The Traveller

Parish Newsletter

Spring 2011





PARISH CHOIR IN DEANSRATH CAROLS



PARISH FOCUS ON... BLANCHARDSTOWN



30 YEAR CELEBRATIONS EXCHANGE HOUSE



ANNUAL EDUCATION ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

WELCOME

Our front cover shows the relic of the True Cross shrine in Holy Cross Abbey, County Tipperary, where representatives of our Parish recently attended a Deanery conference on Baptism and Confirmation. The image again reminds me of that old saying, *"It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness".*

In this edition we once again feature shining examples in the community, particularly in the areas of education, faith, and social care, and also in the area of recognition of gifts, talent, and achievement.

There are times however when the light of the candle needs to be protected and sheltered for the flame to survive. Education is a case in point. The wonderful progress and levels of achievement reported on page 26, ***The National Educational Achievement Awards 2010***, are in dark contrast with the shocking news reported on page 4, ***Visiting Teachers To Go***.

The close link between the investment made through the work of the Visiting and Resource Teachers over the past ten years is clearly demonstrated in the figures on page 4. Between the year 2000 and 2010, Traveller student post-primary enrolment has doubled for First Year, trebled for Second Year, quadrupled for Fourth Year, and increased six-fold for both Fifth and Sixth Year.

The trend then is positive and upward, but coming as it does from a still recent historically and consistently low baseline, there is clearly more to do. The good work done through State investment in Traveller education in recent years needs to be consolidated if very serious regression and its consequences are to be avoided. In this respect the wisdom of cutting 800 jobs in Traveller education must be seriously questioned. Mere common sense would suggest it is unwise. In addition, there is clearly an issue of fairness and



justice when of the 1200 job cuts in education, 800 of these are in Traveller education.

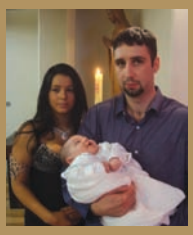
So, in keeping with concerns raised in the Irish Bishops Conference recent document *'From Crisis to Hope'*, in response to concerns and shock expressed by our parishioners, and in solidarity with national Traveller organisations' concerns highlighted in their recent joint statement, we feel called to state our own deep concerns on the extent, timing, rationale and consequences of the education cuts.

We will continue to raise our concerns, and to work, hope, and pray for a review of the education cuts as they are currently proposed. In the meantime, as we journey towards Holy Week and Easter may this period of Lent renew us in faith, and bring God's blessing to us all, to our country, and to our world.

On behalf of the Parish Team.

Fr. Derek.

Fr. Derek Farrell, P.P.



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VISITING TEACHERS TO GO

Among the cuts to education contained in the *Government's National Recovery Plan 2011-2014* is a significant loss to Travellers that demands a response. It means the termination of the Visiting Teachers Service for Travellers (VTST) by the end of June 2011.

cross care social care agency catholic archdiocese of dublin
innovation and action for social justice

Up until 2006, Crosscare hosted regular meetings to consider educational issues for Travellers. The Visiting Teachers were joined by representatives of the Joint Managerial Body (JMB) which represents the Boards of Management of over 400 Voluntary Secondary Schools in the Republic of Ireland, the Parish of the Travelling People and Archdiocese of Dublin Education Secretariat. The meetings were discontinued as educational exclusion could be addressed through the legislative process (Education Act (1998), section 29, "Appeals").

The Visiting Teacher Service for Travellers (VTST) was established in 1980 and the *Task Force Report* (1995) acknowledged that "few initiatives in the area of Traveller education have been as successful as the appointment of visiting teachers."

There are 41 Visiting Teacher posts. Of these, 11 work within the area of the Dublin Archdiocese. According to the *Traveller Education Strategy* (2006) the cost of the service was €2.2m annually for approximately 8000 Traveller pupils and their parents. The service is from pre-school to primary and post-primary, and also the transfer to further and higher education. These teachers reached out to Travellers and gained knowledge, experience and understanding of Travellers and their issues. They have promoted a culturally inclusive education for all. The service collects data on education which helps monitor equality in terms of access, participation, educational status, and outcomes for Traveller learners.

...of the 1200 job cuts in education, 800 of these cuts are in Traveller education.

Issues such as access have improved but it is not wise to take them for granted. In December 2010, when a school refused to enrol a young Traveller boy because he had not had a parent or sibling previously in the school, the Equality Tribunal ordered that the school review its Admissions Policy. The school is appealing the ruling and the young Traveller boy is still awaiting the offer of a place in school.

Other significant cuts include the redeployment of the Resource Teacher for Travellers and taking away the additional teaching hours for Travellers. These resources have helped some Traveller students to keep up with the curriculum and provided support during times of exams, especially during the years of Junior and Leaving Certificate.

In responding to those on the margins of our society, the first duty for Crosscare is to draw attention to these cuts in education and their obvious consequences for Travellers. Inequality in access and in participation can lead to poor outcomes which are more significant than poor exam results. At a meeting in January of the Crosscare National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project, Traveller members noted that poor self-esteem of Travellers in our schools can contribute to the higher suicide rates among young Travellers and poorer life expectancy as noted in the *All Ireland Traveller Health Status Survey* (2010). More needs to be done. Equality in our society and in our schools is to be valued and protected.

Growth in Traveller student post-primary enrolment (1999-2009)

	1999/ 2000	2001/ 2002	2003/ 2004	2005/ 2006	2007/ 2008	2009/ 2010
First Year	478	582	626	745	848	813
Second Year	266	397	527	638	736	870
Third Year	116	220	341	478	558	756
Fourth Year or Transition Tear	31	31	44	86	85	127
Fifth Year	51	86	113	172	236	313
Sixth Year	19	49	63	110	135	135

Source: Visiting Teacher for Travellers Service, Department of Education and Skills.



Parish of the Travelling People Wellbeing Day

Traveller Focus Week, which has been running from 2001 to 2010 is now known as Traveller Pride Week. The aim of the week is to celebrate the contribution Travellers make both within their own communities and to Irish society as a whole, through their culture, enterprise, sporting excellence, professional expertise across every area and unique history and tradition.

During Traveller Pride Week the Parish of the Travelling People held a Wellbeing day in our offices in Phibsborough. We publicised our event on the Traveller Pride Week website, people who were interested in attending pre booked by phoning the Parish office. About 20 women turned up on the day, we would have had a lot more but places were limited.

The morning started off with Mass to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception which is on the 8th of December, the same day we held our Wellbeing Day. The Mass was very well received by all who attended. Baby Bernard was the youngest person at the Mass and he received a special blessing from Fr. Derek.

Thomas McCann gave an input about the Traveller Counselling Service and Crosscare's Petra Daly gave an input on the Suicide Prevention work she does. Both inputs were very interesting and got the women asking a lot of questions.

We had two beauticians who provided a wide range of treatments on the day, and Petra who also is a qualified masseuse kindly volunteered to do massage treatments.

Noreen Ward came in to do Healthy Nutrition and we had some of her homemade soup and bread which went down very well. Noreen gave the women her secret recipe for her home made soup – not too much of a secret anymore!

The feedback from the women was very positive and overall it was a great event.

Geraldine McDonnell







RECENT CHRISTENINGS



Amanda & Anthony McDonagh &
baby Amanda Precious, Merchants Quay.

Welcome, precious little child,
So fresh from God above,
Baptised today in Jesus' name,
Held in His arms of love.
May angels guide your tiny feet
And bring you smiles to wear,
And may our Heavenly father
Always keep you in His care.



Pat & Mary Corcoran &
baby Michael Patrick Francis, Ballymun.



Anne & Terry McDonagh &
baby Terence Stephen, Deansrath.



Paul & Tina Mc Donagh &
baby Bridget Ami, Ballymun.



Ann & Martin Lawrence & baby Peter.



Catriona & Michael McDonagh & baby Davy.



Noressa Philomena Stokes, Clondalkin.



Baby Linda Corcoran.



Mary & Peter Stokes &
baby Simon Gary, Ballymun.



Kathleen & Simon O' Donnell &
baby Michael, Balgaddy.

If you would like to see your Christening in our Newsletter, please send a photograph and details to the Parish Office, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7, or preferably by email to info@ptrav.ie

THE SECOND ANNUAL TRAVELLER PRIDE

THE BUTTON FACTORY, DUBLIN, THURSDAY 2ND DECEMBER 2010

The second Traveller Pride Awards, which mark the achievements of Irish Travellers across the island of Ireland in a variety of areas, were held at a ceremony in Dublin's Button Factory on December 2nd 2010. The awards were again hosted by RTÉ presenter Anne Cassin and awards were presented in ten categories in total, including the Overall Traveller Pride 2010 Award.

The aim of the Awards is to celebrate Traveller achievements across the island of Ireland and the contributions that Travellers make to their own community and to Irish society. The Awards also highlight some of the obstacles that exist for Travellers in Irish society. The ultimate aim is to instil pride, to increase expectations, to celebrate Travellers' undoubted positive contribution to Irish life, and also to celebrate the pride and determination one must have in order to succeed as a Traveller.

This year saw Awards being presented for achievement in Education, Community Enterprise and Employment, Youth, Sport, Music, and Culture, with an Overall Winner selected from these categories. This year the President of Ireland, Mary McAleese closed the ceremony and presented the Lifetime Achievement Award and Overall Traveller Pride Award 2010.

For more information, see the ITM website at: http://www.itmtrav.ie/keyissues/myview/125



Photo: Derek Speirs

Back row from Left to Right: John Nevin, representing the Laois Traveller Men's Group (Enterprise Award), Martin Collins (Music Award), Mark Donahue (on behalf of Nan Joyce, Lifetime Achievement Award), Denise Mc Donnell (Youth Award), Katie O'Donoghue (Culture Award), Ann O'Donnell (Education Award).

Front Row from Left to Right: John Mongan (Sports Award), the President Mary McAleese, Rosaleen Mc Donagh (Community Award and Overall Winner of the Traveller Pride Awards 2010).

AWARDS



Photo: Derek Speirs

President Mary McAleese presents Rosaleen McDonagh with the 2010 Overall Traveller Pride Award.

TRAVELLER PRIDE WEEK

National and local events around the country innovatively focussed on the Traveller Pride theme. The objectives of Traveller Pride Week are:

- To develop Traveller pride in their Irish identity and cultural background.
- To develop an awareness and promote an understanding of the position of Travellers in Irish society.
- To highlight Travellers' contribution to Irish society.
- To promote Traveller participation in public life and policy development.

Traveller Pride Week is organised by The Irish Traveller Movement, Pavee Point Travellers Centre, The National Traveller Women's Forum, Minceirs Whiden, National Traveller MABS, National Association of Traveller Centres, Exchange House, and The Parish of the Travelling People.

The week is funded by the Department of Justice.

For more details see www.travellerprideweek.ie.

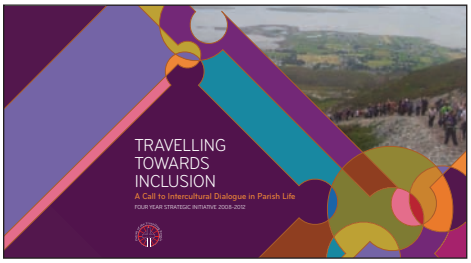


Anne Cassin



Photo: Derek Speirs

John Mongan, Olympic Boxing Club, Galway, is presented the 2010 Traveller Pride Sports Award by former Republic of Ireland Team Manager, Brian Kerr.



DEANSRATH
Spring 2011 UPDATE
Report on Pilot Parish Initiative – Travelling Towards Inclusion



Parish Pastoral Worker Georgina Jameson writes...

December 14th couldn't have come soon enough as the Parish of The Travelling People, St. Ronan's National School and Deansrath Community College joined in prayer and song to celebrate the coming of our Lord. This Christmas Carol service was definitely a great way to get into the "Christmas spirit" and was exactly what was needed to lift us from the doom and gloom of the bitter cold and money worries that December otherwise brought.

As the crowds gathered, the excitement grew and by the time the service was beginning the excitement was overflowing. The minutes leading up to the service gave a great sense of how the night was going to go; the church was already filled to the brim, the singers were eagerly warming up their voices, storytellers and readers were glancing once more over their lines and proud parents waving intently at their talented children from the pews. The laughter and good feeling was bursting from every person. I think those who attended would agree the atmosphere was incredible.

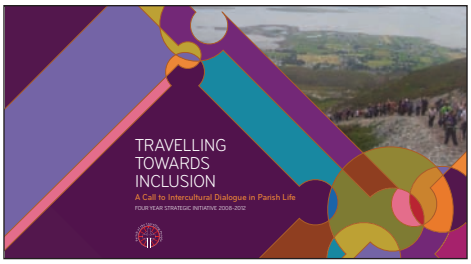


> *"I brought 5 children with me on the night, and they really enjoyed it"*
> **- Christine McDonagh.**

The evening began with a prayerful chant, *Wait for the Lord,* which called the congregation into the spirit of the evening – a spirit of prayer. The stories, scripture and familiar Christmas carols that followed reminded us of the true meaning of Christmas-the birth of our Saviour, and allowed for a time of reflection as to what is really important in our lives-family and friends. Every word uttered and note sung echoed this. The familiar music moved people to sing out enthusiastically, creating a magnificent sound that everyone contributed to.

> *"A very enjoyable night, and from where I was sitting everyone was listening and singing along to all the songs"*
> **- Rebecca McDonagh.**

The evening was a huge success, all the hard work and practice put in by the





Traveller Parish Choir, Deansrath Community College Gospel Choir, St. Ronan's National School Choir, their leaders, and all the readers and storytellers from both the schools and the Traveller community, was so very evident on the night.

Siobhan Ward and Ellie Wright, two students from Deansrath Community College, were heavily involved in the preparation process. They ensured it was advertised properly, worked with readers during and after school and helped in the overall shaping of the night. Much of the night's success is down to the dedication and hard work put in by these girls. Indeed, it is true that events such as this could not be pulled off without the help and commitment of all people involved. The staff of both the schools were so helpful in the lead up to, and on the night of the carol service. They made a marvellous contribution. And finally, to mention also St. Ronan's Fr. Daithi Kenneally, who offered a warm welcome and great encouragement which contributed greatly to the success of the evening.



Dear Reader,
We always like to get your feedback on ***The Traveller Parish Newsletter***, so..

What do you think?

For example..

- Is it making a difference.. to you?.. to others?.. in general?
- Is there anything you'd like to see covered more?.. better?
- Is it interesting?.. informative?.. both or neither?
- Is there anything you think should change?.. or that you don't like?
- Is there anything in particular you like about it?

We thank all those who have already given us their feedback, your opinions and ideas are very much appreciated and very welcome. You can contact us at:

Tel: 01 838 8874 Email: info@ptrav.ie
Post: Parish of the Travelling People, St. Laurence House, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7.





PRIORSWOOD... BALCURRIS... FINGLAS... BLANCHARDSTOWN... PORTERSTOWN... SPRINGFIELD... BROOKFIELD... JOBSTOWN... DEANSRATH... BALGADDY... ESKER... CHERRY ORCHARD... BALLYFERMOT... KNOCKLYON... KILLINARDEN... BALALLY... BLACKROCK... SHANKHILL... GLASTHULE... WICKLOW... ATHY... MAYNOOTH... BRAY... BALLYMUN... CHERRY ORCHARD... BALLYFERMOT... KNOCKLYON... KILLINARDEN... BALALLY... BLACKROCK... SHANKHILL... PRIORSWOOD... BALCURRIS... FINGLAS... BLANCHARDSTOWN... PORTERSTOWN... SPRINGFIELD... BROOKFIELD... JOBSTOWN... DEANSRATH... BALGADDY... ESKER... CHERRY ORCHARD... BALLYFERMOT... KNOCKLYON... KILLINARDEN... BALALLY... BLACKROCK... SHANKHILL... GLASTHULE... WICKLOW... ATHY... MAYNOOTH... BRAY... BALLYMUN... CHERRY ORCHARD... BALLYFERMOT... KNOCKLYON...

Parish of the Travelling People

Parish Focus on...

Blanchardstown





Launch of "*A Helping Hand*" Leaflet

On the 19th October the Blanchardstown Travellers Primary Health Care project launched "A Helping Hand" leaflet as part of Fingal Social Inclusion week.

The Blanchardstown Primary Health Care Group in partnership with Connolly Hospital developed this leaflet which provides some brief and practical information for those working with members of the Traveller community. The leaflet was developed in response to an invitation to the Primary Health Care project from the Hospice Friendly Hospital initiative in Blanchardstown Connolly Hospital to give information to hospital staff on Traveller culture and health beliefs. This leaflet is informative and provides practical information and supports for those working with Travellers. The leaflet was launched by Mairead Lyons, Director of Nursing, Connolly Hospital who welcomed the leaflet and the partnership of working together. Also speaking at the event was Rosemary Orr, Health Promotion Co-ordinator, who worked closely with the Primary Health Care Project.

At the event a briefing on the All Ireland Traveller Health Study also took place. Susie McCarthy, Primary Health Care Co-ordinator, Balbriggan gave background information to the preparation and experience of the peer researchers locally who carried out the work followed by a briefing of the main findings of the recent study. This briefing was given by Bríd Greenan, Primary Health Care Blanchardstown.



Maria, Louise, Martina, Kathleen, Margaret, Mary, Ann Marie, Sheila & Lilian.

Travellers on the Move



"Travellers on the Move" is a collaborative series of three programmes produced by Phoenix FM and participants from the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.

The programmes follow participants and their progress on the three-year accredited Primary Health Care training until their graduation in the final programme. The group selected subjects they wanted to cover, such as local and national issues affecting Travellers, for example Traveller culture, Traveller health and education.

This series of programmes called "*Travellers on the Move*" won a CRAOL Achievement Award and this award was presented to Christine McDonagh Primary Health Care Programme, Blanchardstown by Chris Hitchcock Phoenix 92.5 FM – during Traveller Pride Week December 2010.

This series of programmes were supported by the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland under the Sound and Vision Scheme

The Parish of the Travelling People covers the whole of the Dublin Diocese from Balbriggin to Arklow & out to Athy. In this new feature page we hope to foucus on different parts of the Traveller community around the Dublin Diocese in each edition. If you would like to have you area featured, contact the Parish Office on Tel: (01) 838 8874.

Congratulations to all those Recently Married

THE MARRIAGE PRAYER

Lord, help us to remember when we first met and the strong love that grew between us.

To work that love into practical things so nothing can divide us.

We ask for words both kind and loving, and for hearts always ready to ask forgiveness as well as to forgive.

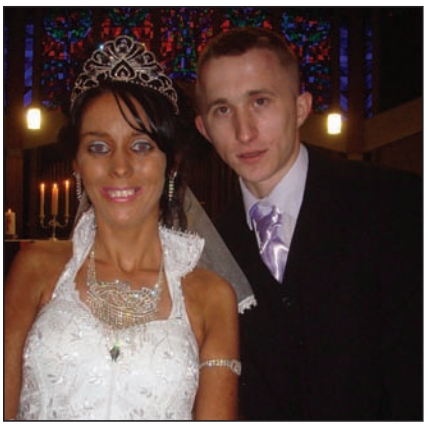
Dear Lord, we put our marriage into your hands.

Amen.

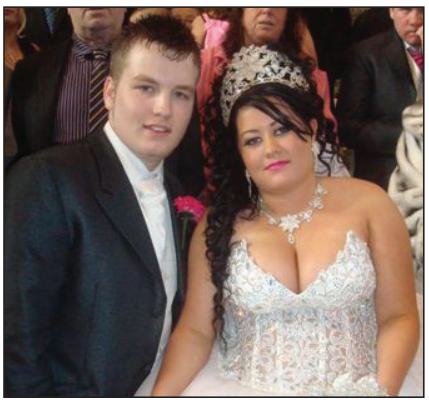
Date	Names	Address
7th September	Ann-Marie Donovan & Ciaran McDonagh	Dublin
13th September	Kathleen McDonagh & Pat Stokes	Clondalkin
22nd September	Dianne McDonagh and Joe Donoghue	Tallaght
28th September	Sarah McDonagh and Joseph Reilly	Finglas
30th September	Sharon McDonagh & Tom McDonnell	Navan
28th October	Winnie O'Donnell and Tom O'Donnell	Lucan
11th November	Rebbeca Maughan and Paul Maughan	Ballymun
27th November	Caitriona Donovan & Patrick Wall	Dublin
11th December	Lily-Ann Power and Michael Foley	Inchicore
22nd December	Rose Lawrence and Eddie Reilly	Ballymun
14th February	Margaritta Donoghue and Michael Stokes	Mount Argus
14th February	Shirley McDonagh & Jason McDonagh	Finglas
16th February	Martina McDonagh & Bernard Connors	Coolock
1st March	Ann-Marie Reilly and Willie McDonagh	Fortunestown



Pat Stokes & Kathleen McDonagh



Rose Lawrence & Eddie Reilly



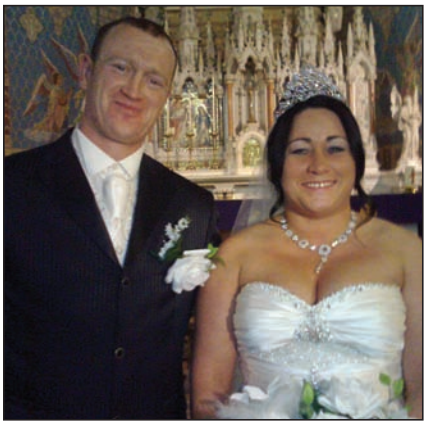
Michael Stokes & Margaritta Donoghue



Joseph Reilly & Sarah McDonagh



Paul Maughan & Rebecca Maughan



Michael Foley & Lily-Ann Power

For advice on and details of pre-Marriage preparation and requirements, please contact the Parish Office at 01-838 8874.
Also if you would like to see your wedding featured in our Newsletter please forward photo and details to Geraldine/Pauline at Parish of the Travelling People, 6 New Cabra Road, Phibsborough, Dublin 7, or preferably by email to info@ptrav.ie



30 Year Celebrations Exchange House

Heydi Foster, Director, writes...

Wednesday 20th October was the start of our three day 30th Anniversary celebrations. We had a number of VIPs including our main speaker Ms. Mary Harney T.D., Minister for Health and Children who took the time from her busy schedule to celebrate with us. It sent an important message to the Traveller community that as member of Government she was there to celebrate with us.

We were very honoured to have Most Reverend Diarmuid Martin, D.D. Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland say a special blessing and a few words to commemorate the occasion.

We were delighted to have as guests of honour from the Christian Brothers at our events – Brother Kevin Mullan for our Third National Education Award Ceremony and Brother Martin O'Flaherty at the 30 year celebration. We are very grateful to the Christian Brothers; for the last five years they have provided us with a home to provide our services.

The 30 year celebration would have never happened if a group of people motivated by social justice had not founded Exchange House 30 years ago. During our celebration, staff, clients and supporters of Exchange House paid tribute to those original founders and the many who have followed their lead over the intervening years. A special thanks was given to the many people in the audience who have served Exchange House as board members, staff or volunteers.

In reflecting on the last 30 years it is clear that Exchange House and the wider Traveller community have made great strides. Young people who we have worked with have grown into parents and community leaders. Adults who participated in literacy programmes have gone on to further education and employment. Individuals and their families suffering from addiction have conquered drug and alcohol problems. Families in crisis have been helped to resolve their problems. Their triumphs are their fundamentals of our success and pride.

At a wider level Travellers are better educated, in more paid employment and living longer than when we started 30 years ago. The resilience and unique contribution of Travellers is more widely appreciated in the settled community.

However, there are many, many problems which remain. According to the All Ireland Traveller Health Study 2010 Travellers' average life span is 15



years less for men and 11 years less for women than settled people. Infant mortality rates are 3.7 times higher for Travellers than the national rate and suicide rates are 6 times higher than the national average. There is still deep rooted discrimination against Travellers. Meanwhile the economic crisis is placing huge stress on Traveller families. Referrals to Exchange House have increased by 35% in the last two years. As well as celebrating what has been achieved we must re-double our efforts. Otherwise our commitment to social justice and equality rings hollow for those who are the most excluded members of our society.

We have no choice but to sustain our commitment to addressing these issues. I would like to thank the staff of Exchange House National Travellers Service, both past and present, for the level of their ongoing commitment. Our job is not glamorous, it can sometimes be challenging and thankless, but it is because of our staff and their relentless commitment, passion and dedication to the Traveller community that Exchange House is the place of excellence it is.





We look forward to our next 30 years and the changes it will undoubtedly bring. Our greatest hope is that we will see Travellers included fully and equally as respected and valued citizens within this republic.

Heydi Foster,
Director

Irish Traveller Movement Yellow Flag in Finglas

The Yellow Flag Programme is run through the Irish Traveller Movement. The programme focusses on culture – creating awareness of what culture means and celebrating and respecting the different cultures in schools and in their communities. The aim of the programme is to bring about a better understanding of each other and to celebrate diversity and interculturalism. The programme is still in its early days but St. Joseph's was lucky enough to be selected to take part.

Teachers, parents, pupils and members of the local community all work together on the St. Joseph's Diversity Committee. The committee has been gathering information on the different countries, languages and cultures we have in St. Joseph's and looking at opinions and attitudes in the school towards each other. Irish culture itself, the Traveller Community, international families and pupils are some of the cultures we hope to focus on.

The hard work starts once the committee begin to work on an Action Plan. We look at ways we can improve awareness of our many cultures and celebrate diversity in our school. Some of the events are...

- The Programme was entered into the Fáilte Finglas awards, through Finglas for Diversity.
- Each week at our assembly we celebrate a different language by having pupils who speak other languages teach us how to say a few words.
- During March we will celebrate the Irish culture with activities and events.

St. Joseph's will be working toward getting their Yellow Flag between now and Summer. Any help, ideas, advice, support we can get is greatly needed.



Yellow Flag raising in Ballyfermot 2010


Pecker Dunne

The Pecker Dunne Tribute Concert – Traveller Pride Week 2010

Photos by: Derek Speirs

Rosaleen McDonagh writes...





The highlight of Traveller Pride Week 2010 was the Pecker Dunne Tribute Concert. It was held in The Button Factory in Dublin's Temple Bar area. The gig was organized by Pavee Point Traveller's Centre. Its hosts for the evening were Thomas McCann, Martin Collins, Winnie McDonnell and Michael Collins – the actor – who was Master of Ceremonies.

Despite the snow, people travelled as far as Wexford to be part of this occasion. Pecker Dunne is one of our own. He's a singer songwriter and has been recognised as one of Ireland's greatest traditional singers over the last thirty years. It's only proper and right that we honour our own and recognise the contribution this artist has made to the country. Regardless of age, or geography, there is not a Pavee that doesn't know one of Pecker's songs. He is best known for Sullivans John, which he wrote and which was recorded by Sweeney's Men and The Dubliners. He also wrote The Miximatosis Rabbit and a humorous version of The Black Velvet Band called The Old



Morris Van. In the 1980s and 90s, he could be heard singing and playing the banjo in Killarney. Nowadays he lives in Killimer in south-west Clare, with his wife Madeleine and four children, all of whom play musical instruments. He has played for huge audiences in New York, working with The Dubliners and with Richard Harris on the film Trojan Eddie.

Aged 74, he was treated in Limerick Regional Hospital in November, 2007, for a throat illness. His spirit was as high as ever. Due to the illness, unfortunately, he couldn't be at the tribute concert but his son Stephen played. Old songs like A Tinker's Lullaby created a nostalgic atmosphere of the olden days of being on the road. On a personal level and I know very little about music but Pecker, in my opinion, has penned some brilliant anti-racist songs which captured the heart and mind of Travellers' circumstances in Ireland.



The tributes for Pecker Dunne rolled in. People like Finbarr Furey said Pecker Dunne was one of the "big musical influences on his life and career." Liam Ó Maonlaí, in his tribute to Pecker, talked about him being "one of a kind" and that his "distinctive voice could never be identified as anything but pure." The hall was full and Pecker's son churned out song after song.





Actor Michael Collins invited people from the floor to sing. The Limerick Piper, Mickey Dunne and his family performed four songs which prepared the crowd into wanting more. And more they got when Mickey's daughter sang a beautiful song about bigotry in Northern Ireland.



With the celebrity singers out of the way, it was our turn. People from the floor, the ordinary everyday Pavee. Beoirs from Wexford to Tallaght sang incredible songs that they had written themselves. Songs about pride and songs about pain. At the bar or during casual conversations people remarked on the talent that was in our community. Poetry turned into music. Music turned into song. Pecker's spirit was definitely in the room that night. The tribute was our way of honouring and respecting the man who was never ashamed to say where he was from, what he was doing and where he wanted to go. A true Pavee.



The T-Factor Talent Show is the brainchild of Melissa Connors, a member of the Traveller community, who works as a Clerical Officer in South Dublin County Council. Growing up in the Traveller community with her father, mother, sisters, brothers, grandparents, and many other relatives and friends, Melissa was aware of the singing talent in the community that could rival any of Simon Cowell's X-Factor contestants! From this knowledge the seed of the T-Factor grew.



Melissa, having read and seen many negative reports on Travellers in the media, and knowing such reports were not a true representation of Travellers or their culture, wanted to show a positive side of Traveller culture.

However, while the main focus of the T-Factor show is the positive side to Traveller culture, Melissa also wanted the whole of the Irish community to benefit from the show. So, all profits from the show, including the raffle, were donated to the National Children's Hospital, Tallaght.

Seeing the potential, and using her Traveller charm, she secured the support of the County Manger Joe Horan for the project and with his support behind her she approached her colleagues in South Dublin County Council to assist her with the project.

Speaking after the event, Melissa said, "*We got over 100 application forms this year. Travellers of all ages applied, from places like Dundalk, Kilkenny, Wexford, Carlow, and Dublin. We had to short list the application forms to fifteen, and then we had to hold heats which were held in the Rua Red, Tallaght.*"





"This was the 2nd year of the T-Factor. This is because last year it was so successful, with so many people taking part, and we got great feed back", Melissa continued.

The show was a great success with over 285 people showing up to watch the T-Factor. There was again great feedback after the show and everyone really enjoyed it. The South Dublin County Mayor Eamon Maloney and County Manager Joe Horan were there on the night and they were very impressed with the talent on display from the Traveller community.

There was also a lot of media interest in the T-Factor. RTÉ were there on the night, as well as The Tallaght Echo, Evening Herald, and The Star On Sunday. The T-Factor is going to be on RTÉ television on May 5th.

In conclusion, Melissa also said, *"There was great support from the settled community with this project, and also a big thank you to all who donated raffle prizes and who got tickets to go see the show."* Congratulations and great credit must go to Melissa and her team in so successfully organising the show.

The Overall Winner on the night was Anne Berry from New Ross. In 2nd place was her son Jim Berry from New Ross. In 3rd place on the night was Margaret Casey from Tallaght.

The T-Factor will take place again in 2011 – watch this space for venue and dates.





Viva House

Giving Support to Victims of Domestic Violence



Sonas Housing provides supported housing to women and children who are victims of domestic violence. It opened its first refuge, Viva House, in June 2010 in the Blanchardstown area.

In its first six months Viva House accommodated 63 women and 112 children on 71 different occasions in its initial six-month period. Referrals to the service are predominantly self-referrals but also entail referrals from other refuge and domestic violence services, as well as legal services, homeless organisations and other services in the community.

Domestic abuse is still a major problem in Irish society affecting 1 in 5 women. Domestic abuse can take many forms – physical abuse is the easiest form of abuse to understand but domestic violence also covers emotional, sexual and financial abuse. It is often based on having power over and controlling a woman. Domestic violence is not a one off event, but rather a pattern which often escalates over time.

And as shocking as these figures are, it is widely accepted that they probably under-represent the true extent of the problem. Women often don't report violence. According to the HSE and other research on average a woman experiences 35 incidents of domestic abuse before she seeks help.

Since opening, 30% of Viva House admissions were Traveller women.

Domestic violence is a major problem within certain sections of the Traveller Community and it's invaluable that Traveller women are able to access supports such as a refuge or outreach service. However the problem is being able to access the service. Two out of every 5 enquiries into Viva House were not able to be accommodated because the refuge was already full.



"The opening of the refuge is good news as it represents an increase in refuge provision in Dublin," says Sharon Cosgrove, CEO with Sonas Housing. "However Ireland still lags behind European refuge provision standards."

Based on the UK and Council of Europe standard of one family unit for a population of 10,000, in the Dublin area alone a minimum of 122 refuge family spaces should be in place. However currently, including Viva House, there are only 34 family places.

"The fact that women make the brave step to leave their unsafe domestic situation but are unable to go somewhere safe because of lack of space is frightening and has potential dangerous implications for the woman," said Cosgrove.

Following Budget 2011 and the news that the government is curbing funding to social services, Sonas Housing says it is critical that funding is retained to run this much needed service. "Not every home is a happy one and there is a need for services for women and children who find themselves in a situation of domestic violence," said Cosgrove.

"In a time of recession it is even more important to ensure services are available to women and children who are experiencing domestic abuse. Studies show that in a time of recession domestic abuse, particularly financial abuse, can increase," continued Cosgrove.

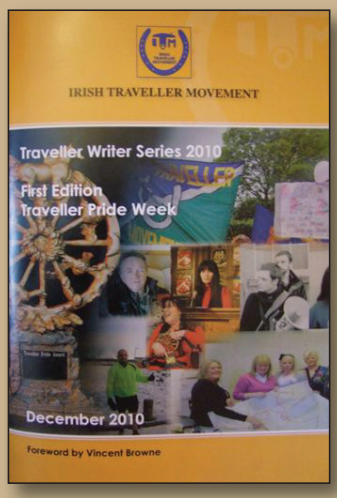
Anne O'Connor, HSE Local Health Manager, North West Dublin said "The HSE has been involved for several years in the development of this project with staff involved on the original Blanchardstown Refuge Development Committee since 2001. Viva House is an excellent example of partnership working between the HSE, Fingal Co. Council, Blanchardstown Refuge Development Group and Sonas with the HSE providing much-needed funding towards capital and running costs."



Some participants at the Conference.

"The fact that women make the brave step to leave their unsafe domestic situation but are unable to go somewhere safe because of lack of space is frightening and has potential dangerous implications for the woman,"

Viva House
01 8662015



Traveller Writers Series

In 2000 during the tenure of the Citizen Traveller Campaign an initiative was created for what was then Traveller Focus Week, whereby Travellers penned as series of articles which appeared in a range of National and regional newspapers during that week.

The Irish Traveller Movement is delighted to revive this project. The Traveller Writer series are now available in booklet form, please contact the ITM office on 01-679 6577 to receive your copy.

An important component to this project is that Travellers have a space to reflect on issues which relate to their lives and Irish life in an open positive setting separate to the more typical ways and issues that Travellers have been called upon to address in relation to their own community. There are many interesting things happening in the Traveller community and individuals whose lives, talents, and endeavours are waiting to be showcased.

The Child Protection Policy Statement of the Parish of the Travelling People

The Parish values and encourages the participation of children and young people in all Church liturgies and parish activities and all that enhances their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development. It appreciates the generous service of the adults who facilitate such participation and respects their integrity.

The Parish recognises the dignity and rights of all children and young people and is committed to ensuring their safety and well being in a way that promotes their human dignity, integrity and worth as children of God.

The Parish recognises that all who work with children and young people have a special duty of care towards them. Leaders must create a safe environment for children and young people to secure their protection and enable their full participation in the life of the Church.

The Parish recognises the responsibility that each child/young person has to respect the dignity, rights and reputation of all who facilitate their participation in Church liturgies, diocesan events and parish activities.

The Parish has committed itself to putting best practice procedures in place to ensure the welfare and protection of children and young people together with the welfare of those who work with them.

Each child/young person is a gift of God and has a right to dignity of life and bodily integrity, which must be respected, nurtured and protected.

The Parish Child Protection Representative is Mr. Colin Thomson: **087-913 7888.**
The Diocesan Designated Person is Mr. Andrew Fagan: **01-836 0314.**

If you wish to talk to a HSE duty social worker about the safety and/or protection of children or young people:
Local Duty Social Worker HSE: **(01) 836 0314** (Office hours).

Outside of HSE hours, or in the case of an emergency, please contact **(01) 666 8600**, or your local Garda Station.

For access to counselling and support, please contact:
FAOISEAMH: **1800 33 1234** (Monday & Wednesday 11am to 8pm and Friday 11am to 4pm)
The Samaritans: **1850 60 90 90** (anytime).

THE WELFARE OF THE CHILD IS ALWAYS PARAMOUNT

OUT & ABOUT













1. Christmas Eve Mass, St. Oliver's Park.
2. A farewell gathering for Barney Joyce, Clondalkin Traveller Development Group.
3. Knock Pilgrimage, Clondalkin Traveller Development Group.
4. Information Day, Clondalkin Traveller Development Group.
5. Knock Pilgrimage with the Clondalkin Traveller Development Group.
6. Parish staff at Deanery Conference, Tipperary.
7. Information Day, Clondalkin Traveller Development Group.



The Traveller Parish Newsletter assumes that the full permission of anyone featured in a photograph has been secured prior to being submitted. As part of our Parish Child Protection Procedures names are not assigned to individual photos of children. Rare exceptions to this are only at the express request of the parents involved, and then at the discretion of the editorial team. Views expressed in *The Traveller Parish Newsletter* do not necessarily reflect views and policies of the Parish. Some photos submitted to the Newsletter may be used on our website. Thanks to all our contributors. Your views, comments and local news are always welcome at (01) 838 8874 or Email: info@ptrav.ie. Parish Website: www.ptrav.ie

THE WAY FORWARD



Traveller Counselling Service Conference in Dublin Castle – 2010

The Traveller Counselling Service held a conference in Dublin Castle on 29th September 2010 to mark the first AGM of the Traveller Counselling Service. The theme of the conference was "the Way Forward" and the aim was to present the way forward for the development of the Traveller Counselling Service and engage with others who are involved with improving the health of the Traveller Community both Traveller and settled people. Both mainstream service providers voluntary organisations and Traveller organisations from around the country turned up including service providers from the UK. The minister John Maloney who has responsibility for mental health opened the conference and spoke about the importance of supporting people who were experiencing mental health difficulties.

Jim O'Brien gave an over view of what the Traveller Counselling Service had done to date and some of the outcomes from the work so far. Jim said over the last two years since the service officially opened its doors a lot of development and progress has taken place, in the first year we launched the project we did not know how it would be received or how the Travelling Community would respond to it and the big question was would the community use the service? This question has been very firmly answered by the Traveller Community. In the first year of the service we had 150 appointments and enquiries about the service, which is a great progression within the Traveller community. This year and particularly in the 2nd half of the year we are seeing between 8 and 10 clients each week which is a large number considering that the Traveller Community is not the majority population. This increase is due to a number of factors one of the key ones being the placing of counsellors in local areas in partnership with local Traveller organisations.



Mick Mason outreach worker with the Bray Traveller Development group talked about the impact of having the Traveller Counselling Service placed in the local area, Mick said it had really made a difference and that people were really using the service. Mick said The benefit for us is that our clients can avail of the counselling in their local area which is vital for them to move forward and for their recovery from drug/alcohol related problems. We have already seen the benefit in a short space of time as one of our clients is in the process of going in for treatment as a direct result of the weekly counselling they have been receiving. We hope that the learning gained from this service around Travellers lack of trust of services, services own lack of understanding of Traveller culture and the issues around Traveller culture and issues surrounding diversity will hopefully lead to a situation where Travellers will feel able and comfortable to attend mainstream counselling services.

Thomas McCann presented a strategy for the way forward and the key points which were identified in the plan were that the service had to be accessible which meant that counsellors had to be placed in local areas where Travellers could access the service. It also had to be sustainable which means that it has to be done in partnership with local Traveller organisations and that small amounts of funding would be sourced locally the local Traveller organisations. Thomas said the long term vision that all services need to be culturally





inclusive and sensitive to the needs of all people. The short to medium term vision is the development of a culturally sensitive counselling service for the Traveller community in Ireland.

In the afternoon workshops took place where the participants and a chance to discuss their reactions to what they heard and also what they felt should be included in the Traveller counselling service to make it more culturally sensitive and appropriate for Travellers, there was a lot of feedback from the discussion groups. We then had a plenary where everyone came back together and discussed the feedback. The feedback from the discussion groups was very positive with very good suggestions and ideas, all participants at the conference felt that this service was very important and that there was a real need to develop it.

The conference was very successful and we had a full house, the participants felt that the conference was very and that their needed to be more of these types of conferences. We hope that we will hold another conference to follow on from this sometime later on in the year.

The Traveller counselling service would like to thank all those who attended the conference and have supported the service since it was launched in 2008.

Thomas McCann

TRAVELLER COUNSELLING SERVICE

If you feel that you need to talk to someone in confidence about issues or difficulties you might be having.

Contact Traveller Counselling Service on

086-308 1476

TRAVELLER CHILDREN WISH FOR A BETTER FUTURE



John Paul Collins writes...

Minceirs Whiden (Travellers Talking), the National Traveller-only forum held an Event on the 10th of December, International Human Rights Day to signify the dwindling of Traveller's children's rights in Ireland and displaying solidarity of Travellers throughout the country in defending these rights.

Travellers from across Ireland attended the event where we acknowledged the improvement of Travellers human rights, while also remembering that there are some rights that have not yet been realised for Travellers in Ireland.

The event, which was part of the Traveller Pride Week, saw Traveller children release balloons which had their wishes and dreams for a better future. The national event took place at the GPO O'Connell Street in Dublin, with local events happening in Galway, Waterford, Limerick, Belfast and other towns throughout the country.





May these few words of sympathy help ease the grief you bear,
and may it comfort you to know, that others really care.

Recently Deceased

October 2010		
3rd	Bridgie McDonagh	Rathcoole
26th	John Joyce	Porterstown
November 2010		
18th	Sarah (Elby) Nolan	Clondalkin
28th	Bridie Stokes	Ballymun
December 2010		
11th	Baby Angel Mary McDonagh	Blanchardstown
17th	Nellie Joyce	Finglas
31st	'Horse'Tom Collins	Finglas
January 2011		
4th	Mary McCarthy	Clondalkin
13th	Gerry Connors	Cherryfield
16th	Michael Maughan	Dun Laoghaire
19th	Kathleen Power	Navan
February 2011		
15th	Davy Collins	Finglas
17th	Martin Joyce	Dunsink Lane
19th	Sam Power	Clondalkin

If we have missed out on any Recently Deceased, or First Year Anniversaries please forward them to us and we will add them in our next issue. Also if you would like to send us a photo of your loved one and a poem, we will try to include it in our First Year Anniversary section.

We pray for all those recently deceased.
May they rest in peace.
Amen

First Year Anniversary

November 2010		
8th	John Anthony Connors	Coolock
12th	Michael Cawley	Garristown
13th	Peter McDonagh	Ballymun
December 2010		
6th	Mary Connors	Firhouse
17th	Nan McDonagh	Cara Park
23rd	Margaret McDonagh	Bluebell
29th	Kathleen McDonagh	Clondalkin
30th	Biddy McDonagh	Mullingar
January 2011		
7th	John Paul Joyce	Coolock
8th	Baby Andrew Charles Collins	Cara Park
14th	John McDonagh	Sandyford
23rd	Baby Stephen Stokes	Carick-on-Shannon
26th	Mary McCann	Blackrock
30th	'Big' Tom Maughan	Ballymun
February 2011		
17th	Winnie Cawley	Tallaght
17th	Anne Harty	Wicklow
22nd	Martin O'Donnell	Finglas
30th	Baby Mary Collins	Navan
March 2011		
18th	Lizzie Cawley	Firhouse
April 2011		
2nd	Francis Maughan	Glasthule
5th	Baby Luke Joyce	Swords
5th	Baby David Connors	Wexford



God our refuge and strength, close at hand in our distress; meet us in our sorrow and lift our eyes to the peace and light of your constant care.

Help us so to hear your word of grace that our fear will be dispelled by your love, our loneliness eased by your presence and our hope renewed by your promises in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

In Loving Memory

First Year Anniversary

Safely Home

I am home in Heaven dear ones,
Oh, so happy and so bright,
There is perfect joy and beauty,
In this everlasting light.
All the pain and grief is over;
Every restless tossing passed.
I am now at peace forever,
Safely Home in Heaven at last.
Did you wonder I so calmly,
Trod the valley of the shade,
Oh, but Jesus' love illumined
Every dark and fearful glade.
And He came Himself to meet me,
In that way so hard to tread.
And with Jesus' arm to lean on
Could I have one doubt or dread.
Then you must not grieve so sorely,
For I love you dearly still.
Try to look beyond Earth's shadows,
Pray to trust Our Father's will.
There is work still waiting for you,
So you must not idly stand;
Do it now while life remaineth.
You shall rest in Jesus' land.
When the work is all completed,
He will gently call you Home.
Oh, the rapture of that meeting,
Oh, the joy to see you come.



In loving memory of

Martin O'Donnell

Died 22nd February 2010.



The National Educational Achievement Awards 2010

The Exchange House Annual National Educational Achievement Awards took place on the 22nd of October 2010. The Awards are presented to members of the Traveller community who have achieved Leaving Certificate, Junior Certificate, GCSE's, or A Levels, in recognition of their achievement. The reasons for the award are to celebrate with recipients and to congratulate them on a job well done, to highlight existing role models from within the community for other Travellers and also to highlight positive images of the Traveller community for the wider community. Exchange House was delighted that the awards were presented to recipients this year by Barry Andrews, TD, Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, for the second year running.

As in previous years, the event was generously supported by Dublin City Council, who provided the Wood Quay Venue for the event. The wonderful surroundings gave the event an extra element of distinction this year which was enjoyed by all who attended. There were 115 nominees in 2010 for Junior and Leaving Certificates, our biggest number yet. Also this year for the first time, awards were presented to learners from the Traveller community who had achieved third level qualifications. Two of the three recipients of the third level award in 2010 are continuing their studies this year.



Some of the Award Recipients.



One of the highlights of the event was, as always, the raffle for award recipients who were present on the night. The City of Dublin VEC generously provided a lap-top computer as the top prize and there were other prizes of cameras and MP3 players.

The 2010 Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award was the final event in the three days of events that marked the 30th Anniversary celebrations for the organisation. The theme of the celebrations was "30 Years-Looking Back, Moving Forward". It was a fitting end to our celebrations as the achievements of the young recipients show, the future of the Traveller community is in safe hands, moving forward.

As Cathleen McDonagh said to the recipients "*You are the future, both of the Traveller community and of wider society*".

Paula Cullen

St Kevin's BNS earn Green Flag status and win the Fáilte Finglas Award



Teacher, Kevin Keogh writes...

St Kevin's B.N.S., located on Barry Avenue, Finglas West, was awarded Green Flag status for the outstanding environmental work undertaken by both its pupils and staff. The award aims to promote environmental education in schools through the participation of students in tasks such as recycling and energy renewal. Ms Catherine Feely, a teacher at the school and coordinator of the activities, implemented a range of policies aimed at reducing electricity and recycling school waste. The Flag Raising Ceremony was attended by parents, pupils, teachers and Spin 104 Radio and a great day was had. Congratulations to St Kevin's and Ms Feely in particular for her hard work and dedication.

Fáilte Finglas Awards

The school also participated in the Fáilte Finglas Awards last November. A project by Mr Keogh entitled ***Traveller Inclusion in the Primary School*** won the Best School category and the Overall Fáilte Finglas Award. The project included a short audiovisual piece, pupil's photography exhibitions, artwork, displays, lesson plans focusing on nomadism, guest speakers from Pavee Point and a coffee morning attended by members of the local community. An initiative by Finglas4Diversity, the awards aim to recognise the positive work undertaken by people in Finglas in the areas of community development and the promotion of inclusion.





Fr. Joe Connolly &
Dublin Footballer, Philip McMahon.





Prayer of Saint Patrick

Christ be with me,
Christ within me,

Christ behind me,
Christ before me,

Christ beside me,
Christ to win me,

Christ to comfort
and restore me.

Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,

Christ in quiet,
and in danger,

Christ in hearts of
all that love me,

Christ in mouth of
friend and stranger.

The Traveller Parish Newsletter is published by The Parish of the Travelling People, St. Laurence House, 6 New Cabra Rd, Phibsborough, Dublin 7.
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