



REHABCARE

# NEWS

## and Views...

RehabCare Newsletter

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### Editorial

Welcome to the latest issue of News and Views. I hope you will like the new developments within. It has been completed following the consultation and readers survey carried out last year, and aims to be lively, interesting and easy to read.

We have also introduced new sections for different audiences, for example the new sports area. This section is aimed at providing you with more in-depth coverage of the sports events and news from around the country.

Now we would like to hear from you. We want News and Views to become a platform for readers to share their knowledge and experience, and their concerns. We would also like you to tell us what you think of this issue—and what you'd like more of. We look forward to hearing from you.

Once again thank you for all the articles as they make a very interesting read!

*Kathleen Morris, Editor*

### Person Centered Planning Conferences

In November 2003 RehabCare's Programmes and Service Development Department organised two conferences on the topic of Person Centred Planning. We were privileged to have John O'Brien as the key speaker at both of the conferences; John is renowned worldwide for his pioneering work in the area of Person Centred Planning. John's visit to Ireland was timely given the impending roll out of the NDA standards which strongly advocate a Person Centred approach to service delivery for people with disabilities.



*L-R: Shona King, Eileen Hennessy*

The first conference was held in UCD on Tuesday November 25th, this was a joint initiative between RehabCare and Centre for Disability Studies in UCD. Over 180 participants from all over Ireland attended the conference; this conference was targeted at service providers and professionals. The demand for places at the conference was extremely high and as a result many people who were interested in attending were unable to get a place on the day. This is evidence that Service Providers throughout Ireland are keen to move towards a more person centred approach to service delivery for people with disabilities.

The second conference was held on Wednesday November 26th 2003. This day was specifically reserved for RehabCare staff; staff from almost all of RehabCare services attended the day long conference in the City West Hotel, Dublin. It provided us all with an opportunity to reflect on the key values that underpin the services provided by RehabCare. It also provided an all too rare opportunity for RehabCare staff to meet and catch up with each other.

Over the two days John provided an inspirational insight into the essence of Person Centred Planning and provided many real life examples that illustrated how powerful this approach can be. John left us some points to remember:



*L-R: Frank Flannery, John O'Brien, Angela Kerins*

- Never allow fear of risk to limit a person's potential
- Always seek to support a person to build on their gifts and capacity
- Person Centred Planning is an approach to living as opposed to a system or product that is implemented by service providers
- We should always strive to make the situation change to suit the person rather than make the person settle for what is on offer.

## Interviews from Service Users in Dundalk Resource Centre

### Alex Teeling:

My name is Alex Teeling. I won two gold medals for swimming in the area GALA in Dublin. I currently work in Dunnes Stores on a Thursday and Friday. In the centre, I do computers and independent skills and which keep me in touch with every day tasks.

### Wayne Mooney:

I started my work placement two months ago in iQon Technologies in Dundalk. I made pizza boxes to put computer components e.g. mouse, power cord. The main reason why I wanted this job is because I wanted a job in computers. Oliver Dowd was the person that showed me what my duties were and I found him very helpful. I have learned to work hard and to work as part of a team. It was also good experience working in the packing industry. I have made many friends while I was

there. Before I worked on iQon I worked in Simply Computers in Dundalk. My job title there was Research and Development manager, what I did there was to check every piece of software and see if it worked on computers. I found this job placement very worthwhile. I will be starting again in iQon at the end of March.

### Martin Hanley

I'm Martin Gerard Hanley. I'm 26 years old. I moved back to Ireland last August 2003. Now I am a member of RehabCare Resource Centre. My programmes are gym, road safety, drama and snack cookery to name but a few. I play the tight ropewalker in the Drama; I joined the Drama group three days a week where I made new friends. I have made a lot of new friends in the centre and I am very happy here.

## Lisa's Going Away Party

*By Gerry Conroy, Portlaoise Resource Centre*

On the 24th of October we had a going away party for Lisa. We all dressed up as the Spice Girls. I was Baby Spice, Breda was Ginger Spice, Michelle was Sporty Spice, John was Scary Spice and Paula was Posh Spice. Lisa Weldon gave Lisa Cashin the Red Book of 'This is Your Life'. We had a lovely little party with wine and chocolates. We will all miss Lisa and we wish her the best of luck in the future.



## Christmas Day Out to see Cinderella in the Gaiety

*By Melita Cobbe, Portlaoise Resource Centre*

We all travelled up to Dublin on Cleary's bus to go and see Cinderella at the Gaiety. The bus dropped us off on Kildare Street and we all walked to the Gaiety. There was lots of singing and dancing in the show; Ronnie Drew and Susan McFadden were especially good. Buttons was also great and one of our favourites. The costumes were brilliant and colourful especially those of the ugly sisters. There

were lots of children at the show and there was great laughter and excitement. When the show was over we then headed back to the bus and we went to Liffey Valley to do our Christmas shopping. Everyone had a brilliant day and we would recommend panto to everyone.

## A Day on the Bog

By Sammy Dunne, Portlaoise Resource Centre



This year we worked on the bog from July to September. Work on the bog depends on the weather. If the weather is good and the turf is dry it could be cut earlier on in the year and its possible to get two cuts off the bog in one year. When the time is right someone comes along and cuts turf out of the bog hole with a hi-mac. The hi-mac puts the turf into a 'hopper'. When it goes in to the hopper the turf is like mud, the hopper dries it out and cuts it into sods. Its like sausages are being made. The sods are then left for three weeks until they are crusty and hard.

This is when the hard work starts. Sam gets up at 4 in the morning; he gets his breakfast, and packs a flask of tea and sandwiches for the day. He goes to the bog for the day, to 'foot the turf'. This means that the turf is stacked five sods high.

Sam pays €165 every year for his plot, which has five rows. From the five rows Sam can get 100 bags of turf and 3 loads of turf. His brother John draws the turf home for Sam. He may sell a few bags of turf during the year but nearly all of the turf is kept for the winter. The turf then heats the cooker and fire for Sam.

## Advocacy Day

By Anita Guest and Dolores McKeever,  
Dundalk Resource Centre

We attended a Regional Advocacy day on Thursday February 19th in Enfield Co. Meath. It was a lovely day for travelling. There were lots of people from other centres there within the North East/Midlands Regions. When we arrived we had tea or coffee. We then broke up into different groups. We were with a group from Portlaoise. There were approximately six people and a facilitator in those groups. One group did a role-play about crossing the road. The others did a role-play, listening, communicating and advocacy. They did a little play at the end to tell the people about advocacy. Advocacy means people having a voice and standing up for themselves. We also did a role-play about our I.A.P's (Which means our Individual Action Plan meeting). We all had a lovely dinner. In the afternoon we gave feedback on all we had done within our working groups. The feedback was good and Dolores highlighted that there was no ramp for getting on the stage when speaking about advocacy. Some groups had prepared pictures to explain Advocacy while others performed their role-play. We looked at different hand signs for hearing, seeing and talking. We had a disco and then we went home.

## "Advocacy" Day

By Robbie Reid, Dunboyne Resource Centre

On the 19th February in the Johnstown House hotel, there was a Regional Advocacy Day. It was great to see a lot of people there, all with a disability of some sort. Some born with theirs, and some, like myself, acquired through an accident. They had a lot to say and gave a lot of great hope for the future. It's a pity that the Minister for Health was not there to see the faces of the people and stop them being numbers on books. It's great to see that everyone is getting together on the subject of disability and advocacy. In the words of Jim Larkin, "Stand-alone they divide and conquer, but stand together we stand as ONE like a brick wall, mightier than the sword". Education is the key to success and when you have that, put it to good use, put pen to paper and make your voice be heard for the ones that cannot speak for themselves. **Message to the Government: look after your own backyard first, then, go somewhere else to help others. That's what ADVOCACY means to me.**

## The Marie Keating Foundation Visits RehabCare Resource in Dundalk

By Dolores McKeever, Dundalk Resource Centre



On the 18th February a lady from the Marie Keating Foundation came to our Centre with one of their three mobile units. These units travel country wide staffed by a nurse and team to provide us with formation and awareness about breast cancer.

She talked to us about the importance of self-breast examination by looking and by feeling and also checking ourselves regularly because early detection is very important. We learned a lot from the talk.

Marie Keating was the mother of the famous star Ronan Keating, she died at an early age from breast cancer, and because of this the Keating family started the "Marie Keating Foundation."



*Hugh Coyle, Monaghan Sheltered Workshop  
They all look so good, this must be mine!  
Picture exhibition at the North - East Sports Day.*

## Promoting Self-Advocacy in Highfield House/A High Support Autism Service

By Stephen Buckley, Highfield House Longford

Ensuring the implementation of Self-Advocacy in High Support Autism services requires creativity, innovation, and a good understanding of the individual with Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

For a person with a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder, self-advocacy is impeded by cognitive restriction and by the individual's unconventional expectation of the world around them. This is observed on a daily basis in Highfield House by the staff team when adults with autism are encouraged to make choices for themselves. Choice making is at the heart of our philosophy of care at Highfield House.

To be in a position to make a choice, one must know what choices are available and the means by which these can be enacted. The capacity to think abstractly, to weigh up the options that are available, and to make a judgement based upon the advantages or disadvantages of a particular recourse are essential if genuine choices are to be made. Many people with and even without, learning difficulties find this process difficult, but given sufficient time and guidance, they are able to think abstractly and make choices accordingly.

One can only respect an individual's free choice if that individual is capable of making a meaningful choice. The person with autism is likely to have difficulty in thinking in anything other than concrete terms and the presentation of abstract choices can send them spiraling into anxiety and associated challenging behaviours. It is not implied that people with autism cannot make choices, but that the options, about which a judgment can be made, must have already been experienced and are therefore concrete rather than abstract. Keep in mind that CHOICE is an abstract ideology.

It may be more respectful to the dignity of adults with autism if we recognize their extreme difficulties in social learning and set out to give them greater access to meaningful choice through direct and positive teaching approaches, such as those implemented at Highfield House.

## The Brendan Grace Concert

*By Keith Hewson, Tullamore Sheltered Workshop*

On Monday the 19th of January, Jennifer, Christine and I went to see Brendan Grace and Johnny Mc Evoy in concert. They were playing in the Tullamore Bridge House Hotel. We love Johnny McEvoy's music. He plays songs like Maggie and Long Before Your Time Nora, etc. At 9:20pm Brendan Grace went onto stage. He is very funny and he told a lot of jokes. He made fun of the Doctors and said they have it easy!

At 10:30pm he did Butler. He told a story about a woman who was crying on a Dublin bus. A tall man told her that her baby was the most ugly baby that he had ever seen. The bus driver put the man off the bus. The bus driver brought the woman into a shop for a cup of tea. He said to the woman, here is a cup tea, a sandwich and a banana for the monkey that you are holding in your arms! We had our picture take with Brendan Grace. He asked us did we like his show and we told him that it was a great show.



*Photo includes: Keith Hewson, Brendan Grace, Jennifer Monaghan and Christine Delaney*

## The National Tree Day

*By Domhnall Flynn, Dundalk Resource Centre*

To celebrate National Tree Day we organised a field trip to the Phoenix Park in Dublin. We got to Dublin by train Stephen, John, Bronagh, Anita, Gerry, Helen and myself, where we got off at Connolly Station and went to the Phoenix Park by Taxi. When we arrived at Ashtown Castle in the Phoenix Park we met Michelle Grimes and she was our tour guide for the day. She gave us a key ring, badge, tree cookie, pencil and a cup to collect seeds. We then went on a guided tour of the grounds where Michelle showed us different types of trees. We also saw some squirrels, deer and other wild animals on the field trip. When the tour was over John thanked Michelle for her kindness and help.

Then we went into the restaurant and had our lunch. Then we went to the visitors centre and we saw a film about the history of the Phoenix Park. When we were waiting on a taxi to take us back to Connolly Station we had a quick look around the rest of the visitors centre. Then we got a taxi back to the Train station and got the train back to Dundalk. It was a very enjoyable day.

## Christmas Party Time

*By Olive Hickey, Tullamore Sheltered Workshop*

We had our Christmas party in the Bridge House Hotel, Tullamore on Sunday the 15th of December. It was also a party night for many other workplaces. Everyone was dressed up, the women wore lovely evening clothes and the men wore suits. The ballroom had Christmas decorations: there were balloons, streamers, red and white lights and Christmas trees. There was a choice of turkey and ham or steak, I thought mine was very tasty. The music was very good. The Conquerors were playing at it. When the band finished the disco started. The people were dancing until am! Here is a picture of us enjoying our party:



*Photo includes: Francis Nihall, Martin Dooley, Andy Minnock, Mary Fitzpatrick, Pj Fox, Damien O'Connor, Ciaran Shields, Seamus Dunne, Paul Byrne, Kevin Condra and Olive Hickey.*

## World Heart Day Walk

By Gordon Bowers, Waterford Sheltered Workshop



Irish Heart Day Walk

On Monday the 29th of September at 10.30 am RehabCare Waterford arranged a 3 km walk for World Heart Day. The aim of the walk was to highlight the importance of a fit and healthy lifestyle through walking.

Twenty-three clients and 2 staff took part in the walk; everyone enjoyed the morning and everyone was presented with a certificate for taking part. After the walk we entered a photo we took of the group, in a competition the heart foundation was running to promote walking and it came in at 2nd place. The competition had 280 entries of pictures of walks from all around the country. We were very proud to come second in the competition. Our picture is now on display on the world heart foundation website. Check it out at: [www.worldheartfoundation.ie](http://www.worldheartfoundation.ie) the picture was also published on their monthly newsletter and we won five t-shirts, which we raffled off between the walkers.

*Well done to all the walkers in RehabCare in Waterford who took part in the World Heart walk.*

## The Film Club

Darren Fripp, Bray Sheltered Workshop

I recently began my new post as Programmes Facilitator. Part of my duties are to develop in coordination with my Service Manager & Programmes Supervisor a new programme's that would incorporate and address many areas including:

- Development • Education
- Independence • Choice.

One such programme that was recently developed is

the Film Club. This was created with service users to develop an insight into various aspects of movie making. Our first guest to fill the hot seat was Kevin Barker from Ardmore Studios whose resume includes assistant director and production supervisor. He was involved in Evelyn and Tailor of Panama. With plans and more guests in the pipeline for the coming weeks all there is left for me to say is : *Lights Camera Action!!*



## ORIGIN OF HOPS



Interview conducted with service users of HOPS  
By Kathleen Morris

*What does HOPS stand for?*

'HOP'S is 'Harrison's Opportunities & Placement Services' for Long-term users of ISFI and Harrison's Restaurant who have Mental Health difficulties.

*When did HOP'S become part of RehabCare?*

HOP'S became part of RehabCare in November 2002.

*What are HOP'S aims?*

HOP'S aims are to improve chances in finding work, increase self-esteem, social interaction, representation and advocacy.

*What kind of activities are you participating in?*

We are participating in arts, yoga, relaxation, acupuncture, aromatherapy, photography, computer courses, food nutrition, and fire safety.

*What are the hours of the service?*

The service is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday although some activities take place in the evening and or weekends such as social evenings at Shelbourne Park etc.

*What are the benefits of attending HOPS?*

One of the main benefits is the social interaction, great supports, a structure and a routine to our day!

*How does the staff support you?*

They listen and provide us with open communication and give us the VIP treatment we deserve.

*What's HOPS future?*

Watch this space....Strong advocacy to develop and empower people with mental health difficulties!

***A big thanks to everyone who participated in the interview!!***

## Harrison's Opportunities and Placement Programme

*By Pat O'Leary, RehabCare HOPS*

I came to HOPS after spending eleven years with Design Forum, ISFI that was in turn run by NTDI. HOPS was created for long-term members of ISFI and allows users to combine part-time work or work experience while looking after their overall health. I was with Design Forum for eleven years and still attend their part of the week. HOPS have given me the opportunity to put work aside temporarily and to develop my social skills, which I had neglected. On an average day there are about 8 -10 people in the group. Most of the people here have something in common having worked in ISFI and in particular Harrison's Restaurant which, when it closed, gave its name to the service. It occupies several rooms at its Mount Street address allowing different activities to take place at the same time. During the two days a week I spend with HOPS, there is light Yoga, a computer class, a weekly meeting and a Wednesday afternoon outing. Other classes available include Literacy, Art, Creative Writing, and Stress Management. My aim while I am here is to recover my health to the point where I can start working again.

Summer 2003 was eventful with a chance to go further field on our outings with the help of the weather. Trips were made to the National Aquarium in Bray, to Dunlaoghaire pier for a stroll and to Malahide Castle. Guided tours were had in the Aquarium and the Castle adding to the visit. Also on the list were the Botanic Gardens and the Horse Show. We toured the 'Box in the Docks' otherwise known as the waterways museum and watched a video on their history. Several films were seen during the year including Seabiscuit one Saturday morning.

Deirdre, our staff art teacher took us to the National Gallery to see the 20th Century Irish artists among other paintings taking in the people's art on Merrion Square on the way. We saw an exhibition of John Hinde's Butlins photographs, computer generated portraits and landscapes in the Gallery of Photography, and some Irish photography of the early 1900's in the Archive nearby. We finished the art outings with a chance to relax with a coffee in Bewleys or the Kylemore if we're in the area.

## Variety Show

*By Stephen Bowers, Waterford Sheltered Workshop*

On December 8th 2003, the clients of RehabCare Waterford staged a Variety Show. The group had been preparing for the show for over three months. The M.C.'s on the day were David Supple and Gordon Bowers. They introduced all of the performers. To begin the show the RehabCare dance group performed their movement Dance with Libby Seaward, dance teacher.

The group consisting of eight people had attended dance lessons in the Waterford academy of dance and drama for 14 weeks and it showed in their wonderful performance. Michael Whelan, as Frank Spencer, provided comedy relief and Jason Barry, as Santa, was not to be missed. Donal's music group sang an Irish medley, a Rock and Roll medley and a Christmas medley. Joan Norris, Paula, Richie and Co. sang a collection of our favourite songs. Jean Corcoran, Pat Cassin & Olan Roring performed their comedy act to rounds of applause and peals of laughter.

All the cast enjoyed performing so much they now have great ambitions for next year's show and they only have 10 months to prepare!

## Begging in the streets of Kilkenny

*By Mark Butler, Kilkenny Resource Centre*

I read an article in the Kilkenny People, about begging in the streets of Kilkenny. People gave their opinion on it. Now I am going to give my opinion on the subject, it goes something like this, people shouldn't be begging out in the streets. Maybe it is because they have a drink problem and are forced out on to the streets. Then they are begging for money to buy food and drink or drugs to survive out in the harsh reality of the world. It can be very cruel at times. In the twenty first century, people should not go hungry, not in this day in age. Money should be managed correctly instead of spending it on drink or drugs.

I think the government should organise something like to have more centres to help homeless people, to look after them. I think begging lowers your self esteem. No one should go hungry in these times, especially with social welfare money and help from the government.

### Review of Makeovers

By Sinead Cusack, Waterford Sheltered Workshop

Earlier in the year, we had a visit from three of the beauty therapists from C.T.I. and we had mini makeovers in the centre. That particular time I had my eyebrows plucked, make-up put on my face, lipstick on my lips and polish on my nails. We were very excited about our coming visit to C.T.I. because of all the equipment there, which meant we could have facials, head massages and many other treatments. The beauty therapists were very nice people and they helped us a lot by giving us loads of tips on how to apply make-up.

I now like making myself up with makeup. I enjoyed myself very much learning about how to use it. We had our photographs taken with the beauty therapists. Two of the therapists who gave us our makeover received student beauty therapist of the year awards. After our makeovers, we went for lunch in town. The day was very special and we enjoyed it very much.



On The 15th of December 2003, the women's group in RehabCare Waterford visited the beauty school in the C.T.I. in Waterford City.

### Our visit to the Fire Station

By Sinead Cusack, Waterford Sheltered Workshop



The entire group agreed that their trip to the Fire Station was brilliant! On Friday 6th February 2004, a group from RehabCare in Waterford visited the fire Station in Catherine Street. The group consisted of Ann Carroll, Glenn Walsh, Mary Power, Joan Doyle, Fiona Morrissey, Maria Allen, Pat Cassin, and Joan Norris.

First, they had the opportunity to see all the different phone lines in the office and listen to the messages coming through about emergencies. Then they saw all the different fire engines in the garage. Next, they went into the yard and the firemen brought around the fire engine. The group split into two and they took turns having a spin in the fire engine. Everyone got a chance to use the firemen's hose. They also met the only female fire fighter in Waterford. Joan Doyle asked her if she liked her job, she replied yes, that she loved helping people.

The group also met Ann Carroll's brother Terence who is a fireman. Before the group left the firemen demonstrated how to slide down the pole safely, unfortunately the group did not get the opportunity to try it for themselves.

## Creativity in Carlow

Written by Mary Brennan (Musical Director)

People with special needs in Carlow and surrounding areas are buzzing with creativity at the moment. A new drama group has been set up under the keen and watchful eye of Mary Austin, drama teacher. She has decided to call the new Theatre Group 'The Patchwork Theatre:', the reason being, the participants supply the patches, be it in song, or action, or favorite character etc, and she puts the patches together to form a production. They have already put on a Nativity play before Christmas, getting a great response from local people and schools, even though it all happened within a very short time span and with very little preparation. This however, will not be the case for the next production, which they hope to put on stage at Easter. The group is meeting this week to decide on a theme, and rehearsals will start straight away.

The singing group from RehabCare Carlow, under the musical direction of Kathleen Byrne and Mary Brennan, will provide the music and songs suitable for the parts. On the subject of the singing group, they took part in a Carol singing competition in Superquinn shopping centre, Carlow, before Christmas, winning a bottle of wine each, and they will be taking on quite an adventure and a challenge, when they go in to record two original songs written by Mary Brennan, who does music and singing and computers with the clients in the centre. Martin Lacey from Graiguecullen Carlow, very kindly offered to record them free of charge, in his studio, after hearing them perform at their annual Christmas party in Ballykealy House Hotel. Martin's band provided music on the night, and he liked what he heard, when the group sang a few Christmas carols during the break. Mary decided it would be nice for them to have their own unique original songs for the CD, so she composed two. 'We are Able People' and 'There's a Place for Everyone, which she hopes will prove popular countrywide. The inspiration for the first song came from the idea of focusing on ability rather than disability, and the inspiration for the second song came from the advertisement on television in the aftermath of the Special Olympics, when the young man proudly says: "There's a place for everyone." The group has taken to the songs very easily, and practice will be ongoing for a few weeks to perfect the songs before actually going in to record. Watch this space...



L-R: Elizabeth McHugh, Irene Daly, Brigid Delaney, Pauline O' Brien, (Olivia Power) John Sheehan, John Langton, Mary Brennan, Kathleen Byrne, Karen Cullen (Ernie Beck) (Sinead) (Eoin Harte) People in brackets not part of RehabCare.

## The Laois Minor Football Team

By Fintan Kearns, Carlow Sheltered Workshop

On Friday 30th of January, I invited the members of The Laois All Ireland Minor Football winning team to our Carlow RehabCare Centre. We made flags and put up banners to welcome them. Four members of the team turned up, three from the Graiguecullen Club, Ian Fleming, Mark Timmons, John Tierney and Donal Brennan from Arles Killcruise club. With them they brought The All Ireland Minor Trophy (the Tommy Markem Cup). All the people in the centre were delighted to see what the trophy looked like. It was a great experience. There were group photos and individual photos taken while they held the cup. They stayed for half an hour, talking to people. It brought excitement and enjoyment to everyone in the Centre.



Fintan Kearns, James Havens, Noel Flemming (Laois GAA) Henry Daly (RehabCare Carlow) Fintan Kearns (RehabCare Carlow) with the Tommy Markem Cup.

### Celebrating the Start to 2004 in Sligo

*By Maureen Gorman and Eileen Niland,  
Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

We celebrated Mass in Teach le Meas RehabCare Sligo on the 2nd of February 2004. The Mass was to celebrate the start of a new year and to remember all the friends and families of the clients and staff in RehabCare.

Everyone in the centre helped in the organisation of the Mass by choosing readings, prayers, gifts to bring up and all the music and songs. It gave everyone a chance to be involved. We also helped to make St Bridget's crosses, which were blessed at the Mass, and everyone brought home. We found out when we were chatting and making the St Bridget's Crosses that many people believe that they help to protect a house from harm.

The Mass was a chance for us to invite members of the M.C.R. senior citizens group to our Mass. Some of us in the resource centre attend the senior citizen group every Monday for bingo and a chat. The ladies all attended the Mass and stayed after for some tea and biscuits. We were able to show them around the centre and let them see the different programmes we are involved in. The centre brought back memories to one lady in particular because when she was younger she worked in our building when it was a German factory, which made different types of clothes. Everyone in the centre was delighted with how the Mass turned out. The Mass was video-taped so we have all taken turns to bring the tape home to show our friends and family.

### Our Christmas Concert

*By Lily Lavin & Aine Guckian,  
Ballinamore Resource Centre*

On the 23rd December we started the day by having a concert which consisted of drama, singing, recitation and riddles. Everybody took some part in the concert. Sr Bridie did a very funny sketch which we all enjoyed, we sang the "Twelve days of Christmas," and the carol "Away in a Manger" which was signed and sung by a group who had been working with Claude Beirne (Speech Therapist). After the Concert we went to Swan Island where the party was being held, for the first time. We had a lovely meal, followed by music dancing and presents.



### Line Dancing (North) Western Style

*By Thady Rooney, Fidelma Coyle, Patricia Beglin, Ruth Cleary,  
Brian Murrin, Mary Kate Dolan, Adrian Cornwall, Pauline Brennan  
Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

We started practicing Line Dancing in our centre a few months before Christmas and it has soon become one of our favorite activities. The eleven of us (Mary Kate Dolan, Michael Leonard, Fidelma Coyle, Pauline Brennan, Brian Murrin, Thady Rooney, Mary Mc Dermott, Patricia Beglin, Ruth Cleary, Adrian Cornwall and Bernie Cullen) meet every Wednesday after lunch for an hour and have lots of fun strutting on the dance floor. Our teacher is Florence Gillen (from Sligo, not Texas!) and Maureen Fallon helps her out as well. Line dancing is a kind of dance that comes from America where it is very popular in some of the southern states. All you really need is some good Country Western tunes, a cowboy hat and an ear for the rhythm! The way we dance is we line up in rows, hands on our hips, moving heels and toes and a clap at the end. It's great to be part of a group that moves in a synchronised way and it makes it for a good exercise too! We are all looking forward to putting on a show during the celebration event for the end of The European Year for People with Disabilities in our Centre on March 4th; on that day we will shake our boots & rattle our spurs like, cowboys do in the Wild Wild West.



*Picture captures: Instructor Florence Gillen sets the rythm for the RehabCare Sligo Line Dancers in a practice session. Front: L-R Thomas Connolly, Bernadette Cullen, Mary Margaret McDermott, Fidelma Coyle, Middle Row: Adrian Cornwal, Brian Murrin, Thady Rooney, Pauline Brennan, Mary Kate Dolan. Back Row: Michael Leonard, Maureen Fallon (staff), Patricia Beglin.*

## Weight Watchers

*By Pauline Brennan, Ruth Cleary, Patricia Beglin.  
Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

At our IAP meeting four of us decided we wanted to loose weight, there was, Patricia, Pauline, Mary and Margaret, we all had different reasons for losing it but we all started to think about it after the women's health groups we went to. Anna, talked about healthy eating, the need for exercise and buying proper fitting clothes, this got us thinking and we asked Teresa to help us with losing weight. She suggested us looking up the local newspaper to see if there were groups we could join to help with losing weight. There was a weight watchers group running every Thursday morning in St. Michaels Family Life Centre in Sligo, from 9.30-11.00am. We got all the information and as there were four of us, we didn't mind going into a group of strangers. We started in October 2003. It cost us €15.00 to join and €7.00 every week after that. The first day Teresa came to the class with us and introduced us to Ann, we had to give our name and height, and Ann told us what our target weight would be. First thing every week you get weighed and Ann tells if you have lost, gained or stayed the same weight. It is very exciting when you loose and it is very disappointing when you gain, we all gained over Christmas. We did not mind really as Ann said that we could expect this.

After Christmas Fidelma, Ruth and Geraldine joined us in early February. After the weighing is over, we all listen to Ann giving us ideas for healthy meals, and how to stay away from "nibbling in the kitchen". Some people tell funny stories about how they find it so hard to stay away from chocolate and sweets. We are allowed one treat every week and some of us thought that Friday night was the best night to have it, others said Saturday and Sunday.

In between the meetings on Thursday we meet in the centre with Teresa and shared ideas, all the weight watcher girls sit together in the canteen at break times and talk about new foods we saw in Dunnes for weight watchers or how well we are doing. We started with four girls, this went up to six and now there are seven of us. Sometimes we walk up to the class, other times we get two taxis and share the cost, and sometimes if Teresa or Alberto have time they drive the bus. We prefer to walk as part of how to loose weight is getting exercise. We are all part of the Gym group also and now that we have some exercise equipment in the centre we can get in a few minutes at "down time", if the weather is not good enough to go walking. Some of us

have nearly reached our target while others have a bit more to go. We have lost altogether between five of us, in 4 months, 6 stone 13 lbs.

It has been hard but worth it and Ann Kerins the leader is lovely, she always has time for a small chat with everyone and she makes you feel so proud when you loose weight. As we leave every week she says, "Have a lovely week and I look forward to seeing LESS of you all next week."



*Picture captures: Weight Watchers Leader Ann Kerins with, from left to right, Margaret Stenson, Patricia Beglin, Ruth Cleary, Fidelma Coyle, Pauline Brennan, Geraldine Gilroy and Mary Duffy*

### Our New Home - Clonleigh Park

*By Margaret Norris, Lifford Sheltered Workshop*

For the past seven years I had been living in the RehabCare hostel in The Diamond in Lifford. About two years ago Frank Burke told us that we would be getting a brand new house. The hostel would be closing and we would be moving to a more modern house to lead more independent lives helping to do the housekeeping and cooking. This would be done with the support of support workers instead of one person who did all the cooking in the hostel. We have three support workers who do different shifts; they take turns to do the sleepovers. It was really exciting in December to move into a brand new house from a cold and draughty hostel to a warm and cosy home where we could have a nice coal fire if we wanted it. The house is nice, bright and modern and part of a housing development where we have lots of neighbours around. I hope to enjoy our new home for many years to come, with my five friends and be happy and contented.



### The Mural

*As told by Mary Leydon, Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

Last year from October to December we took part in the Art Classes every Thursday in the centre with our Art Tutor Vincent Kilcawley. Everyone that took part in the class got together and had a meeting to decide on ideas for an Art Project. We all decided to do a Mural on the wall in the resource Centre.

A Mural means painting a picture directly onto a wall instead of paper or canvas. We all got our ideas on what to paint in the Mural by doing a tour of the Centre with Vincent. Vincent got us to look at everything in the centre and all the activities and programmes that we took part in. He got us to look at the centre as if it was our first time coming here. This helped us to choose a picture of something about the centre that meant a lot to us. I decided to paint some yellow flowers because they remind me of taking part in the gardening programme last summer and how good the weather was. We all had good fun painting on the wall. We had to cover the carpet with cardboard to stop it getting splashed with paint because it could be messy at times. It gave us a chance to meet up and chat while painting. It was good to see the change in the plain wall to a huge painting. I am very proud of the Mural, and take great pride in showing it to visitors and friends that come to visit the Centre.

Perhaps we'll get a chance to paint the rest of the room.....Sometime soon!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### Pancake Tuesday

*By Josie Cullen, Ann O'Rourke and John O'Kelly,  
Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

Every week in the resource centre we have a cookery session where we decide what to cook and for one week we choose to try pancakes because it was Pancake Tuesday.

First we had to find a recipe for the pancakes, once found we then made a grocery list of the ingredients we needed to make the pancakes. We went shopping with a staff member and bought everything we needed.

On the Tuesday morning we prepared the batter for the pancakes, which was great fun as we managed to

get flour everywhere. Then in the afternoon we all gathered around and with great help from our new student Marie from Sligo I.T., we all got a chance to make our own pancakes.

We're afraid to say no one was brave enough to try and toss any for fear of any pancake going missing. So we all sat down and had pancakes and tea for afternoon break. We choose to use caster sugar and lemon juice to sprinkle on our pancakes to give them some flavour.

## Mary Teresa's Story

*By Mary Teresa Dolan, Sligo Sheltered Workshop*

My name is Mary Teresa Dolan and I attend RehabCare five days a week, Monday to Friday from 9.00am –12.30pm. After my lunch at 12.30pm I go out to work in Scoil Ursula, from 1.00pm – 4.00pm, this is the local National School. I work with Oliver Spellman; he is the caretaker. I help him with the cleaning of the classrooms. I do them on my own now and have my own classes that I am responsible for. Once when I broke my arm at home putting out the washing, I was off for 10 weeks and they kept my job for me. My manager is Sr. Sarah Mc Hugh, she is really very nice, she often talks to Teresa in RehabCare to make sure I do not miss out on any parties or activities in the centre. She always tells me to just ask if I have to go to any appointments or classes. I love my job. Last week she invited me as part of the staff to come to a special function in the school, it was a blessing of a grotto in the "Mary Garden". I met the Bishop and had tea and scones. Sister Sarah also invited Teresa, to come with me and I was glad to have the company, as I was a bit shy going for tea with all the teachers and the Bishop.

I did Voluntary work for 12 years with the pilgrims in St. Josephs rest and Care centre in Knock in Co. Mayo. Knock is the only Marian Shrine in Ireland. Our Lady appeared there in August 1879. Pilgrims come there every year and when I got my holidays in August I spent the 2 weeks working in the Rest and Care centre with all the other Handmaids. I enjoyed every minute and it gave me a great feeling, helping other people less well off than myself. I helped with the meals, bringing people in wheelchairs to the shrine and to the ceremonies. I have not done this for about Five years now and in Summer 2003, as part of My Legion of Mary work I spent one week working in

a hostel in Dublin for homeless girls. In Christmas 2003, I spent 2 weeks in the same hostel working, I loved the work but I would not go again at Christmas as I missed my friends and going to the ceremonies in my own church. I live in Sligo in my own apartment, which is in a block of apartments, so I am never lonely, I got this house through Rehab, and I love it. I enjoy my work but I would not like to work full time, as I would really miss all my friends, especially Mary Margaret in the centre. I love working in the workshop with Jim and Maureen and doing activities and programmes with Teresa and Alberto. I did cookery, gym, art, walking club, stress management and women's health group last year and I will be working on some of these things again this year.



*Picture captures:*

*Teresa O' Boyle of RehabCare Sligo, and Anna Kenny from the Centre of Nurse Education for Sligo-Leitrim, present Mary Teresa Dolan with a certificate for her active participation in the RehabCare Sligo Women's Health Group 2003.*

## Bowling Champions Castlebar



From left right front row: Rachael Gielty, Catriona Tonra, Danial Flannagan, and Patricia Cavenagh. Back Row: Martian Murray, Martin Costello, Petrina Flynn, Niamh Cunnane, Bridget Geraghty, Martin Loftus, Judy Lynskey, Paul Gibbons, Mary Moyles. Missing Anne Noone, Raymound Costello, Maureen Deacy.

## Bowling Competition

By John Mckiernan, Ballinamore Resource centre

Myself and five other Service Users go to Longford Mega Bowl every Tuesday. We are taking part in a competition with people from other services in Longford and Roscommon. I enjoy the bowling, especially when I get a "strike", it runs for 6 weeks, next Tuesday is the last week, and I hope we win! The competition is really good practice for my Special Olympics training. I won 2 medals already this year in bowling, silver and bronze in Castlebar.

## Sports

RehabCare Bantry

The unlimited Road Bowling Teams from RehabCare Bantry was shown on RTE 1 Nationwide on Monday March 15, 2004, showing the All Ireland Competition 2003. The screening will also show teams from Castletownbere, Skibbereen, Cork, Armagh, NTDI and Co Action. This is a great achievement for all involved!

## A Perfect Day

By Louise Tinne and Joe Mooney,  
Navan Sheltered Workshop

This year Northeast and Midlands sports day which took place in Navan. It was noted again for it's high level of participation in all the events and course the dancing afterwards. As usual the football took on an added interest as Navan tried once again to wrest the cup from Dundalk to no avail. For now it is now a case of "Maybe next year!" Following the delicious meal a large number of prizes were given out for all sorts of sports and artwork.

Everybody, participants and helpers, judges and referees, together helped to make this a perfect day!



Above: Victory for the Dundalk Team!



Niall (Dundalk)  
Gut's the boot in!



Hold Tight!  
Margaret Comity (Cavan)



Eugene Conroy (Tullamore)  
Shows us how he put it all together...



Longford Medal Winners

## ODE TO JOHN WAYNE

By Richard White, Waterford Sheltered Workshop

WHEN HE DIED OF CANCER, IT WAS VERY SAD.  
 IN THE WESTERNS, HE WAS NEVER BAD.  
 HE WAS A BIG MAN OVER SIX FEET TALL,  
 HE TALKED SLOWLY WITH A YANKEE BRAWL.  
 DEAN MARTIN AND ROBERT MITCHUM WERE HIS FRIENDS,  
 IN THE WESTERNS AND THE WAR FILMS  
 THEY STAYED WITH HIM UNTIL THE END.

## BOB DYLAN

By Lorraine Lanigan, Waterford Sheltered Workshop

A YEAR I REMEMBER IS 1993,  
 WHEN I DISCOVERED WHAT BOB DYLAN MEANS TO ME.  
 HE IS 62 AND IS A JEWISH MAN,  
 HIS MUSIC CHEERS ME UP LIKE NO ONE CAN.  
 HE SINGS 'BLOWING IN THE WIND' A LOVELY SONG,  
 I FEEL HAPPY WHEN I LISTEN TO HIM AND LIKE I BELONG.  
 HE SINGS PROTEST SONGS,  
 HE IS THE BEST TO ME,  
 THANK GOD THAT I FOUND HIM IN 1993.

## Brat Draíochta (The Magic Carpet).

Tá dathanna ioldaite fite fuaite sa bhrat – ag leiriú  
 brionglóib an fhiodóra. Tá aon déag mhíle, sé céad liubíní  
 sa bhrat. Brat ioldaite sea e déanta le snáithe, méaracán,  
 túirne agus olann.

Chomh bán le sneachta ag titim síos,  
 Chomh buí leis an ngrían ag éirí anois,  
 Chomh dearg le fuil,  
 Chomh gorm le spéir,  
 Chomh mín le síoda,  
 Chomh glas le fear.

Nil ré an fhidóra thart fos!

Slán agus bennacht le buaireamh an t-saoil.

Is mise le meas,

Sean O'Seocráinn, Teach lé meas, Sligeach.

The Magic Carpet.

"There's red, blue, yellow, white and green woven together  
 like a picture in a dream."

## My Trip To Mountshannon in Co. Clare

By Pat O'Regan

I went with the Nenagh Resource Centre clients to  
 Mountshannon Co. Clare

We had lots of fun and the weather was fine

We went for a walk on Tuesday when I arrived

I saw a castle and lots of white boats they were big and small and there  
 was a long walk along by the castle

It was a very big park with two black gates and lots of trees and hedges

There were ducks and swans in the water. We stayed in cottages with  
 sitting rooms upstairs

Every night we went to the pub and on Wednesday we went for a meal

It was very nice

## Small Wonders

By Frank Goodman, Dunboyne Resource Centre

It was a bright sunny morning. Sean could see the sunlight  
 shining through the curtains-it was a day for building. He was  
 building a garage. Some swallows had built a nest in the eaves of  
 the house near his work, and had hatched three chicks. They had  
 become friends over the past few weeks, Sean and the swallows.

But while he enjoyed the idea of being watched by the birds,  
 they also reminded him of a dreadful mistake he'd made as a  
 young boy. He was very proud of the catapult he'd made when  
 he was twelve years old, a 'Y' shaped piece of timber with a  
 rubber band on each leg tied to a piece of leather. He was  
 forever practicing his aim against old bottles and tins. It was a  
 dangerous sort of a weapon, capable of causing serious injury,  
 but the young Sean didn't realise the danger. He took a shot at a  
 wren and, although in his heart he did not expect to hit it, he  
 did. Shocked and sorry, he dug a hole beside the pond and  
 buried the little bird. He thought of how, a few minutes earlier, it  
 perched on a low branch, innocent and trusting, and because of  
 its friendliness and faith in humans, it died. Wiping away tears,  
 he threw the catapult away.

Now, years later, turning towards the building, he was  
 shocked to see that the nest had collapsed and the three chicks  
 were lying on the ground. One was dead and the others needed  
 help, quickly. He could hear the urgent cries of their mother as  
 she twisted and turned like a small jet plane in the sky.

Sean had to do something. Maybe God was giving him an  
 opportunity to make amends for killing the Wren years ago.  
 Whether God was involved or not he'd do all he could to save  
 the two that were alive. Problem was what could he do? He  
 looked at the scaffolding he was using. Milk crates, he'd  
 gathered up a lot of them, the milkman must have wondered  
 why he'd not left them back. The kids used them as huge sized  
 Lego; they built houses and walls, all kinds of things. Sean used  
 them as scaffolding, they were light and easy to handle. He built a  
 stand from crates about eight or ten feet high. He knew the cats  
 could not climb this vertical column. He moved fast, the chicks  
 might not survive. He went back to the house and got a  
 cardboard box. He needed something soft. The field behind was  
 full of bales, lucky him. The bed of hay, while rough in  
 comparison to the inside of the nest, was warm. He gently lifted  
 the two birds into the box and put it on top of the column of  
 crates. As soon as he had done this, the mother was calling and  
 swooping down to her young ones. Sean went back to building.  
 He kept an eye on what was going on. She came down and  
 landed on the box. All he could do now was hope she would  
 feed them. Come evening-time, he looked into the box, said  
 good night, and covered it. Sean felt confident they might make  
 it. They looked strong and had all their feathers. It was a pity one  
 died, he thought. He hoped the weather would stay good until  
 they got stronger, he found the whole thing interesting. The days  
 passed quickly, the weather held good. One day he looked inside  
 the box, he realised that another one had died. He felt sad and  
 wondered was all his effort in vain. The mother's crying and  
 jetting around let Sean know that the last bird was all right. After  
 he had his breakfast, he went out to have a look. The bird was  
 not in the box. Coming down the steps, he saw it looking at him  
 from the garden. Was he saying, "Why are you looking into my  
 nest?" or, was he saying "goodbye." Sean hoped he was strong  
 enough to be on his way. It was up to him and his mother now.  
 Sean never saw the bird again. He often wondered did he fly  
 across the sea to Africa, across the ocean wide, to Ireland they'll  
 return, their young to nest and hide, a land of peace and beauty,  
 all fears they'll put aside.

### Person Centred Planning

*By Kevin Barnes, Head Office*

For some people the Individual Action Planning meeting is the focal point in the person centred planning process. Sure it where the momentum and energy is created to turn Person Centred Planning into Person Centred Actions, but the real work has already taken place. Ask anybody who has run a marathon. The 26 and a bit mile's is the easy part, the hard work is the months of training in the wind and rain, leaving your friends in the pub because you have a 3 hour training run in the morning – trust me I know! The following is a descriptive passage of a meeting I facilitated last year. While it talks about the 2 hours we spent together that day, it does not refer to the time it took to get to that point. But ask anybody who crosses that finish line and they will give you the same answer as anyone with a well-supported Person Centred Plan – all the effort make a real difference.

I have facilitated a few person centred planning meetings previously but never in a public house. I arrived early because I wanted to get a table that would seat us all and be conducive to the meeting. Others began to arrive and finally John with his brother. John informed us that we were sitting in "the old men's part" and moved to another part of the pub.

Everyone had a drink and made themselves comfortable. John started by thanking everyone for coming and introduced everyone. In total there were seven people present John, two sisters, his brother, work supervisor, his volunteer and myself. This was the biggest PCP meeting I had facilitated and shows the support and regard with which John is held.

We started by saying that this was a meeting about John and his wishes for the future. I outlined the process we had undertaken, and what we had said in terms of strengths and areas for future growth. John stated his four goals and the background to each. We discussed each one in turn and the meeting became a thinking, questioning, clarifying, supporting and problem solving exercise. It was extremely interesting to hear and observe how these actions were reached. The meeting was a group of equals all together to support John. There were no 'professionals' at that meeting but people who brought their own skills and resource to help achieve John's vision.

Some of the key features of the meeting included the inter reliance on each other to achieve goals. For example John's brother had obtained a price for a new kitchen floor (one of John's goals). The work would take two days but John would have to move out whilst it was being done. Because John's supervisor was there he was able to contact the respite manager and get John two nights in the facility.

Because all parties were present this problem had an immediate solution. Also John's brother was able to offer a short-term solution to John's lack of work by couriering over 'filing' from his own organisation (another goal).

The group discussion helped to bounce ideas and gave people a chance to relate current issues with previous experience. One issue previously discussed was that John might forget to take his medication. Through conversation it became apparent that the real problem was that John takes his medication so "mechanically" he sometime forgets if he has taken it or not. The only way to check is to count back from the number of tablets in the bottle. This requires mathematic skills that John does not possess. Through my own experience I was able to explain how blister packs work.

It was also interesting that John was still highlighting areas of interest. He began to look to Mondays and Fridays as further opportunities for himself. He also spoke of musical interests that his family knew but that I had not asked. It shows the importance of flexibility in the process and ensuring adequate time to all the significant people in a person's life.

The meeting was extremely productive. John expressed his great satisfaction at the meeting. Others were also happy with the outcome, it gave everyone the desire to go the extra mile and because of the number of people present much could be identified while spreading the actions amongst the support circle.

It was agreed that everyone would get a copy of the action plan (this had been drafted on the back of a number of beer mats) and that everyone would report back to John in one month's time. The overall plan would be reviewed in six months by one of John's sisters (she would now become the key facilitator instead of me) but that I would be a part of this and a meeting with John and his sister two months prior to discuss the process.

John and his support circle were immense. There was energy and a drive to make changes happen. John had a vision for himself and had surrounded himself with the people to assist him live that vision. The group worked well, especially in the planning meeting, because of the equality within the group.

Working through the Person Centred Planning process with John I saw the need to actively listen and develop the rapport with the person, while having the support of others as equals. By spending time with the support circle we all learned more about John's strengths and abilities. By providing a forum for people to meet we learn about the whole person and we are able to pool our resources to assist John. Person Centred Planning is more than information gathering and action planning. It is cyclical process of discovery, vision making, doing, reflecting, and learning.

## Advocacy Day

*By Jimmy Dooner, NRAC Representative, Tullamore Sheltered Workshop*

The following article is about the Advocacy day, which was held on Thursday the 19th of February 2004 at Johnstown House Hotel, Co. Meath. Peter McKeivitt opened the advocacy day and it was good to hear what he had to say about advocacy. It was good to have the guest speakers to express their opinions. They are there to help us for the future. The advocacy day has made people more aware that they have the right to speak out for themselves. Everyone mixed together with people from other centers during the group work. The feedback from all the groups on the day was a success it helped people to understand about advocacy. It got people talking about advocacy and not to be afraid to ask questions about issues that are important to them. Some people got the chance to speak to a large group for the first time this will give them confidence and belief in themselves.

It is helpful to NRAC because people will speak out more and issues can be worked on at national level. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who organized the day and for everyone who took part in the day.



*Jimmy Dooner*

### NRAC Election

RehabCare in Waterford had its annual NRAC election in January 2004.

The new Committee is:

David Supple:	Chairperson
Richard White:	Vice-Chairperson
Stephen Bowers:	Secretary
Gordon Bowers:	Treasurer
Pat Cassin	
Mary Power	

All of the Committee has served at least one term before with NRAC, except Stephen Bowers but we sure big brother Gordon will give him a few pointers. Congratulations all the members and the best of luck to them in their new roles.

Following NRAC elections the new CASTLEBAR committee is as follows:

Chairman:	Martin English
Vice Chairman:	Fiona Charles
Secretary:	Patricia Cavenagh
Treasurer:	Martin Loftus

Representatives

Supported Employment:	Raymond Costello
Residential Services:	Paul Feehan
Sheltered Occupational Services:	Deirdre Garvin

### E.Y.P.D. 100 Ways to Make a Difference Campaign

*By Gordon Bowers member of the NRAC Committee, RehabCare, Waterford Sheltered Workshop*

On March 5th and 6th, I helped representatives for the EYPD 100 ways to make a difference campaign to get pledges in Waterford. We were based in City Square shopping centre in the middle of Waterford City.

We had display boards, which gave people information about the campaign. One of my jobs was to sit at a table and give information to the passers about the campaign. And when people approached me and asked what was it all about, I told them about the pledges and making one did not cost any money but it would mean a change in their behavior. For example, not parking in spaces allocated to people with disabilities even if they were in hurry and the rest of the car park looked full. I also gave away loads of badges to people.

During the day, about 65 people made pledges with me. I really enjoyed helping out, I am looking forward to doing it again on the 19th and 20th March when the campaign returns for its final visit.

### Dear Editor Column

Contact Editor by mail or email  
kathleen.morris@rehab.ie

Dear Editor,

I was writing to ask what I should do about a complaint I have with another service user in the centre who is always bothering me?

*John*

Dear John,

1. You should have a copy of the RehabCare complaints system that you should follow with all complaints. The first step is for you to talk with the person involved or the person who is bothering you. If you need support you can bring someone with you or ask a staff member to help you.

2. You could also bring your complaint to an NRAC meeting or House meeting to try and resolve the issue. Remember the confidential phone line 1 800 320 520 and email address charter@rehabcare.ie are also there for confidential support.

3. If you do not feel it has been resolved at this point you need to put your complaint in writing. There is a pink form you should fill out. You may need help to do this and staff will support you. Give this form to your manager and they will write to you to say they have received your complaint within two days. They will then set up a meeting within five days and invite you to it. At this meeting there will be you, your representative, the person involved, their representative, the manager. At this meeting everyone will discuss what needs to happen. Actions will be planned and written down. A second meeting will happen to ensure that everyone is happy. However, if the problem still exists and the problem is not resolved you can follow the next stage.

4. Using a yellow form write up your complaint and what you would like to see happen and send it to Angela Kerins, Chief Executive, Roslyn Park, Beach Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4. Angela will write to you confirming she has received your complaint within two days of receiving it and tell you what is going to happen. At this meeting there will be you, your representative, the person involved, their representative, the manager and Angela or her representative. An external person that you have all agreed will also attend. At this meeting all present can discuss the complaint. The panel will then discuss the issue in private and make a decision. The panel will then tell everyone the decision and if everyone is happy the complaint will be recorded as being resolved and closed. However if the problem still exists you will be given information about an external agency to take your complaint to. Hope this is of some help to you John.

The Editor

## Seminar's & Conferences

### Loss & Bereavement in people with intellectual disabilities

*Thursday, 10th and Friday, 11th June 2004*

*Dr. John McEvoy*

The literature on loss and bereavement is vast. However it is only within the last decade that we have started to focus on the needs of people with an intellectual disability following loss or bereavement. This workshop will explore the reactions to and experience of loss and bereavement within the intellectually disabled population and will discuss suggestions as to ways of supporting grieving individuals.

**Bookings and further information can be made by contacting:** Iris Murray at the Irish Hospice Foundation  
Tel: 01 - 679 3188 email: iris@hospice-foundation.ie

### Group Facilitation Skills (June, Dublin)

*St. Andrew's Resource Centre,  
114-116 Pearse Street, Dublin 1.*

#### 2-Day Workshop - 2nd and 9th June 2004 (9.30 - 4.30)

*Tutor: Norrie Gibney*

Learn, through theory and practice, the basic skills of working with groups and teaching classes. The aim of the workshop is to identify needs, enable participants to learn and develop facilitation skills, and to gain an understanding of groups in a safe and comfortable environment.

The course allows participants to actively engage in skills practice in a gentle, progressive and relaxed way. The development of confidence and integration with groups is a process of acquiring these skills and this becomes a most enjoyable and enriching experience for all participants.

*Norrie Gibney* is an experienced facilitator. She is also a trainer of facilitators and runs a number of other courses on various aspects of positive living. Most of her work is carried out within the KLEAR network. Norrie trained with Maynooth, Meitheal, The Easton health Board and CYC. Norrie advises in a private capacity and also does consultancy work. She is known for her relaxed, competent and professional approach and encourages empowerment at all levels of group work

For further information and registration please contact: norriegibney@hotmail.com  
Tel: 01 2822040

## Web times

The Tidal Model is rapidly becoming established internationally, given that the original pilot in England was completed less than four years ago. We are so impressed by the many colleagues - old and new - who have taken the values of the Model to heart, and established almost 100 projects in ten countries. We are learning so much from their passionate efforts. Discovering and reclaiming mental health through compassionate caring [www.tidal-model.co.uk](http://www.tidal-model.co.uk)

Access West Bealach Aniar.

A Guide to Services, Supports and a Rights Based Perspective for People with Disabilities in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon

Treoir Seirbhísí, Tacaíochtaí agus Léargas bunaithe ar Chearta dóibh siúd le míchumas i nGaillimh, i Maigh Eo, agus i Ros Comáin

[www.accesswest.ie/signposts/learningdisability.html](http://www.accesswest.ie/signposts/learningdisability.html)

A multidisciplinary team trained in traumatic brain injury. Consultants include: individuals with TBI, family members, learning specialists, nurses, paraprofessionals, lawyers, neurophysiologists, and physicians specializing in emergency medicine, and neurology. An excellent resource for ideas and support when working with people with traumatic brain injury. <http://www.headinjury.com/welcome.htm>

## Staff Updates

Congratulations and best of luck to the following in their new posts:

- Margaret Gillard as Director of Operations with responsibility for management of RehabCare services across the country.
- Shona Boyne as Director of Human Resources, which includes all areas of people management, training and the specific new responsibility of Health & Safety for RehabCare.
- Sarah-Jane Dillon as Director of Programmes & Research, continuing the development of programmes across the services and creating a new research function to contribute to the future management and development of services.
- Ann Fitzpatrick, programme supervisor Galway Sheltered Workshop.
- John Curran, programme supervisor, Costello Sheltered Workshop.
- Noreen Brophy, programme supervisor, RT programme Athlone/Tullamore.
- Siobhan Ahern, home based respite manager.
- All the other staff nationally.

## Programmes Workshops & Training:

- April 29-30, 2004 – Discovery Workshop - Carlow
- May 11-12, 2004 - Discovery Workshop - Cavan
- July 21-22, 2004 - Discovery Workshop - Cork
- July , 2004 - Programmes Forum - EAST/SOUTHEAST V.T.B.C.

## Gene 'increases risk of autism

Scientists say they have identified a gene which may increase the risk of developing autism. The gene is involved in the production of ATP - a molecule that provides the energy cells need to function. Researchers in the United States said the risk only applies to people with a certain genetic make-up. Writing in the American Journal of Psychiatry, they said as many as 10 different genes may be involved in the development of autism. Autism affects about one in every 1,000 people. It is a developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and interacts with other people. People with autism can have problems relating to other people and to the world at large. They can have problems understanding people's feelings or making friends. There is growing evidence that the condition may be inherited. Studies suggest parents with one child with autism are 100 times more likely to have another child with the condition compared to other families. However, scientists agree that the condition is complex and that more than one gene is involved. Dr Joseph Buxbaum and colleagues at Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York carried out genetic tests on 411 families, who have members with autism.

They found that they all had variations in the SLC25A12 gene, which is involved in the production of ATP. The researchers suggested this flaw could disrupt the production of the fuel cells need. They said even minor disruptions could affect the ability of cells to function properly. However, the researchers said the genetic variations they identified in this study appear to be quite common. By themselves, they do not cause autism. They said people with autism probably have this and other genetic mutations. "Having one of these variants appears to approximately double an individuals risk for the disorder, but it is an accumulation of genetic factors that cause the disease," Dr Buxbaum said. "Our current challenge is to identify more of these genes." He added: "Identifying all or most of the genes involved will lead to new diagnostic tools and new approaches to treatment." The National Autistic Society welcomed the study. "Scientists over the world are engaged on looking for the genetic roots of autism," a spokeswoman said. "Some are looking at other chromosomes as loci for possible genes. The NAS welcomes any research which furthers our understanding of the cause an possible treatment of autism." Source: BBC News, 31/3/2004



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