The Traveller

Parish Newsletter

Christmas 2009



CHRISTMAS GREETINGS

"The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light.
They lived in a land of shadows,
but now light is shining on them.." *(Isaiah. 9:2)*

Welcome to this Christmas edition of the Parish Newsletter and to our features on and news of Traveller related events around Dublin Diocese. In this issue Biddy Connors shares with us her experience of visiting the Holy Land. Like Biddy, I too was fortunate enough recently to be a pilgrim in the Holy Land for the first time. Our front cover in fact is a photo taken in the church in Bethlehem. I think the image captures the simplicity and the beauty of that first Christmas night, when the light of Christ first shone into our darkness.

Jesus is often called 'the Light of the World'. His light shines into, and overpowers the darkness of sin and death. That is why we call Jesus our Saviour, and that is why we celebrate his birth at Christmas.

As we prepare for Christmas we keep in mind families coping with serious illness, or the loss of loved ones. This Christmas we are especially aware that many lives – in our families, our communities, our country, are sadly overshadowed by the effects of the economic crisis, the recent bad weather and floods, and the awful findings of the Dublin Enquiry Report on the Church & State handling of allegations of clerical child sexual abuse in the Dublin Diocese. If, as the saying goes, the deepest dark of night is just before the dawn, then surely we must hope and pray that better times are possible for all who have suffered or are suffering. For anyone in particular need, there are contact numbers of various support agencies, Help-lines, and also counselling services included inside *(on pages 10, 12 & 25)*.

The message of a short reflection I came across recently speaks of humility, freedom, transformation of brokenness, and building of hope – all much needed, and something perhaps for us all, our society, and certainly for our Church to pray and work for in 2010:



Photo courtesy of **John McElroy**

Lead us to Bethlehem Lord.
Show us the Christ Child-
The King of Kings in a manger.
Remind us you came with no glamour,
but a quiet, extravagant love that whispered revolution:
'freedom from oppression
and good news to the poor'.
Lead us to the broken places –
use us to build hope
and work for their transformation.

(*from Volunteer Missionaries Movement*
Website: www.togethervmm.weebly.com)

On behalf of all the Parish Team – Colin, Pauline, Cairenn, Martin, Geraldine, Marcella, Sr. May and myself, every blessing, a very Happy Christmas, and a peaceful New Year from us to you.

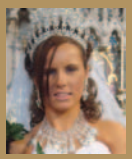
Fr. Derek.

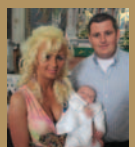
Fr. Derek Farrell, P.P.

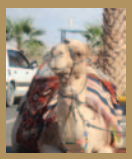


The Traveller Parish Newsletter assumes that the full permission of anyone featured in a photograph has been secured prior to being submitted. As part of our Parish Child Protection Procedures names are not assigned to individual photos of children. Rare exceptions to this are only at the express request 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 alway welcome at (01) 838 8874 or Email: info@ptrav.ie

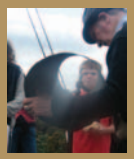

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C.A.S.A. – LOURDES PILGRIMAGE 2009

In mid-October a small group of Traveller women and children went on pilgrimage to Lourdes with CASA, an organisation Fr. Derek has been involved with over the past 20 years. For individuals and for families living with disability or special needs, and also for volunteers interested in giving and receiving in a spirit of caring and sharing, CASA is well worth knowing about…



Martina McDonagh, Teresa McDonagh, Bridget McDonagh and young members of their families with CASA helper Erin.

CASA (Caring and Sharing Association) is a voluntary organisation, established in 1981, whose goal is to develop friendships and social outlets for people with disabilities through a variety of social activities. These include regular social events, holidays, respite breaks, and pilgrimages to Lourdes. CASA is affiliated to the Disability Federation of Ireland.

> *CASA has shown me the face of God, the beautiful face of God, many times and in many moving ways*
>
> ● ***More than Words can Say (CASA)***

(CASA)Each year CASA organises two pilgrimages to Lourdes, normally around June and October. Not only CASA members benefit from their Lourdes trips, others through hospice, hospital and pastoral contacts accompany them. Each pilgrimage comprises of 130 people including a spiritual, nursing and medical team. CASA partakes in the Lourdes ceremonies, as well as organising its own spiritual programme. Their one-to-one approach ensures participants get the most out of the Lourdes experience.

> *In Lourdes, I got the greatest gift given to anybody, that of acceptance. My main wish today is to share myself with other people, now that the gift of acceptance has changed my life forever: A candle loses nothing when lighting another candle.*
>
> ● ***More than Words can Say***

Every year CASA also organises 4 - 6 holiday breaks during the summer.





These holidays are based in their purpose built house in Swords which can accommodate up to sixteen adults at one time. They also use their respite house in Malahide, accommodating a similar number in a comfortable home-from-home environment. The programme is carefully planned to suit the needs of individual members and is packed with variety, including such things as shopping, cinema, bowling, crafts, outings to the park, sports, nights out, day trips and excursions.

There are 20 local CASA groups nationwide – in Dublin, Bray, Cork, Longford and Maynooth. Activities are organised on a regular basis - usually an event occurs once a month, providing the opportunity for socialising, friendship and support. In Dublin, separate central events for both Southside and Northside groups are also organised. From time to time all CASA groups come together to celebrate special events, such as the recent Christmas Mass and Social in Croke Park.



CASA relies largely on the generosity of the public. Funding is also provided through annual fundraising events, donations, a direct debit scheme, sale of Christmas cards. To help fund its activities, CASA also has a number of charity shops. For details on these, and for more information on CASA, the website is www.casa.ie.

If you would like to join CASA as a volunteer please email: mailto:rebecca@casa.ie with your Name, Address and Contact phone number. CASA will then contact you with details of your local group.

You can also contact CASA at:

Carmichael Centre,
North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7.
Tel: 01 8725 300
Fax: 01 8725 370

Congratulations to all those Recently Married

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. Dear Lord, we put our marriage into Your hands, Amen



Date	Names	Address
9th July	Caitriona McDonnell & Martin Anthony McDonnell	Crumlin
18th July	Davy McDonnell & Margaret McDonnell	Finglas
28th July	Ellen Mongan & Martin Corcoran	Clondalkin
31st July	Katrina Connors & Paul McDonagh	Malahide
4th August	Annmarie Stokes & Pat Stokes	Lucan
19th August	Ellen O'Donnell & Michael Corcoran	Tallaght
20th August	Julie McDonnell & Joe McDonnell	Navan
7th September	Bridget Mongan & Peter McDonagh	Lucan
7th September	Bridget Mongan & John Mongan	Lucan
21 September	Freda Cawley & Jonny McCarthy	Clondalkin
14 October	Maude Joyce & John Joyce	Balbriggan
20th October	Bridget Melissa Lawrence & Paddy Mongan	Ballymun
22nd October	Caitriona McDonagh & Joseph Mongan	Tallaght
19th November	Shirley Lawrence & John Grey	Maynooth
20th November	Natasha Mongan & John Ward	Finglas
1st December	Mary Stokes & Patrick Lawrence	Finglas



Joe and Julie McDonnell, Navan



Peter McDonagh & Bridget Mongan, Lucan

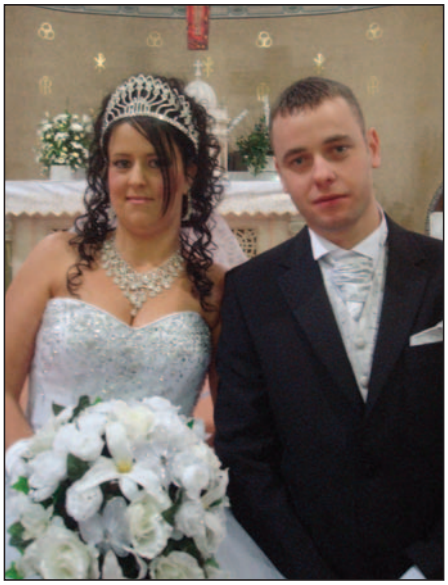


Bridget Mongan & John Mongan, Lucan



Pat and Annmarie Stokes, Inchicore.

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.



Mary Stokes & Patrick Lawrence, Finglas



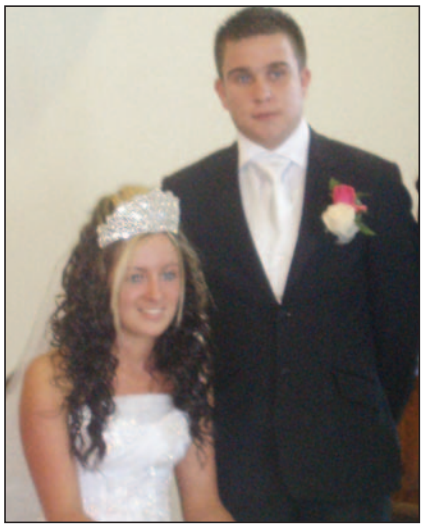
Caitriona McDonagh & Joseph Mongan, Tallaght



Paddy Mongan & Bridget Melissa Lawrence, Ballymun



Martin Anthony & Caitriona McDonnell, Crumlin



Davy and Margaret McDonnell, Finglas



Ellen Marie Mongan & Martin Corcoran, Clondalkin

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO GET MARRIED

- **You must be at least 18 years old to get married**.
- If possible give at least six months notice of the wedding, the minimum notice for the Church and State is three months.
- Check with the priest you want to perform the marraige ceremony, to see if he is available on the date you have chosen, check the church is available on that date. If you are planning a wedding reception, it is important to confirm the availabily of the church and the priest **before** booking the hotel or reception venue.
- Telephone the register office in Joyce House on 01-8638220 or 01-8638200 to make an appointment to get registered.
- To register in Joyce House you need to bring €150, plus photographic identification, for example, passport or drivers licence.
- You also need your PPS numbers and the names and the date of birth of your two witnesses.
- You also need the name of the priest who will be performing the marriage ceremony, the name of the church you will be married in and the date of your wedding day.

*For **advice** on preparing for your wedding and if you would like some **helpful tips** for the special occasion, please feel free to contact the Parish Office at (01) 838 8874.*

TRAVELLERS VOICE CONCERNS ABOUT PROPOSED CUTS

The public march on 30th September provided BTDG staff and many other community projects the opportunity to express their concerns at the proposed Government cuts which will devastate the work of Traveller & community organisations and Traveller families. BTDG insist that any further cuts should ensure that there is not further exclusion of Travellers.



Catherine Joyce (left) and BTDG staff at the public demonstration in Dublin.

> **"It does not look good and many years of hard work and progression of Traveller human rights may be lost"**
>
> ***Catherine Joyce, Manager of Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group (BTWG)***

Currently, BTDG is a limited company which receives funding from the Community Development Programme (CDP), FÁS, HSE, VEC and others. BTDG ensures that the Traveller voice is heard in the community and that the community and voluntary sector ensure the inclusion of Travellers. There are nine paid staff (six Travellers), 14 Community Employment (CE) participants, 36 Trainees (LTI) and 18 volunteers working in the project and all have experienced cuts in 2009 already. The CDP programme funding is essential to support and secure funding for all of the other work of BTDG that has benefitted hundreds of Travellers and their families in the area since it was set up in 1994.

BTDG wants consultation as the proposed cuts (*listed below)* could further exclude Travellers and create even further hardships on the community and families. BTDG feel that it is essential that their work continues and is developed to meet the needs of Travellers. Their message is, STOP THE CUTS NOW. Among the proposed cuts are:

Traveller Families

- Reducing Social Welfare and *Child Benefit* payments
- Ending Exceptional Needs Payments
- Introducing a single primary Social Welfare payment
- Introducing restrictions for individuals on Jobseekers Allowances/Benefits
- Introducing means and assets test requirements to restrict Medical cards
- Reducing retention of medical card from 3 years to 1 year upon taking up employment

Traveller Organisations

- Discontinuation of Dormant Accounts Fund and Jobs Initiative Programmes
- The merger of Community Development Programmes with the Partnerships
- The merger of Partnerships and Volunteer Centre structures with the County Childcare Committees
- Senior Traveller Training Centres would be 'mainstreamed' and cut
- Reduce allocation to Local Drugs Task Forces by €2m and target projects which have a good track record of delivery

The Progression of Travellers & Social Inclusion

- Increasing Class sizes in schools & reducing English Language Support teachers (this would mostly affect Roma)
- Reducing Capitation grant to schools
- School transport would be cut.
- Reducing Student support scheme funding and Back to Education Allowance
- National Education Welfare Board absorbed into Dept. of Education & Science
- Withdrawing the right to pass the tenancy to another family member
- Discontinuing Affordable Housing Scheme

Report on Maynooth Deanery Meeting of Wednesday 23rd September 2009



Noreen Ward, PTP Parish Pastoral Council

Last September, I attended a meeting in the Spa Hotel in Lucan with Fr Derek and Martin Rowan. It was my first time to attend a Deanery meeting. A Deanery is a group of parishes. There were a 130 people from pastoral councils attending.

We gathered in a big room with candles and flowers and we began with prayer. The people were friendly and we began with a blessing by the priest. Then the priest who was leading broke us into small groups. There would have been 10 groups of 8 to 10 people roughly. He assigned each group a priest but we went into groups with people that were unfamiliar. There was a secretary to take notes. We were there to do some work.

The priest leading the meeting, Fr. Paddy, asked us to imagine:

You are in charge of the funds for the church, so what would you do to run the church and how we keep our church open and re-engage people?

We needed to come up with ideas and we needed to surface ideas why people drifted away. We had to come up with ideas on how to attract young people, and others back…

For example:

- Set up a children's choir… because I know that it can make a big difference to children.
- Catechism is not learned at school any more – it makes a link between the school and the parish.

There were lots of different opinions. Some people thought that married priests would give rise to more vocations. I really appreciated being asked my opinion. It was very different to what I could have imagined. There were prople from Esker, Lucan, Crumlin in my group – and to think we had all the same problems it made me more aware that we are all Catholic. When I introduced myself, there was no negativity, no criticism. In fact they really wanted to know what I thought. There were many people of an older generation who shared many of the values that Travellers hold today. For example, simply saying "God bless that child" was appreciated. We had a great discussion.

So why was it important to be there? The reason we were called was to consider changes that are happening. The aim was to prepare us for change; not to frighten us but to educate us together. Some people think that things will never change – it will always be the same. Some are afraid that we might lose our priests and it would be like the end of the world. But as long as we have these meeting where we can learn and get deeper insight – and Travellers need to be part of that – if even only 2 out of 10 listen, it will be worthwhile.

Hello from Marcella



Hi Everybody! My name is Marcella Wynne I'm from Cabra West in Dublin. I've been lucky to secure a Community Employment position as a receptionist in The Parish of The Travelling People. I started with the Parish in July of this year and it goes without saying that everyone in the office has been so helpful and has made me feel very welcome. Coming here has been a great learning experience for me, as I've never worked or had much opportunity to interact with Travellers before this. The Parish of The Travelling People is a very busy place; the type of work done here was quite new to me. Although I was a novice, help was always at hand from Geraldine, Pauline and we won't forget Colin, who shows up just when you need him! The work varies, for example I never realised how much paper work is involved in arranging a wedding. Every detail must be documented and followed up to the letter, so that everything runs smoothly for the couple on their big day. My work also involves meeting and greeting Travellers who come to the Parish office for their marriage course, which is facilitated by Sr. May and Cairenn. You would also receive a lot of telephone enquiries from Travellers who wish to have Fr Derek officiate at christenings and special blessings as well as weddings. The Parish hold their team meetings once weekly. These meetings are very informative as everyone has an input and it gives you an idea of their role in the running of the Parish. It was at my first team meeting that I met Martin Rowan, who is the Pastoral Development Co-ordinator in St Ronan's Deansrath. I'm enjoying my work in the Parish immensely as no two days are the same. I'm looking forward to my future here in The Parish of The Travelling People. There's still so much more to learn about the Traveller Community and their culture, but its early days!

RECENT CHRISTENINGS

The centre of attention on this special
Christening Day,
Is a darling little child,
so cute in every way.

This little Christening greeting has an
extra-special touch.
For though you're only young
you're loved so very much.



Baby Gerard O'Brien parents Michael & Elizabeth.



Michael & Margaret Collins with baby Sophie.



Mary & Martin Lawrence with baby Martin Christopher & Family.



Annmarie & Jerry Wall with baby Patrick, Inchicore.



William & Annmarie Stokes with baby Martin Gerard, Clondalkin.



Pat & Ann McDonagh & baby Pat Pio, Ballymun.



Baby Elivia Faustina McDonagh & Parents Ballymun.



Mary & Kieran Collins with baby Martina.



Tracy and Joe Keily and baby Heidi Ann, Clondalkin.



John & Pauline McDonnell baby Rihanna and Family.



Baby Summer Kayla Maughan, & parents Lena and Patrick, Swords.



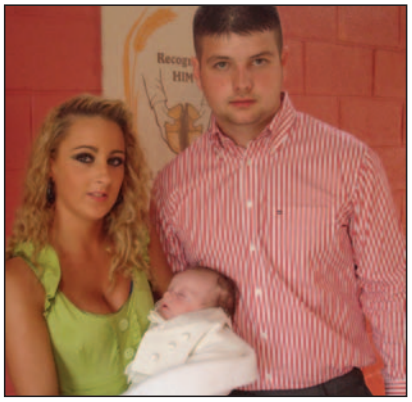
Patrick & Kathleen Gavin with baby Winifred Rebecca.



Ann Rose & Davy Collins with baby John.



John Paul & Lena Collins, with baby Abby & Nicole.



James & Lucy McDonagh with, baby James Anthony, Clondalkin.



Joe & Annmarie McDonnell with baby Joe.



Joe & Louise McDonnell with baby Hayley.



Martin & Margaret O'Donnell, with baby Simon Joseph, Finglas.



Martin & Bernadette Collins with baby Martin Joseph, Bluebell.



Sandra & Patrick Collins with baby Rihanna.

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.

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS IRELAND ANNOUNCE 2009 AWARD WINNERS



Thomas McCann receiving his Award.

Social Entrepreneurs Ireland was established in 2004, is a privately funded, not-for-profit organisation that believes that innovation and social change in Ireland will be driven by exceptional people with exceptional ideas. They have developed a support model that helps these social entrepreneurs grow their ideas from concept to reality.

On 19th October Social Entrepreneurs Ireland announced their 2009 Award Winners at a ceremony in The Exchange, the newly renovated former Labour Exchange on Dublin's Gardiner Street. Guest of Honour was President McAleese. Thirty one social entrepreneurs from throughout the country received Awards. Established in 2004, the annual Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Awards are supported by NTR and have supported over 142 people and organisations who have brought their innovative ideas to drive social change in Ireland. One of the people to receive an award from President McAleese was Thomas McCann who set up the Traveller Counselling Service in 2009. The Traveller Counselling Service was set up to specifically address the needs of Travellers, such as depression, anxiety, self harm, couple and family problems through providing culturally appropriate counselling. The Traveller counselling service is independent service. It is open two afternoons and one morning per week and has six qualified counsellors, both Traveller and non Travellers. Opening times for the service are Thursday from 2pm to 7pm, Friday 2pm to 7pm and Saturday morning from 10am to 2pm, the service is free and open to all Travellers.

There were also a number of other awardees which ranged across a wide variety of social issues, community and active citizenship; young people and children; education and learning; mental and physical health; new communities and Travellers; environment and sustainability; disability and older people. If you feel that you have an interesting idea and would contact social Entrepreneurs Ireland, there contact details are:

14/15 St. Stephens Green,
Dublin 2, Ireland.
Tel: 01-661 8935
Email: clairemurphy@socialentrepreneurs.ie

It was a great evening and there were about six hundred people there. Now that the Traveller counselling is up and running it is important that Travellers use the service and if you would like to contact us or you know someone who you feel it would help to talk about problems they might be having then please contact us our contact details are at the end of this page. Do not ignore difficulties or problems that you or someone else might be having until they get to crisis point do something about it now and help yourself or someone else do something about it.

Thomas McCann,
6 New Cabra Road,
Phibsborough,
Dublin 7.

Tel: 086 3081 476
Email: travcounselling@hotmail.com

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

PTP's New Role in Dublin's Parish Pastoral Workers' Formation





In April 2008, Dublin's Archbishop Diarmuid Martin outlined the proposed formation and role of Dublin's new Parish Pastoral Workers, including:

…"A programme of evangelization and catechesis, the promotion of life-long Christian learning, attention to the social teaching of the Church, the celebration of the sacraments with particular reference to the Sunday Eucharist, the building up of community life within parishes, with special emphasis on families, young people and marginalized groups."

The second group of students is now in formation, studying at the Mater Dei Institute while also working in parishes they each have been assigned to. The Parish of the Travelling People, as part of our ***Travelling Towards Inclusion*** initiative, has now become part of the students' formation. In February we look forward to one of the current group of ten students joining us to begin a four month placement. The Parish Team has also presented two training sessions on Traveller life and culture, the work and ministry of the Parish, and how ***Travelling Towards Inclusion*** can hopefully be part of the Parish Pastoral Workers' approach in whichever parishes they may find themselves working in. We wish them all well in their preparation and in their future pastoral roles. We thank them for their welcome, their active participation in both training sessions, and for their helpful and encouraging feedback which includes the following:

"Our recent gatherings gave us a deeper insight into Traveller culture and traditions, pointing to the possibility of future positive integration of both communities."

"Dialogue is always good."

"These two meetings were extremely informative and, in opening our eyes to our own prejudices, will hopefully enable us to work towards the inclusion of all people."

"We learned a lot about the Traveller way of life."

"It was interesting to hear of one of the Traveller presenter's experience of moving into a house where she was initially rejected by her neighbours, but then later on when they took the time to get to know her, they became the best of friends. There is a lesson for us all – showing what can happen if people are open."

"The group really appreciated your time and honesty in your presentations, and we all learned a lot."

FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL







Taking Care in Tough Economic Times

crosscare social care agency catholic archdiocese of dublin

innovation and action for social justice

Sometimes when people are under stress, they turn to the Parish of the Travelling People for help. But the Parish does not have the resources to help everyone directly. At present, there is a lot of talk of the recession. We hear stories and arguments on TV and the radio every day. The talk among friends and family members is often about the fear of losing jobs, trying to make money go further to pay bills and people under stress and coping badly. This article is not meant to depress you and you might wish for some distraction that will make you smile. There is no harm in that but if we close our eyes and ears to all the bad news, we might miss some good news too. So I suggest what we need most in these challenging times is HOPE. Hope is not wishful thinking. It is facing our challenges and seeing beyond them. In this short article, perhaps we can look beyond the problems to find the contact details of agencies and services that try to help people in different sorts of difficulties.

If you, or someone you know, needs support, someone to talk to or is in crisis:

- Contact your local GP or family doctor.
- Contact your GP out-of-hours service.
- Go to or contact the Accident and Emergency Department of your nearest hospital.

See details of local health services you can contact opposite.

The information opposite was taken from the websites of the organisations. The HOPE we share with you is that anyone in need can see beyond the problem to find people who can help and there is further HOPE that in very challenging times, you might be able to help these organisations by organising a fund-raiser or by becoming a volunteer. Why not take care and get involved.

For more information on mental health and wellbeing:

Go to www.yourmentalhealth.ie
Contact Mental Health Ireland on (01) 284 1166

WHERE TO FIND SUPPORT

Crosscare Housing & Welfare Information is an information, advocacy and referral organisation with a focus on housing, homelessness, social welfare and related matters.
Address: 1 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1
Telephone: 01 872 6775
Crosscare Migrant Project provides its service to intending, existing and returning Irish emigrants, as well as immigrants and members of new communities in Ireland.
Telephone: 01 - 873 2844
Crosscare Food Centres can be contacted at:
Holles Row Food Centre: 01 676 5707
Longford Lane Food Centre: 01 475 5299

Society of St Vincent de Paul provides direct assistance to people who have a variety of needs. In addition, we try to promote self-sufficiency, enabling people to help themselves.
Address: Dublin Region SVP House,
91-92, Sean McDermott Street, Dublin 1.
Telephone: 01 855 0022

The Money and Budgeting Service (MABS) is a free and confidential service for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.
Helpline: 1890 283 438
(Monday-Friday 9:00am-8:00pm)

National Traveller MABS
Unit 2, North Park, North Road, Finglas, Dublin 11.
Telephone: 01 864 8510

Women's Aid is a national voluntary organisation which provides support and information to women and their children who are being physically, emotionally, financially and sexually abused in their own homes. There is a direct service to women experiencing domestic violence through a National Freephone Helpline 1800 341 900.

Local health services
HSE Health Information line CallSave 1850 241 850
(8:00am-8:00pm, Monday to Saturday)

Traveller Counselling Service is an independent culturally appropriate counselling service for Travellers in the greater Dublin area Contact 086 308 1476 and within 24 hours someone will get back to you and arrange a first meeting.

Samaritans offer confidential, non-judgemental support 24 hours a day.
What ever you are going through, whether you think it is big or small, you don't have to bottle it up.
Visit Us: 112 Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.
10.00 am - 9.00 pm, 7 days a week.



DEANSRATH
DECEMBER '09 UPDATE

Report on Pilot Parish Initiative – Travelling Towards Inclusion

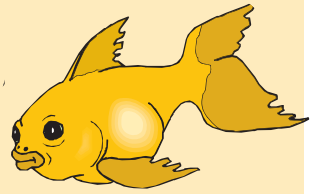


The Story of the Squirrel and the Fish

Once upon a time...

there was a squirrel that lived in a house in a tree. One day Squirrel was sprawled on his couch, watching Discovery Channel , and surrounded by discarded beech nut shells and hazelnut chocolate bar wrappers. There was a knock on the door. Squirrel answered it, and there, to his amazement he saw....

... a fish.



Squirrel felt quite uneasy and he didn't know well how to react, but then neither did Fish. So Squirrel thought he would try to welcome Fish in the best way he knew, and he filled the bath with water.



The story has limitations but some points are clear from it. Squirrel did not offer Fish a beech nut, did not put on the kettle to make him a cup of tea, did not open a bottle of wine nor put on a Metallica cd. Instead he went outside his own terms of reference and read the world from the viewpoint of his visitor. Squirrel had also made structural adjustments to his house, by installing a bath, so that all visitors, including Fish, could feel at home there. He had addressed structural issues rather than relying on sentiments of hospitality or inclusiveness.

As well as organising practical parish initiatives the pilot project, through the Advisory Group, tries to reflect on how the resource which is the faith of the Travelling People can be shared with the whole church. I have tried to find a model of the church that makes sense of the experience of the Pilot Project so far, and makes it possible to communicate that experience in some common language.

'*Follow the Way of Love*' ,the US Catholic bishops' letter for Year of the Family, 1994, has a very appealing notion of the family as the basic Christian community, the domestic church, or the church of the home. Families they suggest are foundational churches to the whole people of God and families comprise the most basic christian community. If the US bishops made these suggestions based on their experience of the nuclear family how much more true they are in the case of Traveller families. Many Traveller families would make up a fair size settled parish congregation. Within that large community every christian virtue in chapter 25 of St Matthew's gospel will be called into play.

This focus on the family as the basic christian community, then, suggests that the parish life may not be the central focus of christian religious life but rather that parish leaders are there to enable families to recognize that they are a domestic church. The bishops conclude "a family is holy not because it is perfect but because God's grace is at work in it, helping it to set out anew everyday on the way of love."

I have found this framework helpful as this pilot project moves to the end of its first year. I am conscious that many people, especially in the US, have exposed the evil of the inward looking family unit but I think the bishops meet that issue by affirming that "the practices of the family, not its structure, are central to its identity as domestic church" and "a family is holy, not because it is perfect,but because God's grace is at work in it".

In day to day Deansrath life, the parish organised a combined Traveller – Settled people pilgrimage to Mount Melleray Abbey in August. Elizabeth Moorehouse from Deansrath parish spoke at Mass in preparation for her visit to a women's project at a leprosy village in Jimma, Ethiopia, with other women from Ballyfermot Traveller's Action Project. Also South Dublin County Council (SDCC) held a very successful a Café Style Conversation on Traveller Pride in Deansrath Community Centre as part of Traveller Focus Week. It was organised by the Social Inclusion Unit of SDCC.

Martin Rowan

My trip to THE HOLY LAND



Prayers in Bethlehem

My name is Biddy Connors and I went to the Holy land on the 25th October this year. I went with Joe Walsh Tours as an independent person but I joined on with a parish so we had a spiritual leader, the poor priest did not know what was happening. He thought he would have 40 people instead he had 78 people to look after because there was a mix up in the number of people going. The priest was very good to us and let us join in all his Masses.

The weather was very hot over there. The food was very different from our food in Ireland, the people in the Holy Land don't have milk with meat at the same time so at dinner time you would have to leave the hotel to have your tea are coffee.



The experience I had was very different from Lourdes or Medjugorje, I was in Lourdes and Medjugorje a few times. It was different in a very nice way.

Our Lord really walked in this land you can feel him there, and to walk on the same land as our Lord walked on was a life changing experience for me. To see with my own eyes where he was crucified on the hill of Calvary and also where he was born in Bethlehem opened my eyes to what our Lord did for us.

I also met a lot of new friends from Ireland, and I want to say that the people who live over there were very nice people, very funny people with a great sense of







humour, always making funny jokes and I have also learned a few funny jokes myself. I will never forget my time in the Holy land it was very beautiful. Every day was exciting you would see difference places every day the bus trips were great because we went to places where Jesus was and it was out of this world. The garden of Gethsemane is where I felt most at peace. Getting blessed in the river Jordan did it for me where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist.

The Sea of Galilee was very special the boat trip and the silence where the boat stopped in the middle of the sea was so special also the dead sea was so beautiful I wanted to stay there for ever.

To finish my story I can't express my feelings enough and I will say you will have to go to the Holy Land to find out about this very special place on earth.

Biddy Connors





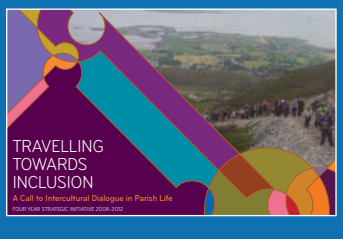




This is my Grandson Dan Connors from Wicklow. He is 19 months old and he was born with a liver disease and has had two operations and is waiting to go on a waiting list for a liver Transplant. He is doing very well at the moment but needs all the prayers he can get as the liver transplant is very serious as his aunt Josie died having her transplant so it is very important for people to see little Dan and pray for him.

Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to ask for prayers for him

Biddy Connors, *Grandmother*



UPDATE ON THE PILOT PARISH PROJECT

December 2008 saw the launch of the Pilot Parish project in Saint Ronan's parish, Deansrath, Clondalkin and the project was introduced in an article in the Easter edition of this newsletter. The reasons for developing the Pilot Project are to encourage, promote and support connections and dialogue between Traveller and settled parishioners in Saint Ronan's parish and to develop initiatives through which they can celebrate their common faith.



Since that article was written, the Pilot Project has made considerable progress especially in the areas of building relationships with Traveller families living in the parish, organising events, such as pilgrimages, that bring together both settled and Traveller parishioners, jointly organising a programme of pastoral home visits to Traveller families and organising other activities all of which are aimed at promoting inclusion, understanding and participation by all parishioners in Saint Ronan's.

The work of building connections and relationships with Traveller families in Saint Ronan's remains a key priority for the Pilot Project. Since the project started the Co-ordinator has devoted considerable time and energy on visiting families in their homes, getting to know them, meeting them when they come to Mass and being with them in important moments such as when they celebrate life in the Baptism of their children or when they grieve the death of a loved one.

Traveller families have responded very well to this work. They are very appreciative of the respect they are shown and in turn, they are generous in their willingness to share details of their lives and their hopes, dreams and fears for themselves and their community. They have also shown the Co-ordinator what he describes as "*amazing hospitality*".

The approach being used in the Pilot Project is one where the emphasis is on friendly informal contact, home visits and being with people in happy and sad times. This approach is working, Traveller families are being reached out to in a very direct way, their faith and religious traditions are being discussed and respected and there is a welcome for them at all parish ceremonies.

The challenge now is to maintain this approach with Traveller families while at the same time work on building relationships and understanding with the settled parishioners in Saint Ronan's. This is no easy challenge because the number of settled people who attend church ceremonies, on a regular basis, is very small and very diverse.

During the 2009 Lenten period, Saint Ronan's Parish and the Parish of the Travelling People jointly organised a programme of pastoral home visits to Traveller families in the area. The visiting teams of two people comprised both lay and religious members. The visits provided opportunities for the teams to pray with each family and to bless them and their home. The visits also provided an opportunity to explain what the Pilot Project was about and to pave the way for further contact and family visits. As part of the visitation each family was given a simple sheet with details of the prayers used during the visit and information on contacts in the parish together with details of Mass times and other parish events. The visiting teams were well received by the Traveller families and the visits served to confirm the importance of family prayer, blessings and family shrines in Traveller religious tradition.

During the past year the Pilot Project has helped organise a number of pilgrimages including to Knock and Mount Melleray which served to bring both Traveller and settled parishioners together in a shared activity. Other ongoing activities also aimed at promoting inclusion and understanding include the *after Mass cup of tea*, one of the first of the project's initiatives and one that continues to flourish; a photographic exhibition organised with funding from South Dublin County Council which showed Traveller involvement in parish activities in a very positive light and a Mass readers group which includes a number of Travellers and has resulted in Traveller voices being heard at Mass. It is hoped that the Traveller participants in the Mass readers group will serve as positive role models for others in their community.

All of these events together with the consistent presence and ground work of the Co-ordinator alongside the openness and welcome of the parish priest of Saint Ronan's are contributing to the building of the kind of trust, respect and understanding that are at the core of healthy relationships. Many challenges remain but the Pilot Project has made a very positive start.

Kate O'Brien, *Phagos*



BRAY TRAVELLERS BEOIRS PROGRAMME

Bray Travellers are a Community Development Project under the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs operating from the rear of 97, Main Street, Bray. Bray Travellers Community Development Group was set up to address issues of education, accommodation and health with and for Travellers, we aim to be a voice for Travellers and to support all Travellers in addressing their own needs with any support they may need. Bray Travellers CDG has eight employees and is managed by a Board of Directors.

Bray Travellers runs 'Beoirs' which is a back to education and training programme for Traveller women. 'Beoirs' is the Cant word for women and the programme aims to provide the participants with the life and work skills they need. The programme also concentrates on developing a knowledge of and pride in Traveller culture. During Traveller Focus Week in December last, Bray Travellers published a booklet called *'Beoirs' Stories* a collection of stories and works of art by the women of the 'Beoirs' Traveller Women's Training Programme. The following areas are featured in the booklet: Travelling, Marriage and Children, Religion, Beliefs and Folklore, Culture, Animals, and Rights for Travellers.

Here is what the women themselves say about the programme:

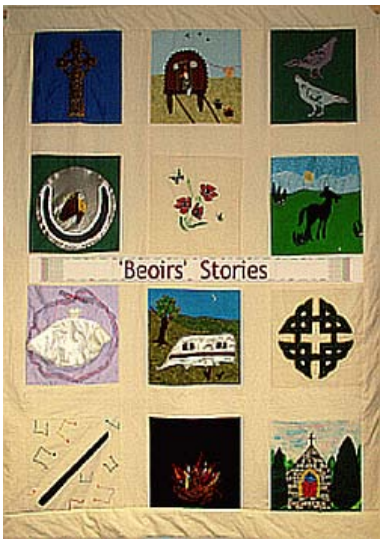
What the programme means to me

- I look forward to coming in every day
- There is a great atmosphere in the centre. The women get on very well together
- I have learnt how to send emails and I now have good keyboard skills
- I have a better understanding of what it is like to be a learner and this has given me more patience when I am helping my children with my homework
- I have learnt more about nutrition and preparing healthy meals. I have really gotten into making homemade soups
- I have improved my understanding of Maths and I am better able to help my children with their Maths
- I learned how to knit and I felt a great sense of achievement when I knitted a scarf for my child

The participants of 'Beoirs' Back to Education and Training Programme held their end of year exhibition, awards ceremony and sale of work on Friday 3rd July 2009 in the Little Flower Hall.

The theme of this year's exhibition was 'Light through the Darkness'. The inspiration for this theme came from the Photography module. The training room was turned into a temporary darkroom and out of this darkness came black and white photographs of the women's children, which were developed by the Traveller women themselves under the guidance of their tutor.

You can visit the website of Bray Travellers CDG at www.btcdg.ie.



Views on Education

- Education makes you independent
- Education should be based on respect
- I would like to see more Travellers working in early childhood education in crèches and playschools
- I would like to work in education and hope to qualify as a Special Needs Assistant
- Sometimes Traveller children can be bullied in school because of ignorance

Traveller Focus Week



Tim Costigan & Andrew Chapple, two of the authors at the launch of the Traveller Specific Drugs Awareness Training Manual, Clondalkin.

Barney Joyce, Clondalkin Travellers Development Group.



Pavee Point 25th Anniversary Conference





Conversation Café event, Deansrath



Conversation Café event, Deansrath



John Moloney, T.D.
officially launching Traveller Focus Week 2009.



Worlds Apart, Same Difference – new play by Michael Collins.

Michael Collins pictured with fellow actors,
Tiny James and Michael Collins Junior.



Pavee Point 25th Anniversary Conference

Photo courtesy of **Derek Speirs**



John Curran, T.D. launching the Traveller
Specific Drugs Awareness Training Manual.



A PRAYER FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

God our Father, You see your children growing up in and unsteady and confusing world.

Show them that your ways give more life than the ways of the world, and that following you is better than chasing after selfish goals.

Help them to take failure, not as a measure of their worth, but as a chance for a new start.

Give them strength to hold their faith in you, and to keep alive their joy in your creation.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen

PILGRIM WAYS



St Dearbhla's well is traditionally associated with relief for those suffering from eye complaints. St Dearbhla's well is located in Falmore at the end of the Mullet peninsula in the Mayo Gaeltacht area. The well overlooks the Atlantic Ocean with Achill and Iniskea in the backround. Pilgrims pray at the well and bless themselves with the water. They take some of the water home and use it every day to bless their eyes praying at the same time.

St Deirbhile, the daughter of Cormac Mac Daithi, was of noble lineage. According to local tradition having decided to devote her life to God and wishing to escape from an army chief who intended to marry her, she came to this area during the sixth century. An annual pilgrimage to the well takes place on August 15th in honour of the saint, and a belief in the healing properties of its water remains to this day.

Located in the graveyard at Falmore are St Deirbhile's Church (now a national monument) and Bed, the latter is the reputed burial place of the saint.

Missy Collins
Reflections on Medjugorje



I went to Medjugorje on the 19th of July 2009 for seven days. Eleven members of my family came with me on the pilgrimage. It was a great honour when the visionary, Ivan, invited myself and four other people to Our Lady's apparition on one of the days we were there. The whole pilgrimage was a beautiful experience.

Letter from a Knock Pilgrim

My name is Dick O'Leary, I'm a very committed person to Our Blessed Virgin Mary and I often run pilgrimages to Knock, Lourdes and Rome. I would like to say I always get satisfaction when I invite the local Traveller Community on pilgrimages. Most of the Travellers who go to Knock with our group would be from Cara Park in Coolock. The Traveller pilgrims who have travelled with me are good people with plenty of humour and who tell great stories of many experiences.

One year I went to Knock I got speaking to a young Traveller woman, she shared a story with me about her young daughter. Her doctor had told her and her husband that they would never have children. She went to Knock and asked Our Lady to grant her the joy of having at least one child and she would always spread devotion for Knock. Later she gave birth to a lovely baby girl, naming her Mary.

This year again we went to Knock to celebrate the anniversary of the canonisation of St Padre Pio and a group of Travellers went with us. We had a great time and we were all blessed with relic of Padre Pio and met many people who had several cures both from Our Blessed Mother and Saint Padre Pio. I look forward to returning on our next pilgrimage to Knock.

Yours Sincerely,
Dick O'Leary

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

July		
12th	Mary O'Rourke	Coolock
August		
14th	Baby Angel McDonnell	Finglas West
27th	Margaret (Bob) McDonagh	Dunsink
September 2009		
24th	Owen Maughan	St. Margaret's, Ballymun
November 2009		
8th	John Anthony Connors (4 months)	Coolock
12th	Michael Cawley (12 years)	Garristown
13th	Peter McDonagh	Ballymun

First Year Anniversary

July		
18th	Baby Martin O'Donnell	Clondalkin
August		
21st	Mary Mongan	Clondalkin
October 2009		
15th	Winifred Mc Donagh	Porterstown
30th	Mary Connors	Tallaght
31st	Baby Caitlyn Marie McDonagh	Blanchardstown
November 2009		
14th	Martin Ward	Clondalkin
21st	Kathleen Connors	Clondalkin
25th	Dave McDonagh	Manchester
December 2009		
4th	Luke Wall	Blessington
14th	Eamonn Farrell	Fr. Derek's Father

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



St. Anthony's Prayer

St. Anthony, help me find ways to honour God's blessings by showing my love for all of God's creatures. Share your strength that I may cope with the trials and troubles of daily life. You, through whose voice the Word of God was preached, intercede for my need (*mention your special request here*). Powerful Patron, be with me always and teach me to reach out in love and support to others.

Amen.

The T Factor







Melissa Connors of South Dublin County Council, reports on the T Factor which took place on 29th September 2009. It was held in the Civic Theatre, Tallaght Town Centre, with proceeds in aid of Cancer Research.

I would like to thank South Dublin County Council especially, *Mayor* Mick Duff, *County Manager* Joe Horan and *Director of Housing* Billy Coman for their support for the show. I want to thank my colleagues in South Dublin County Council in particular the staff of the Social Inclusion Unit, Traveller Accommodation Unit, Traveller Support Unit, Corporate Services and the Grants & Project Sections for all the assistance they gave me over the last few months.

The show could not have proceeded without it's sponsors South Dublin County Council, Health Service Executive and the Irish Traveller Movement, so a big thank you to them.

While the show may have been my idea it could not have proceeded without the talented contestants and I want to really thank them for entering the competition and for all the work they put into rehearsals in order to put a fantastic show on.

A special thanks goes to Aidan, Chris B, Chris S, Gerry, Maria, Patricia, Sarah & Zita and the staff of the Civic Theatre for all their help.

Finally I want to thank my parents and family for all their support in this project and throughout my life.

Primary Health Care Graduation Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group



In 2006 the Primary Health Care Project in Blanchardstown funded by the Traveller Health Unit commenced, now after the first round of participant training and a lot of hard work, four women have received accreditation of a major award in Community Health Advocacy. The women have worked hard to complete eight modules, some up to a Fetac Level 5 and training in a wide range of health areas including women's health, mental health and Child protection to name a few.

> ***"The inherent approach is to work with the Traveller community in order to develop a primary health care project based on the Traveller community own values and perceptions so that positive outcomes can have a long term effect (DOH 2000)"*** ***Bernadette Joyce***

In October 2008, they took part in a significant piece of work relating to Traveller health the "*Our Geels" All Ireland Traveller Health Study*"(AITHS) completing a census of over fifty Traveller families in Blanchardstown. Along with participating in consultation for this study, the National Intercultural Health Strategy, informing service providers of Traveller culture and gaps in services they have worked closely with the local G.P and Nurses in Mulhuddart as part of their training. They also produced an Immunisation Dvd for Travelllers "*To Save Lives Immunise*" and completed work experience with mainstream local agencies such as the Mulhuddart/Corduff Community Drug Team, Barnardos and the Local Drugs Task Force in Blanchardstown.

Congrats to Bridget Dinnigan, Maggie McDonnell, Bernadette Joyce and Sylvia Hand on their achievement.

Bríd Greenan
Primary Health Care Co-ordinator

Below: Tinsmith, Johnny Donoghue; Eli Cahn and Cian Joyce



In September 2009 Carraig Dulra Organic Farm in Glenealy hosted a celebration of old traditional skills from both the Traveller and settled communities. Many traditional crafts on display such as tinsmithing are in danger of being lost to new generations.

Heritage Skills Weekend in Wicklow

Main photo: Johnny and William Donoghue



Maggie Doran, Johnny Donoghue & Ian Daly

Over 100 people enjoyed the event which demonstrated great craftsmanship from tinsmiths such as Johnny Donoghue and Andrew Connors. Johnny wasn't always a tinsmith and recalls the time when he worked as a cook in the 1940s. He had to cycle 22 miles to work, put in a full day and then cycle the 22 miles home again! Suzie Cahn of Carraig Dulra gave excellent advice on how to grow and use herbs. Herbs are not only useful in cooking but have been used for medicinal purposes by our forefathers. Suzie demonstrated how to mix tinctures and lotions for common skin complaints and other ailments. Weaving, a craft that has been around for approximately 500 years was demonstrated by Carath Carty who brought his loom. Visitors could also get involved in building an outdoor oven under the expert tutelage of Bob Wilson of CELT. Bob teaches dry stone walling, a building method by which structures are constructed from stone without any mortar to bind them together. Dry stone walling is one of the oldest skills. Indeed in County Mayo an entire field system made from dry stone walls and since covered in peat, has been carbon dated to 3800BC. Maggie Doran from Stillorgan County Dublin described to people how she used to live in a barrel top wagon and travelled all the roads around Ireland. In fact she was ready to walk from Glenealy to Rathdrum to catch the train home describing the distance as only 'peg of a stone'.

The weekend was organized by the Enterprise Support Workers Orla Costello and Peter Geoghegan in Wicklow Travellers Group and was funded by County Wicklow Partnership.





Ian Daly, Bill, Mick & Mary Moorehouse



F. C. TOWN FOOTBALL CLUB

UPDATE



Greetings from all at F.C. Town

We are in to our third season as an all Traveller football team. Things are going really well for the team all the players have shown great commitment and dedication not missing a match and turning up hail rain or snow for training, the team have come on a great deal from or first season.

We have played seven games and won all seven so far this season in the Amateur Football league. We are also through to the first round of the Amateur Cup and we play Wyteleaf's first team from the Major Division in our second round match.

We also presented some players awards for last season.

The awards went to:
Paddy Collins for Players Player of the Year
Martin Collins for Top Goal Scorer for the second year running,
Paddy Gallagher for Managers Player of the Year.

Again, we would like thank all those who have supported us through the seasons, a big thank you to those who have made donations to the team it is really appreciated.



Martin Collins
Top Goal Scorer.



Paddy Collins
Players' Player of the Year.



Paddy Gallagher
Manager's Player of the Year.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPONSOR F. C. TOWN?

The cost of the league each year is very expensive. If you would like to make a contribution to F. C. Town it would be very much appreciated. You can contact their manager Michael McDonnell through the Parish Office on 01 8388874

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 9137888.**

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

The National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project

The National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project recently called on young Travellers to design a poster related to mental health. There was a big response with over thirty young people taking up the challenge. There were a number of age categories which included under 10, 12 and under and 18 and under.





The winners included:


Leanne McDonnell 1st prize under 18s.

Under 10
1st Winnie Ward, Tullamore.

2nd Amy McDonagh, Tullamore.

3rd Ciara McDonagh and Nicola Carroll, Tullamore joint winner with 3rd Chloe Doyle, Tullamore.

Special Merit, Michael Cawley.

12 and under
1st Michaela Dinnigan, Blanchardstown.

2nd Zoe McDonagh, Tullamore.

3rd Katie Casey, Exchange House and joint third Megan McDonagh, Tullamore.

18 and under
1st Leanne McDonnell, c/o Parish of the Travelling People and Dan Wall, Tallaght Travellers.

2nd Crystal McDonagh, Tullamore.
2nd Ally Casey, Exchange House.

Congratulations to everyone who took part. The posters were displayed during Traveller Focus week.

Health Made Easy 2



Do you have a group interested in learning about healthy food and cookery? Could you commit to attending a course one morning per weeks for six weeks? "**Healthy Food Made Easy**" is a nutrition and cookery course run by a local facilitator trained by the HSE. Upon completion, participants receive a cookery book and certificate. **Please telephone Noreen at 086 790 7360** for rates and any further information.

WE HAVE BEEN ASKED TO HELP BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE FOLLOWING

URGENT SAFETY WARNING

Beko, Flavel, Leisure and New World gas cookers

It has recently come to our attention that a particular Beko, Flavel, Leisure and New World cookers with a separate oven and grill can, if they are not operated in accordance with the user instructions produce

Dangerous levels of carbon monoxide which can cause serious injury or death

WHAT TO DO NEXT:

1. **CHECK THE LIST BELOW TO SEE IF YOU OWN ONE OF THE AFFECTED COOKERS***

Brand	Product model number
BEKO	DCG8511WLPG
BEKO	DCG8511PLW
BEKO	DG581LWP
FLAVEL	DCGAP5LS
FLAVEL	AP5LDWP
FLAVEL	AP5LDW
FLAVEL	AP5LDSP
LEISURE	CMIONRK
LEISURE	CMIONRC
NEW WORLD	5OTWLM SV LPG
NEW WORLD	5WLM WH LPG
NEW WORLD	5OWLM SV LPG
NEW WORLD	5OTWLM WH LPG

2. **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCED OPERATE THE GRILL WITH THE GRILL DOOR CLOSED.**

3. **ARRANGE FOR A FREE SAFETY INSPECTION AND MODIFICATION.**

FOR BEKO, FLAVEL & LEISURE
FREEPHONE 1800 25 29 25
(9AM-8PM MON-FRI, 10AM-4PM SAT-SUN)

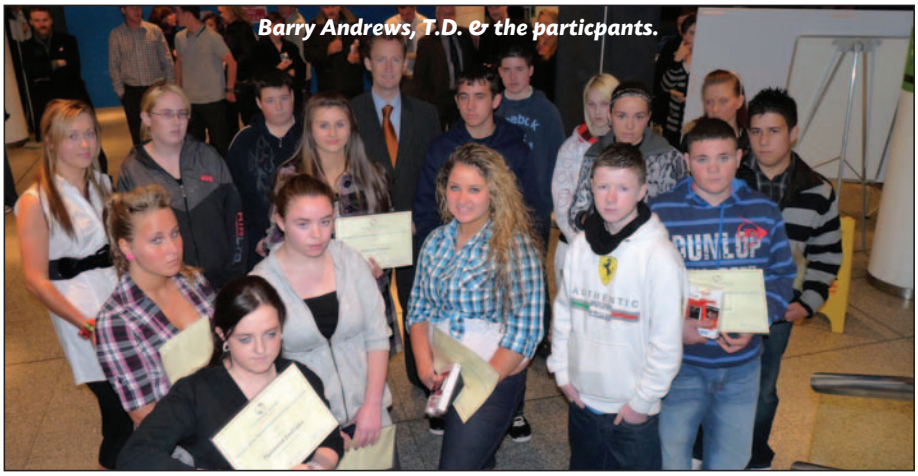
FOR NEW WORLD
FREEPHONE 1800 569 569
(9AM-5PM MON-FRI)

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Awards

The Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award ceremony was held on Friday the 6th of November in the Dublin City Council Offices at Wood Quay. The Awards were presented to members of the Traveller community who had recently completed Junior and Leaving Certificates and GCSE and A-Level examinations. The awards were open to nominations from all over the island of Ireland.

There were 101 recipients of the award in 2009 and many of them were present to collect their certificates and medals in person. The medals and certificates were presented by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Mr Barry Andrews, TD.

One purpose of the Award is to highlight positive role-models within the Traveller community. "The award has been established to acknowledge the significant achievements of the many Travellers who are now fully accessing and participating in education. Education is the key to our future and each and every one of you present here tonight has a key in your hands. Continue to use it wisely because it will open many doors. Stereotypes don't need to be broken – we've already broken them", said Cathleen McDonagh, Team Leader, Education Service.



Barry Andrews, T.D. & the particpants.

Another purpose of the Award is to show nominees how formal education is highly valued by Exchange House. "At Exchange House we believe strongly that access to education and participation by Travellers is the single greatest measure that can break the cycle of disadvantage and social exclusion experienced by Travellers. Today's award recipients are role models for the wider community. As well as giving great pride to their families and communities, their example shows what can be achieved on a wider scale with sufficient support and encouragement." said Carmel Terry, Board Member of Exchange House National Travellers Service.

Exchange House National Travellers Service has plans to honour members of the Traveller community from all over the country who achieved third level qualifications at future events, building on the success of the awards ceremonies to date.

The recipients of this year's awards and their proud families took part in the event which would not have been possible without the generosity of the sponsors, Dublin City Council, FÁS, City of Dublin VEC, Hugh McDermott, The Katherine Howard Foundation, Health Services Executive, CDYSB, and Lena O'Donovan, Florist.



Eileen McDonagh



Students of the Month

Megan Collins, Maria Collins & Melissa Collins





Francis & Amanda Ward



John Paul Collins, Tony Collins, Paula Maden & Paddy Collins at the Exchange House Educational Awards.

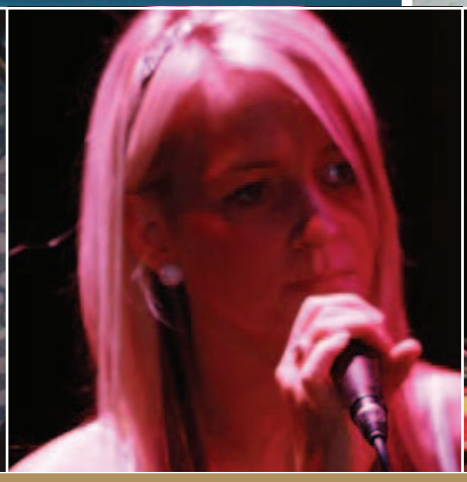


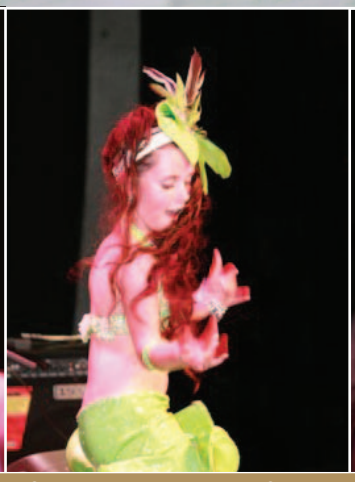
***Worlds Apart, Same Difference –* new play by Michael Collins.**













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