

# canal communities news

News Bulletin of the Canal Communities Partnership

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## President McAleese Launches New Intercultural Centre in Inchicore



President McAleese welcomes everyone gathered in the Jim Mitchell Memorial Park in Inchicore at the launch of the Canal Communities Intercultural Centre which is now open in Ring Terrace  
Photo: Denis Geoghegan

**The 26th of September was a day of Celebration on Ring Terrace in Inchicore when the new Canal Communities Intercultural Centre was formally launched by President Mary McAleese.**

The local community came out to welcome their new neighbours and Dublin City Council played their part by filling the Jim Mitchell Memorial Park with flowers and a festive air.

The event had a particular focus on children as we are looking with hope towards our future as an exciting, vibrant intercultural community which is enriched by diversity of many cultures and outlooks.

The Park was buzzing with activity even before the President arrived with playground games, face-painting and a basketball demonstration. A group of youngsters from the McDermott School of Irish Dancing, with members from Ireland, Poland, Japan and South Korea performed for the President and Beata Wold inspired us with her singing in Polish and English.

Children from local primary schools

joined the President in a ceremony to unveil the commemorative plaque. Des Bishop hosted the event and brought good humour and laughs to the occasion.

The Canal Communities Intercultural Centre at 2B Ring Terrace (off Tyrconnell Road, next to the Oblates) is a new, practical resource for Irish and



Local children lend a festive air to the event  
Photo: Enda O'Brien

new communities in Bluebell, Inchicore, Rialto, Kilmainham and Islandbridge. The Centre is a welcoming gathering place, an information and advice centre and a community development organisation that hosts events and activities which will give both local Irish-born residents in the area and people who are arriving here or have settled here from other countries an opportunity to get to know each other and work together.

The Centre exists to inspire and empower people, groups and organisations to work towards an integration which celebrates difference but recognises our common desire to be respected parts of a dynamic, responsible, creative and caring community.



"International" Irish Dancers perform  
Photo: Enda O'Brien

In the Centre you will also shortly find a new Citizens Information Service and a Refugee Information Service, so you can bring a variety of queries to this one-stop-shop.

All members of the community are welcome to our door for information, referral, to join in events or training. We have an exciting, intercultural group of volunteers who are at the heart of the success of the centre and if you have some time to spare we would be happy if you joined us!

To find out more about the Centre and its activities you can visit our webpage at [www.canalintercultural.com](http://www.canalintercultural.com) or contact our co-ordinator Jacob Nwazota at 01 4537239/0871324115 or by email at [info@canalintercultural.com](mailto:info@canalintercultural.com)

## Providing Essential Links Back to Work



Gwen Turner, Margaret Maher and Tony May helping participants to "expand their world"

### **T**he Lynks Special Community Employment Scheme for recovering drug users has been in operation in the Canal area in one shape or form since 1998.

While the FAS supported project has evolved over time, the basic objectives remain the same: to assist the participants in achieving both personal and employment goals.

At the moment Lynks operates from a well equipped, spacious, attractive base in the Oblates Basketball Centre. There are 32 people on the project who are overseen by 4 full time supervisory staff. The number of staff reflects the recommendation from the Drugs Task Force that the ratio of participants to staff on such projects should be 7 to 1.

Prior to 1998 the Canal Communities Local Drugs Task Force was concerned that people who had become stabilised on methadone were, for various reasons, finding it difficult to get into either education or employment. The Task Force then came up with the idea to set up a specific CE scheme for recovering drug users.

In November 1998 the Special FAS CE scheme was established under the sponsorship of Dolphin House CE project. It had neither a name nor a premises, just a

supervisor, Margaret Maher.

It wasn't until 2002 that Lynks was formally established as an independent CE scheme and it was only earlier this year that the scheme finally got its own permanent base in the Oblates Basketball Centre

At the outset the Special scheme differed in several ways from the standard CE schemes already operating in the Canal area. The participants were initially recruited by the Special scheme and then placed anonymously in one of the existing CE schemes (no more than 3 per scheme).

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### **"We have a really strong emphasis on training"**

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They were exempt from any cut backs that might occur in FAS schemes. And they also automatically qualified for a 3 year placement on CE. Regular positions on CE only qualified for one year with a possibility of extending for a further year.

This *special* status caused some tension in the beginning, especially when cutbacks occurred. However, these and other issues were ironed out through dialogue over time. Another problem in the early days was that the Lynks participants often ended up in the less skilled positions that were on offer.

According to Lynks supervisor Gwen

Turner the situation today is very different, "We have a really strong emphasis on training for employment as well learning things to use at home. Anyone that comes to us is automatically given computer training." But the training is as broad as the positions available. "We've got people who are placed as youth workers, outreach workers, secretaries, office workers, community workers, addiction workers – even a football coach.

"If one of our participants was to be employed as a cleaner then they have to be fully trained in hygiene and learn the importance of cleaning procedures", says Gwen.

The Lynks project is for people who really want to change their circumstances. According to Manager Margaret Maher, Lynks runs a strict regime. "Time keeping, attendance and respect are vital. If people are late, they're sent home. If people don't show up there's no point in keeping them on the project." The position of the project is that if people have problems they will be given every assistance possible to overcome those problems but if they are unwilling to work towards their goals they will be let go. Gwen adds, "This is not a project to come to if you want to do nothing."

While the project is strong on discipline it is equally supportive of the participants who want to improve their quality of life as well as enhancing their chances of getting back to work.

According to Margaret Maher quite a few participants need a more protective environment to begin with. So at any one time up to half of the participants may be based in the project engaged in activities to prepare them for placement. They will remain in the centre doing personal development, training and education. If they have other needs they will also be addressed before being placed in an outside CE scheme. The project provides acupuncture, massage and training for Indian head massage.

Some former participants are now using their skills to the benefit of the local community. One is currently providing computer training for older people in the Basketball Centre (she has a waiting list of 70 prospective trainees). Another former participant produces artwork for community projects such as the banner recently used by the Canal Communities Intercultural Centre for the official launch by President Mary McAleese.

One current participant who is training to be a beauty therapist provides pedicures and facials for the project as well as for local community development projects and local events.

As Margaret Maher puts it, "We want their quality of life to improve by helping them expand their world."

## Scholarship awards for Local Students

Two local people from the Partnership area have been successful in being awarded the Bank of Ireland Millennium Fund scholarship. This fund covers the 32 counties of Ireland. From hundreds of applicants 60 students were awarded scholarships.

Sabryna Fagan from Bluebell and Emer Kelly from Inchicore were among the 60 to get scholarships which will provide both financial and mentoring support to them during their time in college.

Sabryna was successful this year in gaining a place on the Diploma course in Youth and Community work in NUI Maynooth. This is a full time course and leads to qualification as a youth worker. Sabryna has already completed a FETAC level 5 course in the Liberties College and we wish her ever success in her future studies.

Emer has just begun her second year as a Social Science student in Trinity College. She successfully completed the Trinity College access course before gaining a place to study Social Science. We congratulate both students on being awarded scholarships.

## Bluebell Framework Plan Discussed

Bluebell Community Development Project and the ABC Group recently held a meeting in Bluebell's ABC centre to update local people on the contents of Dublin City Council's Bluebell Framework Plan.

Following discussions on the contents of plan, local people have requested Dublin City Council to supply a copy of the plan to each household in Bluebell.

It was agreed to hold a series of meetings to keep up to date with developments of the Council's plan.

## Out and About in Inchicore



Every week a group of men meet for breakfast just up the road from Kilmainham Jail. They meet to swap stories and keep in contact with each others lives. Everyone gets something different from the meeting. It's comfortable, relaxed and friendly. Some men like to tell stories some just want to listen. What ever suits each individual.

There are lively discussions on the topics in the news and all views and opinions are welcome. It's a good place to get information and make contacts for what's going on in the area.

One member of the group said it was "a great way to get out of the rut and meet others". Another said "It's just handy because it's local and is just across the road".

Canal Communities Partnership supports the group and funds the breakfast so there is no charge, though the men take care of organising that themselves.

A few weeks ago the group went on a day out to visit Wicklow Gaol. Other trips are planned for the future.

There is an open welcome for men of all ages on Mondays at 10.30am. So if you would like to come along please feel free to drop in on Monday mornings from 10.30am to 12.30pm in Sacred Heart House, 66 Inchicore Road. The premises are wheelchair accessible.

If you would like more information contact Denis at 473 2196.

## Eala Og at Work and Play



Eala Og Childcare Centre which opened last April in the Goldenbridge Integrated Complex is now fully operational catering

for a total of 28 children aged 2 to 5 years with a further 50 children on the waiting list.

The service provides quality,

family friendly, affordable childcare for parents returning to work, education or training who live in the Canal Communities Partnership area.

The Centre is open from 8.30 am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday and at the moment there are 18 children attending in the morning and 10 in the afternoon.

The curriculum allows each child to develop fully and helps them get ready to go on to "big" school. Each day covers a range of activities including: sand and water play, gloop, baking, puzzles, reading, outdoor play, singing and construction play. The seasons are covered, as well as special occasions, transport, the sea, the sky, jobs etc.

Each month a country is chosen as a project. The country chosen will be one of the 9 different nationalities that are currently in Eala Og. The parents help with the project as they, afterall, know most about their native country. For further information contact Leslie at 01 473 5610.



*Ijeoma Igbonwelundu has recently joined the Partnership staff in our Bluebell office as administration assistant to the Community Development Team*

## €20,000 in Millennium Fund Allotted

The Canal Communities Partnership was successfully awarded €20,000 this year from the Millennium Fund to distribute supports to help local people who are attending further and higher education.

The closing date for applications has now passed and those who applied will know the outcome of their application by early November.

# PARTNERSHIP

## Equality For Women Event

About 30 women from all over the Canal Communities Partnership area came to the first networking event of the Canal Communities Equality for Women project on Tuesday, 26 September in the Rialto Parish Centre.

The Equality for Women Measure which supports the Project is funded by the government and the EU to focus on improving opportunities for women in Ireland.

The networking event was open to all the women participating in the courses being run under this project. Tutors and course organizers also attended.

There was plenty of food for all – ranging from fresh grapes and plums to luxury chocolates. Kate Lambert from the Inchicore Outreach Service gave a very interesting and stimulating talk on equality for women.

She focused on the way boys and girls are treated differently from the moment they're born and how this translates into important differences in opportunities and treatment as they get older.

And to celebrate the project and women in general, Kate's talk was followed by a session of pampering. No fewer than 7 therapists were on hand to offer Reiki, Indian Head Massage, neck and shoulders massage and facials.

They were kept busy right up to lunch time. It was a great start to the Equality for Women project networking. We hope the next event on 24 October will be as enjoyable.

## Great Summer for Parent/Toddler Group

The Intercultural Parent/Carer & Toddler Group had a very enjoyable and eventful summer thanks to the volunteers and funding received from the Canal Communities Partnership and the Health Service Executive.

The three volunteers, Begona, Nastasha and Philomena organised outings to places of interest in Dublin and surrounds. The first trip was to the Zoo and 15 parents and children attended. A sponsored walk to Brickfield Park in aid of Barnardos was held in June and €300 was raised by the group. Parents and children enjoyed the playground and picnic.

There were two trips organised in July – one to Lullymore Heritage and Discovery Park in Kildare and the other to the aquarium in Bray which was

followed by a visit to an indoor play centre in the town.

In August the group visited a farm in Reynoldstown, North County Dublin.

They also went to St Anne's Park, Raheny for a picnic. Between 30 – 42 parents and children participated in the events.

The group meets every Wednesday and Friday in the VEC Sports Centre in Inchicore. For further details please contact Philomena at 087-6606084.



## Disability and Education

Last October the Partnership held a workshop to identify education related issues for disabled people living in CCP area.

Twenty people attended the workshop which included disabled people, services providers, people from agencies and parents.

Discussions covered a range of issues including transport, getting extra resources for disabled people attending all forms of education, information and support for parents of disabled

children, support for disabled children in preschool and getting disabilities assessments.

As a result of this meeting a report will be produced at the end of October. If you would like a copy or want further information please contact either Maureen at 01 458 4853 or Lucy at 01 458 4842.

## Regeneration Get Together

The Partnership is organising a "Get Together" for local people as well as management and workers of community projects from the Canal area to share information on redevelopment and regeneration.

The event will take place on Tuesday 31 October from 10am to 1.30pm in the Carmelite Community Centre, 56 Augier Street beside Whitefriar Street Church. Over the last few years the Canal area has been

undergoing major redevelopment and regeneration.

The area, which covers Islandbridge, Kilmainham, Rialto, Inchicore and Bluebell, has several distinct and separate communities and some of these have gained a lot of knowledge and experience on development and regeneration.

The idea of this event is to help other communities in the area benefit from the sharing of that knowledge and experience as well as assessing what needs to be done in the future.

To book a place contact Maureen or Ijeoma at 456 4220 by Wednesday 25 October.

## New LES Staff



Andre Vanchard has recently joined the staff of the LES as a Mediator and is based in Rialto.

## Childminding Courses

Last September the Childcare Information Bureau ran a two day course on Quality Awareness in the Sheldon Park Hotel, for people who are currently childminding or interested in taking up childminding.

Some of the issues covered in the programme included:-

- \* Needs of the Child
- \* Protection of the Child
- \* Play
- \* Networking

\* Good procedures and working relationships

The programme was delivered by the IPPA, the early Childhood Organisation.

Sixteen people attended and five of these were from the Rialto Community Network and one from Bluebell.

The people who took part in the course will also be invited to attend further training over the coming months which will include First Aid, Child Protection and Arts & Crafts.

All programmes are free of charge and for childminders living in the Dublin 8, 10 or 12 areas.



Suzanne Kelly and Liz Byrne of the Childcare Information Bureau