it helps keep us fit. I enjoy it a lot. I get the bus part of the way to the gym and then I walk the rest of the way. The gym costs 4 Euro for 1 hour. There is always a gym instructor there to show us what to do. After I finish my exercises my legs feel tired but I feel great as I know I am getting fit. I intend to keep going to the gym for a long time.

## A Day in My Life

By Bridie Kelly, Service User, Heather Grove Galway

I work in the Canteen in Parkmore Factory on Mondays, Thursdays and a half-day on Friday. I live in a house in Glenina, Galway. I live there with four other people - Mary, Terry, Declan and Ann. We have been living there for over a year now. I stay there five nights a week and I go home at the weekends. I go grocery shopping on a Monday evening if the weather is fine. I also go for a walk most evenings after dinner and on Thursdays I might go for a drink.

## St.Patricks Day Parade

By Frank Butcher, Service User, Heather Grove Galway

A few of us from the Resource Centre took part in the Parade in Galway City. There were a lot of people there. We did a sketch of Father Ted. We won first prize of a cup and money. We have been invited to City Hall in a few weeks for a presentation of the award. After the Parade we all went for a meal in Kate's Bar. It was very nice. I enjoyed the day very much.

## Mothers Day

By Bernie Cullen, Service User, RehabCare Sligo

At our House meeting on Monday 24th of March, we all talked about doing something for Mothers day on March 30, 2003. Some of us are lucky and still have our Mothers, while others have lost theirs. However we all decided we would like to do something. We agreed flowers might be the best and anyone who's Mum who had passed on, could make a posy to place on the grave, if they wanted.

We got Maureen, the workshop supervisor to show us how to do flower arranging, as she is very good at this sort of thing. First we had to work out how many people wanted to make an arrangement, how much it would cost, where to get the flowers, oasis, dishes, and tape. Maureen gave us good advice on where to shop and it worked out really cheap. We went for a drive to the local park to get some greenery.



Back Row L-R: Pauline Brennan, Patricia Beglin, Pauric Gillen, Bernie Cullen, Margaret Stenson, Fidelma Coyle, Mary Duffy. Front Row L-R: Ruth Cleary, Frankie Lynott, Paid Hunt, Maureen Fallon (Workshop Supervisor), Aidan McGovern, Mary Teresa Dolan, Mary Kate Dolan.

On Friday we were very busy as most people decided to make a flower arrangement, the place was like a jungle with flowers, leaves and greenery everywhere. When we were finished, it was really worth the hard work; the posies were just like you would buy in the florists, except much cheaper.

# WEST/NORTH –WEST REGION

## RehabCare Sligo Soccer Team

By John Mc Munn, Service User, RehabCare Sligo



We have been training together for the past year. Our coach is John Brennan, he is our NRAC external facilitator also. John is very good at teaching us skills and how to score goals.

We have recently teamed up with Rosses Sheltered Workshop, which is close by, for the Soccer. They train with us every Wednesday from 12pm -1pm indoor, in a local hall, it is close by so we are able to walk to it if the weather is good.

Special Olympics have arranged training sessions for us and two other groups, with Niall Harrison, who is the Regional Development officer with the F.A.I. We train on the Astro turf at the Sports Complex in Sligo with him.

On the 26th March we competed in three matches against Northwest Special Olympics, Letterkenny, Cleary Centre, Donegal and Gallagher House, Tubbercurry, we won all our games, they were very tough and we were all delighted and proud of our win.

We invited all the other teams back to our centre for soup as they had brought their own packed lunches.

I was asked to be Captain of the team by the Coach, I was very proud. We got the loan of Football gear for the match but we will soon have our own gear as we have got sponsorship from a local Bank to buy our own kit.

*Back Row L-R, Niall Harrison, F.A.I. Coach, Gerard Mc Morrow, Adrian Cornwall, John Mc Munn, Captain. Noel Reddy and John Brennan Coach.*

*Front Row L-R, John Walshe, Philip O Donnell, Goalie, Mark Geelan, Con Shanley.*

*Missing from the team photo, Thomas Connolly and Gerard Gillen who were unable to play on the day.*

## Personal Experience of RehabCare

By Bernie McDermott, Service User, RehabCare Ballinamore

My Name is Bernie McDermott and I attend RehabCare resource centre in Ballinamore, Co. Leitrim. Prior to RehabCare, I started to attend NTDI in August 1981 making Christmas Crackers and working on rubber components for cars.

In 1988, I went to the Social Employment Scheme two and a half days each week doing gardening in the local convent. This scheme lasted for one year. I then went to work in Lough Rynn in Mohill for a year, then returning back to work in the local convent. Through this I also got some local gardening work from people in the area.

In 1996, someone suggested that I go back to Rehab now that it has changed and it is now RehabCare.

So I started in RehabCare in November 1996. Prior to coming to RehabCare:

I lacked confidence in myself, I did not know how to look after myself, I had no idea how to cook, I did not understand good housekeeping, I did not know how to manage money. Socially I was shy and lacked confidence in strange settings, I could not swim, I was never involved in sport, I never used a computer, and I had never attended a meeting of any kind. With help and guidance from staff in RehabCare my life has changed completely.

I have made a lot of home improvements; I have bought things for my house that I never would have thought of.

For example: I have installed a shower, had the bathroom tiled, bought a video and washing machine, had my kitchen and bedroom done up, and had a telephone installed.



*Bernie McDermott, Gold Medal Winner and Vice Chairman of NRAC Committee, Rehabcare*

Positive things that have happened in my life are: I have learned to swim, I have learned to play pool, I have successfully taken part in Special Olympics up to national level and have won 13 medals (10 gold, 3 silver), I have become involved in National RehabCare Advocacy Committee (NRAC) and have travelled to meetings in various parts of the country (I now travel independently). I have gained a lot of confidence in myself, I have no difficulty speaking in public to groups of people. As part of my work with NRAC, I also learned to use a computer, to type letters and keep minutes of meetings, I have learned to cook, which means I now cook at home instead of eating out, I completed a foundation course for NCVA in cookery and hygiene, and I have learned how to manage my money. I opened a savings account and save weekly, which allowed me to do up my home.

Overall I feel my life has changed for the better since coming into RehabCare. People have actually said this to me, and to staff from the Resource Centre. Since my life has changed so much for me, I do not think about the past. I am very happy with the way my life is now and hope to continue to live as I am now.

*“With help and guidance from staff in RehabCare my life has changed completely”*

## Cookery Classes

By: *Mary Margaret Mc Dermott,  
Service User RehabCare Sligo*



*Geraldine Gilroy, John McMunn, Willie Peyton,  
Mary Teresa Dolan, Mary Margaret Mc Dermott*

Every Tuesday morning myself and four of my friends go to Dunnes to do shopping for our cookery class in St. Michaels Family Life centre in Sligo. Five of us go on Tuesday, and five go on Wednesday. I go with Mary Teresa, John, Willie and Damien on Tuesday, and on Wednesday, Bernie, Margaret C. , Margaret S., Blath and Geraldine go.

We all had our own cookers and because the class was very small we learned a lot. The first class we cooked roast stuffed chicken fillet and stewed apple and custard. On Saturday I went to town with my sister and bought the ingredients, I cooked this meal for my mother, she was surprised and thought I was a great cook. I live at home with my mother and it was very nice to be able to cook a different meal for the weekend.

We learned to cook shepherds pie, apple tart, queen cakes, Irish stew, fish cakes , toast and fried egg, flap jacks, grilled chop, sausage and tomatoes.

Next week is our last week and I feel so sad because I enjoyed it so much. Teresa did a video of all the classes so we can look at it when we are not busy in the workshop.

Our cookery teacher is Anne Fox and she is very good at telling us all about healthy eating and quick dishes to cook when we get home from work. We all have a photocopy of the ingredients for each meal, so we can cook at home.

This is the Tuesday group enjoying Irish stew and queen cakes for desert when we returned from the class.

## Vincent's Bird Table

By *Vincent Mc Goldrick, RehabCare, Sligo.*

When I was doing my Review of my IAP's in September 2002 I said I would like to build a bird table for our Garden. I never made anything from wood before and I did not know where to start.

Teresa and I went down to the Garden Centre to look at how bird tables were made, we got a very good bargain, as the summer was nearly over, and there was a sale on self-assembly bird tables. We bought one and I asked Eamon to help me put it together. It was hard work and we had to study the instructions very carefully. It took Eamon and myself a few days to put it together. After we put it together , I took responsibility for painting it. I painted it three times with wood preservative. Every time I painted it the paint soaked away. The third time I painted it, I was very proud as it looked very well. Now that the Spring is here, I have to put food out every day, I love birds and I wanted to see the garden full of them.

We all get great pleasure looking at the birds feeding in the Garden. Now I would like to learn the names of all the different birds, so I will be going to the library to get some books with pictures and I will make a scrapbook of all the different birds in our garden.



*Vincent McGoldrick with Self Assembly Bird Table*

## WEST/NORTH –WEST REGION

### Aislings Story

By: Aisling Egan, Service User, RehabCare Sligo

Before Christmas 2002, I was unable to go from the canteen area to the bathroom without the assistance of somebody, as I am visually impaired.

In December, Teresa and I were talking about how I would like my life to be in five years time. I said I would like to be a little more independent and not depend on someone every time I left my chair to go somewhere. I had been working with the INCUBI on external mobilisation, using a cane, but I did not want to use a cane inside. Teresa contacted my Key Worker in INCUBI and he helped her draw up a programme to help me be more independent.

Every day for three weeks we practiced a route from the canteen to the bathrooms. Eventually I became more familiar and less afraid. Teresa gradually reduced the support she was giving me but she still stayed with me until I was fully happy to go it alone.

When I started off, I was very nervous, as there were a lot of doors to open and I had to be sure nobody was coming in and I would not be able to see them. Eaton arranged for a see through panel to be put into the doors so that people could see anybody else or me coming towards the door. I felt more confident then.

The next step was to get from the bathroom to the Programmes area by myself. Once again we practiced the route and by St. Patrick's weekend I was able to go from the Programmes area to the canteen, from the canteen to the bathroom and from the bathroom back to the programmes area before and after all my breaks.

Today I feel more confident and independent than I was before. I feel happy as I don't have to depend on anyone at my break times, I can come and go when I am ready. I am very proud of my progress in a short space of time.

### Programmes with Workshop

By Margaret Stenson, Service User, RehabCare Sligo



RehabCare Sligo group

I work in RehabCare Sligo, and until the end of February 2003, I worked in garment making, with Sadie Carlin as my supervisor. Sadie retired in February and Olivia Harte, who was chairperson of our NRAC committee, left for one year to do a computer course with FAS. I was elected to the NRAC committee, in March. I was very nervous taking up the position but everybody said I would be very good at it, now I am glad I am on the committee.

I am also on the Newsletter committee and we took photos and decided what we wanted to go in to the newsletter, we had a lot of meetings as everybody had different ideas and we had to decide on three or four items. We have a lovely programmes area, attached to the sheltered workshop, Teresa is the Programmes Supervisor and Maureen is the Workshop Supervisor. Maureen is able to tell Teresa when things are not too busy in the workshop and then Teresa organises activities, for those times. We go bowling, swimming, walking, and shopping. We have a chart in the Programmes area called a "Down Time" chart and if there is nothing organised or if Teresa is working with other people, we can select activities of the chart that we can do ourselves.

Every Monday, we have a house meeting and we plan the week ahead, any appointments, classes, programmes, or activities are all put

on the white board so we have a good idea what is on every day. If we forget we check the board every morning.

There are classes everyday like cookery, numeracy and literacy, football, art, gardening, computers, and drama where Tutors come in on a weekly basis. For these classes only a certain number of people are gone from the workshop at any one time. This means that the work gets done and everybody has an opportunity to do things they are interested in.

A few years ago when you had no work, you just sat around doing nothing, but now you have lots of things to keep you busy all day, you can watch a video, play a board game, do art, read a newspaper. It is much better now when we have a break we can play pool and practice for the tournament that is running in the centre.

Our local sports shop, John Kent, sponsored the tournament and he gave two lovely trophies for the winner and the runner-up. Everybody wants to win them, so we are all trying to get in some practice.

Its nice to be asked what do you want to do, instead of being told what to do, because we are all adults in RehabCare and like being able to make our own decisions and choices.

It's nice now to have activities and work, because everyone needs to have something to achieve.

# From Sock Factory to Resource Centre

By Simon Buggy, Service User, RehabCare Douglas Photograph Edited By David Crowley



**In July 2001, RehabCare took over many Sheltered Workshops across the country. This article highlights some of the development, transformation, and positive changes that can happen.**

Before RehabCare was formed, the Douglas Centre manufactured socks for most of Ireland and exported some to England. Our main customer was Dunne's Stores, with other, smaller shops buying them as well.

We had 25 knitting machines that were turned on from 9 am to 9pm Monday to Thursday, and on Friday, from 9am to 3pm. We worked in very warm conditions so that the wool would be pliable for the machines to work well. The noise levels were around 64db-96 db.

For the 27 long-term service users it was very hot and sticky, all year round. We had good times then, with lots of overtime and fun. The knitting machines were used to make about one dozen pairs of sock per hour. Most of us were allocated four knitting machines. Bobbins of 60% wool, which were mixed with nylon and other fibres, were used on these machines. A very small knot was used to tie the end of each bobbin together.

The work was year round with stock taking every 3 months. We all had to clean the work area. Stopping the knitting machine to take the sock out was tricky. From time to time, the socks were faulty and would not come out of the container.

The socks were made in a continuous tube, with a drawstring that helped to separate them. As the toe of the sock was next to the top part of the next sock, some care had to be taken when separating them as you could damage not one sock but two of them.

When socks were separated, they were counted into a dozen pairs, tied into bundles, and put into boxes. When you had 25 bundles per box, these were moved to the turning machine to be turned inside out. The box was then sent to the overlooking machine, so the toe could be seamed and sent back to the turners to be turned the right way. From there, it went to the steam press machine to be pressed flat and then checked for faults. It was then matched for size and colour and packed for the customer, using any label the customer wanted. 15 dozen (pairs) were put into a box and stored until a truck came to pick it up. Some went to Dunnes Stores and some even went to Australia, once a year.

Since then, we have moved on to bigger and better things. We were told, one Friday, that we were to move to Hollyhill for a short time, so that the centre could be stripped out and new walls and floors fitted.

When the work was finished, the centre looked bigger. We now have a TV room, bed room, shower room, two wheelchair accessible toilets, a very large kitchen cum-dinning room, gym room, offices, meeting rooms, an art and craft room, a computer room, two work rooms and a very large hall way with a pool table. All rooms are bright and airy.

The clients and service users decorated the centre. We went shopping for the tables and chairs for all rooms and the fittings for the kitchen as well. Within a short time, the centre was equipped with pictures, furniture, plants, office furniture, and a networked-computer room. As with most things, we feel the centre is ours and is used by anyone that comes to the centre.

Now during the week, there are many different things happening, like communication skills, art and craft's, indoor football, indoor soccer, music classes, computers and introductory computer skills, cooking classes, confidence building, stress management, swim & gym, assertiveness, focus groups, vocational orientation and trips to different places around Cork City and county. We also have an active work unit which packs cooling products for a local company. To date, there are about 35 service users here and over the next year, we hope to attract new clients to the centre.

## EAST/SOUTH EAST

### First Aid Certificate Presentation Night

*By Aisling Mahar, CSM, Bray Sheltered Workshop*

Tuesday, 18th March, saw the presentation of Certificates for successful completion of a first aid course for the service users of Bray Sheltered Workshop. This was a huge achievement for



this group, many of whom have never embarked on a course like this before. Of the eight that attended the course 6 people received full First Aid Certificates. And two received attendance Certificates.

The course was carried out by a company known as Berrick First Aid, who has a lot of experience working with groups with special needs. If anyone would like any further information on the type of courses they offer please do not hesitate to ring us in Bray. Once again congratulations is extended to all those who successfully completed this First Aid course, it is a very positive step forward for the integration of programmes into Bray Sheltered Workshop.

### WLR F.M./ LYONS Club Christmas Hamper Appeal 2002

*By Terry Coady, Client, Waterford RehabCare*

Over the year 2002 we decided to collect our loose change in an old water cooler bottle, outside the canteen, in the Centre in Waterford. In December, we decided to donate the money we had collected over the year to the WLR F.M./Lyons club Christmas hamper appeal. We collected one hundred and thirty five euro from the money bottle. We found it hard to sort the money between the old coins and the euro money.

A representative from WLR visited the centre and was handed the cheque from David Supple, Treasurer of the NRAC Committee.

### The Watergate Theatre

*By Sighile Hennessy, Service User, RehabCare Kilkenny*

My name is Sighile Hennessy. I have been working part time in the Watergate Theatre for about seven years and I enjoy it a lot. My job is dealing with different people. The Watergate staff are very nice to me. I take bookings on the computer for various different shows.

### Spring Fever

*By Margaret Evans, RehabCare Bray.*

On Wednesday 5th March, my Art class put on an exhibition. It was called "Spring Fever". It was at The Mermaid Arts Centre in Bray. The centre looked very nice and very bright. The pictures also looked lovely hanging on the walls.

The exhibition started at 6 p.m. There was a big crowd there. I felt a bit nervous when I saw them all. I felt more relaxed after a glass of wine! My two sisters came and they bought pictures. One was mine. Two people were fighting over one of my pictures. They both wanted to buy it. That made me feel very proud.

There was a great atmosphere on the night. I really enjoyed the Art exhibition. Hopefully I will put three pieces into the exhibition next year.

### South-Eastern Region Inter-Centre Competition

*By Jason Barry and Richard White, Clients, RehabCare, Waterford.*

We are all looking forward to the inter-centre competitions, which are beginning very soon. We have chosen our teams in Waterford following a tense playoff. The games included in the competition are pool, darts, a quiz and a poetry competition with 14 clients from each centre involved in the competition.

We are looking forward to visiting other centres and those centres paying us a visit in return. Our teams are busy practicing and hope to be in top form for our first event, which takes place against Wexford on the 7th of April. The final points score of each team will be announced at the end of July. Johnny Barrett, our Workshop Supervisor in Waterford has donated a cup, which will be presented to the winning team and will be called the 'James Nolan Perpetual Cup'. We hope everyone enjoys the competition and has the opportunity to make many new friends from the centres involved.

### Bowling

*By Mandy Simpson, RehabCare Kilkenny*

Once a month we go bowling in Carlow. We go on the bus from the centre. We split up into two teams. We only go for an hour because we have to be back to let some people in and for lunch. We contribute €3 each.

It only takes us half an hour to get to Carlow. We have no bowling alley in Kilkenny so, it is hard to go bowling. Some of us would like to bowl everyday. Some people go to class everyday so they do not get a chance to go bowling.

## Bridgewater United



RehabCare Clonmel have a new soccer team. It is called Bridgewater United. We train every Friday with our Manager, Sinead and we are getting better each week. Two weeks ago we played our first match against RehabCare Kilkenny and we were all very happy that we won. The local furniture shop sponsored our jerseys and we are honoured to wear the Tipp colours!!

Bridgewater United,  
RehabCare Clonmel.

## The Day I Started in VTOS in Kilkenny

*By Mary Curran, RehabCare Kilkenny.*

Last September I started my one years Junior Cert at VTOS, Bishop Birch Training Institute, Waterford Road, Kilkenny. VTOS stands for Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme.

When I got there I met a lady called Geraldine Moran. She spoke about the different classes and introduced the teachers. On Mondays from 9.00 am to 10.00 am Niamh teaches computers and numeracy from 10.15 am to 11.15 am Patricia teaches French classes. On Tuesdays, there are two classes of art with Catherine, and Siobhan teaches English and communications.

On Thursdays Frances teaches computers and business studies. Peter teaches woodcarving. On Fridays a Dutch lady called Sylvia does ceramics pottery. Over all it is very hard but different and I am enjoying it.

## One Year Old!

*By Eileen Looby, Marie Johnson, Marion Parsons, RehabCare Clonmel*

On Tuesday 4th March, we had our first birthday party in RehabCare.

We came in and got the place ready for the party.

Visitors came and we had Mass at 12 o'clock.

About 1 o'clock we all had lunch. There were sausages, sandwiches, chicken legs and sausage rolls. We also had tea, coffee, minerals and birthday cake for everybody.

After our lunch we sat around chatting with friends and visitors. We all went home happy.

## Our New Wheels!!



RehabCare Clonmel recently purchased a new mini-bus, with funding from the South Eastern Health Board.

*Pictured above with the new bus are Mary, Dymna, Eileen, Eileen, Gerard, Ray and Paddy with their bus driver Terry.*

## RehabCare Wexford



Art project depicting the four seasons, completed in the summer of 2002 by the service users in Wexford and the CE scheme employees.

## MIDLANDS/NORTH EAST REGION

### The BEST Supervisor We Had

*Brendan Sharpe was a Workshop Supervisor in Monaghan Sheltered Workshop for over 10 years. Service Users wrote this to commend Brendan in thanks for all his work and the friendship he provided.*

Brendan was jolly and happy. He was a great joke teller and was always good fun. We enjoyed working with him because he respected us all equally. When we wanted to talk about anything Brendan was always there and would listen. Michael Hughes always said "Right Jack" to Brendan.

On the sports day, we all had our photograph taken with him. He had helped organize the football and also helped with the training of many different events.

He enjoyed music and at his farewell party he danced around to the songs. He will be missed at the Christmas Party where he always sang two party pieces, "There's a Hole in the Bucket" and "The Fairy Tale of New York".

We will all miss him very much!

Regards,

From all at RehabCare, Monaghan.

### Happy New Year AGAIN!!!

*By RehabCare Port Laois*

Our celebration of the Chinese New Year was a huge success. Seventeen service users and staff visited us from the Kildare Resource Centre. There was a huge team effort going on here all week. We all helped to decorate the house, prepare the food and cook the food. On Friday the tasks were shared out, these included: taking and hanging up coats, pouring drinks, serving food and washing up. Our guests were first shown around and they had a drink while they waited for the food. The Chinese food that was served up was absolutely delicious. We had a variety of food: BBQ spare ribs, chicken green curry, chicken & potato curry, jasmine rice and prawn crackers. The day was a huge success and we hope to have similar parties in the near future!!

### Visit to the Fire Station

*By Michelle Coonan, Service User, RehabCare Port Laois*



Seven of us went to visit the fire station. There was myself, Noel, Melita, Mary, Gerry, Breda and Caroline. Fireman George met us at the door and he showed us round the fire station. We saw the room where the alarm is first raised and the big map of Laois so the firemen know where to go. When somebody rings 999, the call is answered in headquarters in Dublin, then a fax is sent down to Portlaoise with details of where the fire or accident is. Next we saw the changing room, where everyone has their own space. All the firemen have their names over their lockers and we saw all their gear ready to wear in the case of an emergency. George showed us the fire brigades, and James brought one outside to show us how it works. He let us spray the water and we all got to sit up in the fire brigade. James got us all a hat to wear while we all got our photos taken. Finally then they brought out the big ladder that goes up 92 feet, as tall as the church steeple! We all had a great trip to the fire station, the firemen were very nice and we saw the important work that they do.

### The Maltings

*By Gerry Conroy, Service User, RehabCare Port Laois*

When we arrived at the Maltings gym we met a trainer and she showed us to the changing room. We all got changed and headed for the bikes. Noel and myself started on the bikes while Caroline and Melita were on the steppers. Next we all had a go on the walking/ running machines, we liked these because we could all go at our own pace. Next were the rowing machines, which were much harder. Lastly then we all had a go on the bikes again. Although it was very tiring we really enjoyed ourselves and felt really fit afterwards. We all showered and then we headed home. We found it very good and we are really looking forward to next week!!

# NRAC External Facilitator Training

By Michelle Joyce, National Development Officer

I'm delighted to inform you that training has taken place for NRAC external facilitators. Their needs were identified and training has been provided in two locations around the country in Tullamore and Dundalk. The course "Leadership and Presentations Skills" has empowered facilitators to define their roles to the NRAC Committee while also providing support to each other. The NRAC National Committee, RehabCare Training Dept and Programmes and Service Development Department devised this course. Last year this course was a pilot for service users in Cork and Dublin, with such a positive response it was then opened to staff.

Two members of the NRAC National Committee, Mr Micheal O'Brien and Mr Jimmy Dooner, facilitated on each course, with Elva O Grady Training Department, and myself.



# RehabCare Castlebar NRAC committee visits Sligo

The NRAC committee of Castlebar visited Sligo NRAC on Thursday March 13, 2003. The two NRAC committees got a chance to meet each other and to discuss NRAC Issues. It also provided an opportunity for some leisure time as well, the two committees played a game of snooker and had a great time.



## FIVE NATIONAL VALUES OF NRAC

1. TEAMWORK
2. TRUST
3. REPRESENT PEOPLE
4. ASSESS FOR ALL
5. EQUALITY

# NRAC

By Jeremy Ward, Michael O'Brien and Michelle Joyce

On the first day back after New Year 2001 NRAC and the Staff Training Unit met in Cork to design a leadership course for the National Committee and all their members. What we thought would be quite a straight forward task turned into a monumental exercise.

The initial design meeting went on for three days and at the end we agreed on a ten day syllabus. The syllabus was challenging, ambitious and creative ranging from selection interviewing skills through presentation skills to secretaryship, chairing meetings and leadership through communications.

As with all training programmes the preparation period took about six months. We had started the process on a dreary blustery January day and it came to fruition on a beautiful June day in the Cork Staff Training Centre. On the first course we had delegates from Nenagh, Hollyhill, Douglas and Kilkenny. The road show moved to Dublin a month later where we had delegates from Dunboyne, Park House, Tullamore, Ballinamore and Ballyfermot.

Some abiding memories stick with us from the two pilot courses. The subject of the set piece debate was whether England or Brazil would win the World Cup. Fred Cronin from Hollyhill argued passionately in favour of Brazil and at the end he congratulated the opposition on their performance adding "Actually I don't know anything about Soccer and have even less interest in it". There is a great future in Dail hEireann for the lad!

## NRAC CORNER

### NRAC – *continued*

We also remember Mary Curran from Kilkenny delivering her presentation on the History of Kilmainham Jail, which was both historically fascinating and emotionally affecting.

The abiding memory from Dublin was the standard of discussion ranging from Mick McCarthy to the flawed first Disability Bill a discussion that flowed into the evening at Dinner in Bewleys in Ballsbridge. The debate at Dinner go so heated that we thought that the whole of the National Committee was going to march on to Leinster House, never had Dublin come nearer to a replay of the Bastille.

The second part of the process involved rolling out NRAC syllabus requirements to staff and external facilitators in a series of a day and a half workshops facilitated by all of us as well as Elva O'Grady. To date we have had thirty three staff members attend and already that syllabus is being delivered locally in certain parts of the country.

What started as a formidable project ended up as a hugely enriching experience. Michael O'Brien has now got the "training bug" and joins us as a part-time member of the staff training team, after exhaustive training he and another member of the National committee who has yet to be decided will take over the Disability Awareness modules towards the end of the year.

Michelle Joyce is the NRAC Development Officer, Michael O'Brien Chairs the National Committee and Jeremy Ward was the course director for the programme.

## Information Corner

Share Music is a truly total art, total theatre in which everything counts. It is inspired by the principles of access and inclusion. The Courses provide a friendly and supportive environment which participants feel free to contribute.

This year Share Music is introducing training courses for disabled and non-disabled people wishing to develop leadership skills in this area of art and theatre. The first of these has been organised as a 'Training for Education' course, as part of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme of courses held at Aldeburgh in Suffolk, England.

### Comments on courses

*'A week to remember for the rest of my life'*

*'Truly life changing'  
'I felt instantly at home'*

Various Courses are available in England and Northern Ireland. For those interested please contact Chris Shurety on **00 44 20 7247 7855** or [chris.shurety@sharemusic.org.uk](mailto:chris.shurety@sharemusic.org.uk)

# European Year of THE DISABLED PEOPLE

As we all know 2003 has been designated as European Year of the Disabled People. There are over 37 million disabled people in the European Union. The European Year of disabilities is about creating an inclusive community. There are many projects going on around the country. It is important that we all play an active part in this year! To find out more on what's going on log on to

**[www.Eypd2003.org](http://www.Eypd2003.org)**

## Responding to violence against WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES

### **WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES MUST AT ALL TIMES BE CENTRAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESPONSES TO VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AND MUST BE SUPPORTED TO TAKE LEADERSHIP ON THIS ISSUE.**

This is the central message of a new publication by the National Disability Authority and Women's Aid entitled 'Responding to violence against women with disabilities'.

The purpose of the booklet is to encourage and support frontline services in addressing the issue of violence against women with disabilities by profiling the issue, reducing anxiety amongst service providers and stimulating dialogue on the issue.

The booklet outlines steps involved in developing a good practice response by both disability organisations and organisations addressing violence against women, including statutory, voluntary and community service providers. It also includes useful contact information to support organisations in progressing this work.

Women's Aid and the National Disability Authority have collaborated since 2001 to address violence against women with disabilities. The National Disability Authority participated in a study by Women's Aid on the feasibility of research into violence against disabled women in 2001. The study report is called 'Violence against disabled women'. In 2002, Women's Aid and the National Disability Authority held a joint seminar in 2002. A report of the seminar proceedings is also available. The booklet builds on this work.

Women and men with disabilities experience a range of violence and abuse, in different settings. It is important to understand both the forms of violence and abuse and the contexts in which they occur. These include:

- medical settings (inappropriate medical procedures such as forced medication or ECT),
- institutions, care services, day centres and schools (rough handling, over medication, locking people in rooms, sexual and physical abuse), and
- family and intimate relationships (physical, sexual, psychological, financial abuse, abandonment and neglect, denial of sexual and gendered identity).

Barriers to accessing protection and support, which have been identified include:

- difficulties in naming and identifying abuse
- lack of acknowledgement and affirmation of the sexual needs, rights and lives of people with disabilities
- isolation
- experience of disempowerment and low self-esteem
- questioning of credibility
- services' lack of knowledge, skills and understanding
- services' lack of physical access
- practitioners minimizing or denying abuse and violence of people with disabilities
- lack of access to advocacy, particularly in closed environments.

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## *Responding to violence against women with disabilities* — continued

The issue of abuse and violence experienced by men with disabilities was raised in the 'Violence against disabled women' study and at the seminar. The booklet notes it may inform a good practice response to men with disabilities who experience violence.

The booklet, seminar report and 'Violence against disabled women' are available from:

### **Women's Aid**

Tel: 01-8684721 Email: [info@womensaid.ie](mailto:info@womensaid.ie)

### **National Disability Authority**

Tel: 01-6080400 Email: [nda@nda.ie](mailto:nda@nda.ie)

The booklet can be downloaded from the following websites: [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie) and [www.womensaid.ie](http://www.womensaid.ie)

Comments on the booklet and the issue of violence against women and men with disabilities are welcomed. These can be made to:

**Marion Wilkinson, National Disability Authority**  
[mwilkinson@nda.ie](mailto:mwilkinson@nda.ie)

**Iris Elliott, National Disability Authority**  
[ielliott@nda.ie](mailto:ielliott@nda.ie)

**Rachel Mullen, Women's Aid**  
[Rachel.mullen@womensaid.ie](mailto:Rachel.mullen@womensaid.ie)

The booklet encourages organisations to start taking action on violence against women with disabilities immediately, and highlights that good practice can be developed even within existing resources.

Steps for disability organisations include:

- prioritising the safety and well-being of a woman who discloses experience of violence and abuse
- developing gender equality policies and practice
- consulting with women with disabilities as to what response is needed from the organisation
- ensuring all staff and volunteers receive training on the issue of violence against women.

Steps for organisations addressing violence against women include:

- beginning or continue dialogue with women with disabilities about disability equality issues and consulting with them as to how services could be made accessible to women with different disabilities
- including women with disabilities in your organisation by recruiting disabled women as staff and volunteers
- ensuring equal access and equal outcomes for women with disabilities.

This includes:

- carrying out a disability equality proofing process
- producing information that is easily understood by women who may have literacy difficulties
- producing materials in Braille, large print and on audio tape
- developing helplines for women who are deaf and hearing impaired by using fax, texting and minicom where appropriate and safe for the women
- recognising the importance of outreach services to women with disabilities

## LONELY MAN

*By John Ryan, Service User Kilkenny*

He spends most of his days,  
Looking down a whisky glass,  
Reminiscing about the past,  
As he proceeds to order another drink at the bar,  
Taking in the scenery and the atmosphere,  
Filled with music & laughter,  
As last orders come around again,  
Cigarette after cigarette,  
He finds he's self-walking home alone,  
In the rain once again lonely man.

## SHE'S GONE AWAY

*By John Ryan, Service User Kilkenny*

I watched you from the landing above the stairs,  
You had the suitcase at the door,  
As you closed the door behind you,  
You left your thoughts on a chair,  
Leaving me in the past,  
A memory,  
Stood behind the shadows on the stairs,  
She's gone away.

## LIFE

*By John Ryan, Service User Kilkenny*

Where is my life going?  
I seemed to be turning around and round,  
No direction  
How some people,  
Like to treat me like a clown,  
Ten years from now will I be dead?  
Imprisoned doing life,  
Young men crying in the cells below,  
Counting the days on the wall,  
The years forever more,  
Where am I going?  
Stages in my life,  
Like a never ending play,  
I play my role to the end,  
Until the curtain fall is this the end?

## TIDES OF LOVE

*By John Ryan, Service User, RehabCare Kilkenny*

The shore is going in,  
The tide is going out,  
What's the difference about it,  
When the world turns around,  
The sun is going down,  
The birds are flying high,  
When I see you on the shore,  
I feel like reaching out,  
The tides of love have lured me to you,  
Reaching out and knowing that you're there,  
The tides of love have drawn me to you,  
To the place we once shared.

## CITY OF LOVE

*By John Ryan, Service User Kilkenny*

My eyes strayed across the street,  
With the rain below my feet,  
and the sound of traffic and peoples feet,  
Stood placed behind a stain glass window frame,  
A mental image of a women acting her part,  
Surrounded by props and material things,  
And not conscious she had a audience,  
And physically not knowing of my presence,  
I think I love her.

## THE QUARRY

*By Dermot Eoghan,  
Sheltered Workshop, RehabCare Navan*

The quarry stands there,  
With no sound.  
As the rocks lay,  
All around.

The trees are blowing,  
Around it too.  
Like they stood,  
And never grew.

Some sheep sleep there,  
Every night.  
Until the sun,  
Brings daylight.

It sits near,  
That's always  
A bridge there.  
As the quarry stands,  
Nice and fair.

As it stands there,  
With no sound.  
As birds,  
Fly all around.

# Editorial

*Busy, busy, this time of year just seems to be non-stop. It doesn't look like things are going to change anytime soon. There are great events coming up such as the Special Olympics in June and the local and national events to celebrate 2003 being the European Year of Disabilities.*

*In this Spring issue, we have lots of interesting articles from around the country, some fantastic poetry, and useful information for staff on events and diary dates.*

*Before you finish reading this, I am looking for any staff or service users who have 'interesting' or 'wacky' hobbies that you like to share with us. We would like to discover more about our workforce and service users to find out what drives you.*

*So come on, tell us about it and better yet send photos! A prize will be awarded to the most interesting hobby with an article published the next edition of RehabCare News and Views. Until then keep those articles coming.*

**Kathleen Morris**  
Editor

RehabCare  
Roslyn Park  
Beach Road  
Sandymount  
Dublin 4

# Staff Diary

## DIARY DATES

- Midlands/North Eastern Regional Application Training Day  
– May 21, 2003
- South/ Mid- West Regional Application Training Day  
– June 5, 2003
- West/ North West Regional Application Training Day  
– June 17, 2003

## REGIONAL PROGRAMME MEETINGS

East/South East – May 22, 2003

Midlands/ North East – June 10, 2003

South/ Mid Western – June 17, 2003

West/ North West – July 1, 2003

## DISCOVERY WORKSHOPS

June 26, 2003

September 17, 2003

## WEB STUFF

Department of Health and Children, Ireland  
[www.doh.ie](http://www.doh.ie)

Health Research Board  
[www.hrb.ie](http://www.hrb.ie)

Health promotion Unit  
[www.healthpromotion.ie](http://www.healthpromotion.ie)

Centre for cross border studies  
[www.qub.ac.uk/ccbs](http://www.qub.ac.uk/ccbs)

Centre for the study of Autism website  
[www.autism.com](http://www.autism.com)



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Website: [www.rehab.ie](http://www.rehab.ie)