

# Donegal Centre for Independent Living

Quarterly News Bulletin Spring 2013

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**Donegal Northwest 10k:** Due to huge success last year we are inviting everyone to get involved and take part in the Northwest 10k. At the end of March over 300 invitations, sponsorship and registration cards were sent out to all our Leaders, Pas and Volunteers. Funds raised go towards providing a PA service to people with physical/ sensory disability in the Donegal area. The 10K can be walked, jogged, wheeled or run and everyone can take part. So please get your family, friends and neighbours involved to show their support for DCIL. Date : Sunday 5th of May 2013 Starting Point : Community Centre, Pearse Road, Letterkenny Starting Time : 2pm *Completed Registration forms & €10/€15 fee to office on or before Friday 26th April. Extra Sponsorship cards available from office 074 91 28945*

**Directions to Employment** – on February 28<sup>th</sup> as part of the Community Awareness Programme an online directory for people with disabilities to find employment was launched. Take your time to browse this valuable resource. It can be located at [www.directionstoemployment.com](http://www.directionstoemployment.com)

**Donegal Community Health Forum:** The launch of the Donegal Community Health Forums' Website took place in Letterkenny on March 5<sup>th</sup>. It provides useful information on the health scene in Donegal and can be located at [www.communityhealthforum.net](http://www.communityhealthforum.net).

**Quiet Spaces** – During events, festivals and at other times we all feel a need to escape from the madding crowd to an oasis of peace, quiet and refreshment. This idea came out of discussions of the Disability Action Working Group. DCIL is part of this group and participates in their monthly meetings in Derry. Cafes, restaurants, churches and businesses could all be encouraged to make such a space accessible on a permanent or semi-permanent basis. It is important that there would be access to toilet facilities, and that during events trained volunteers be on hand to offer assistance. Could a legacy be that all service providers would be willing to offer such quiet spaces?



**Introduction to Music Workshop** Robin Crowley, our experienced music tutor and professional musician, began a 6 weeks music course on March 14<sup>th</sup> in the very welcoming and accessible Cheshire Apartments. Callum, Dessie, Maureen, Linda and Sean were all willing and able participants. This workshop would not have been possible without the cooperation of the VEC Adult Education Services, a relationship we hope will endure! As you see on the photo, our star pupils Callum (left) and Linda (right) are enjoying the instructions of Robin Crowley (middle).

## **School Awareness Programme**

Primary school pupils from Lurgybrack, Drumkeen, Trentagh and Gaelscoil Adhamnain have recently been learning about disability from DCIL staff member Jennifer Doherty and DCIL personal assistant. As usual Jennifer was accompanied by her faithful guide dog, OJ. OJ is always a great hit with the children and since 2010 this final programme has proved very popular in Donegal schools. We heartily thank the Letterkenny Credit Union for sponsoring this phase of the programme.



**Donegal Links:** DCIL attended the “Making the Links Information Day” in Donegal Town on March 6<sup>th</sup> organized by the HSE and TiR Boghaine Teo. For DCIL it was a good opportunity to meet representatives of 25 other service providers in the Donegal area and share information and news. A special thanks to our local volunteers, Laura and Mary!



Leader Raymond Gillespie

#### **DCIL Leaders in the News**

**Frank Larkin, DCIL Chairperson:** The Irish Times on February 27 in its REHAB supplement carried an interview with our chairperson Frank Larkin on the difficulty of suitable transport in Donegal and the tightening up of grant requirements for car conversion to maintain employment. He asks “In a place like Donegal, how can you access work, look for work and do training unless you have the transport in the first place to get there?” He describes as “devastating” the cutbacks in personal assistant hours and how negatively it impacts on one’s quality of life.

**Leader Raymond Gillespie,** who carries out the daily internal postal delivery services at Letterkenny IT, was in February presented with a cheque for 1,100 Euros by Student Union President David Heraty. This fund raised during Rag Week will enhance Raymond’s independent living at the Cheshire Homes, Letterkenny. A great show of solidarity and sharing from staff and students at the IT.

**Leader John Doherty,** blind from birth, recently graduated in Administrative Management at LYIT and is now undertaking a course in Disability Studies. He was at Derry’s Playhouse in February taking part in a drama play “SenseAbility” highlighting the difficulties faced by people with sensory loss. The play was audio-described and interpreted with British and Irish Sign language



**Disability and the Government:** In 2011 the *Programme for Government* gave a commitment to complete the consultation required to establish ‘a realistic implementation plan for the National Disability Strategy’. This is still awaited. The commitment in the HSE national service plan for 2013 (HSE, 2013:16) to maintain personal assistance hours at 2012 levels is welcome. However there is concern about the further 1.2 per cent cut envisaged in respect of services for people with disabilities. Additionally, the overall cut in health spending as well as specific Budget 2013 measures (such as the cut to the carers respite grant, the increase in prescription charges and the increase in the threshold for the Drug Repayment scheme) will affect many people with disabilities and families that include sick children or adults.

(See ‘What would *real* recovery look like?’, a recent publication by Social Justice Ireland, p.216).

**Other upcoming events** will be the Bluestack 40k Challenge on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June and the Maracycle 2013 Company Challenge on Saturday June 29 & Sunday June 30<sup>th</sup>.