



Newsletter of Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committees

Issue 8 May 2015



Welcome to the latest issue of the Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committee newsletter – our first of 2014. In this issue, we continue to highlight some of the achievements of projects working with children, young people and families across Limerick.

I am delighted that Inspector Helen Costello has joined us, replacing Supt. Dan Keane on the Limerick CYPSC. I would like to thank Dan for his time and dedication to the committee and extend a warm welcome to Helen. An Garda Síochána are a key partner on the CYPSC and we are delighted with their continued commitment to the committee and working towards improved outcomes for children and young people through interagency working.

There have also been a few changes in some of the projects that operate under the Limerick CYPSC. In this issue, we feature an introduction from Caitlin Lewis, the new Restorative Practices Development Officer who replaced Ingrid Colvin. Ingrid was key in developing the RP project in Limerick and I wish her every success in the move back to her native Dublin. For the next phase of the project we are delighted to secure someone of Caitlin's calibre to lead up the project as it enters its final year. Caitlin also gives us an update on some upcoming RP training to take place in May.

Melinda Hughes has also joined the Homemakers Family Support Service, replacing Maura McDonnell as Project Coordinator. The Homemakers Service has done well to establish itself in the past year and I look forward to working with Melinda as the service continues to develop.

Inside this issue you will find news from some key CYPSC projects such as ABC Start Right and Parenting Limerick. January also saw the launch of www.loveparenting.ie, a one stop shop for information and support on positive parenting. Inside you will find some pictures of the launch by Minister of Education and Skills Jan O'Sullivan, an example of the type of content available and the website and some information on the Start Right Case Studies which were launched on the same day.

Loveparenting.ie is the first step in an exciting new Population Approach campaign which is soon to hit Limerick city and suburbs. This approach is part of a larger Early Intervention and Prevention strategy being pursued by the Limerick CYPSC and takes in the work being done by Start Right and ABC Start Right, the Homemakers Service and Parenting Limerick. Inside you will find information on what the Population Approach campaign will look like. *(continues on next page)*

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- New RP Development Worker appointed
- Population Approach soon to be Launched City Wide
- New Barnardos Homemaker Co-ordinator appointed





We also have an update from the Limerick City-Wide Children & Youth Forum, including a feature on their recent Youth Conference in Thomond Park. This was the second annual conference organised by the forum and I wish to congratulate all those involved in organising this very successful event. There are also updates from Southill Club 2gether, Incredible Years and the ISPCC.

Finally, following on from our Christmas edition of the newsletter, we are once more featuring a snapshot of a couple of the cultural events that have taken place with children and young people in Limerick. In March we saw the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival take place with a host of children's events happening throughout the city and county. In April the Limerick Spring Festival of Politics & Ideas held a Children's Protest Art morning with the Limerick Printmakers. We take a look at some of the key messages coming from the children at this event.

We hope you find this newsletter interesting and informative. As always, we welcome submissions from across the children's services sector in Limerick City and County for future newsletters.



Gerard Brophy

Chair, Limerick Children & Young People's Services Committee

National CYPSC Website

A new website featuring information on all Children and Young People's Services Committees throughout the country is soon to be launched. The website, which has already gone live, is an excellent resource for anyone looking for information on the background and purpose of CYPSCs, the latest news and events with CYPSCs and a detailed break of each county CYPSC. The National Co-ordinator of the Children & Young People's Services Committees maintains the website with each CYPSC Co-ordinator responsible for content on their own county section.

The website will be officially launched by Minister for Children and Youth Affairs James Reilly TD at a CYPSC National Event, "Achieving together for children and young people", which will take place on 18th June in Griffith College, Dublin. Go to www.cypsc.ie for more information, to explore the website and to take a look at the Limerick page.



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF LOVEPARENTING.IE

Parenting is the most important job in the world, but it is also the most challenging. Nobody can do it by themselves: We all need help from time to time.

Parenting Limerick—in conjunction with Limerick Children and Young People’s Services Committee and Start Right—officially launched loveparenting.ie a new and exciting positive parenting website.

Loveparenting.ie came about as a way to support all parents. Not everyone can or will access supports but all parents have questions, doubt themselves etc. This website is a one-stop shop that provides advice, tips and reassurance about positive parenting.

The website was officially launched by Minister for Education and Skills Jan O’Sullivan on Friday January 23rd in Thomond Park Stadium. Guest included community and family support groups and numerous families themselves from all over Limerick City and County. MC Richard Lynch opened the ceremony and welcomed speakers including Dr. Eileen Humphreys, Lindsay Liston (Southill Family Resource Centre Children’s Services Co-

ordinator, Caitriona Murphy and Amy Quinn, Southside Parent Forum.

The event provided parents with the opportunity to have their questions answered at information stands, while there were many interactive activities there for children.

In her speech Minister O’Sullivan spoke about the importance of parents as “the primary educators of their children. I consider early years of education an absolute priority. This website ensures that parents will have the best advice about all the important decisions regarding their children and it will offer an invaluable source of information to parent’s in need”.



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The positive Parenting website loveparenting.ie helps parents to find their way through the “Ages & Stages” of their child’s development and offers practical advice on building strong relationships through positive interactions. The website has articles covering topics such as bullying, relationships, playing with your child, tips on avoiding and managing tantrums and supporting developmental milestones. It signposts the variety of Limerick– based and national services available to parents, as well as providing helpful tips from professional. There are also lots of downloadable publications about parenting and links to other useful websites. Support is just a click away!

If you would like more information on loveparenting.ie or have any suggestions or articles that you would like to see included, please contact Jeanne Ryan at info@loveparenting.ie or 061 419388



Amy Quinn with her son Scott; Lindsey Liston, Southill FRC; Minister Jan O’Sullivan; Caitriona Murphy, Southill parents forum and Maria O’Dwyer ABC Start Right Manager



Images from loveparenting.ie official launch 23rd January 2015 Thomond Park Stadiumes
View More <http://loveparenting.ie/gallery/love-parenting-launch-at-thomand-park/>

LOVEPARENTING.IE; A ONE STOP SHOP FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPORT ON POSITIVE PARENTING. THIS ARTICLE IS ONE EXAMPLE OF THE CONTENT AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE



Mummy! I can't find my shoes? I don't want to wash my face! Brush your hair! Eat your breakfast! Hurry up or we'll be late!! I forgot my bag.

The above should sound familiar to many families rushing to get themselves and their children ready in our ever busier mornings. Rather than struggling through the same sprint everyday there is an easier solution to the morning chaos. By working with your child to create and complete a simple routine morning time can become much more successful and less stressful for both you and your child.

Children are creatures of habit and are happiest when things stay the same. Although variety is part of day to day life, household routines are important for helping children feel safe and secure as well as loved. Consistency in routines or activities that happen at about the same time and in about the same way each day provide comfort and a sense of safety to young children. These routines can help prevent tantrums, misbehaviours and distress. Regardless of whether it is time to play, eat, sleep, or time for Mum or Dad to return, knowing what to expect next gives children a sense of security. This helps them learn that caring adults will provide what they need and leaves them free to focus on the most important work of all – playing, exploring, and learning about the world around them.

Visual Aids can be useful to help your child get ready in the morning. A simple picture schedule with a few removable icons for key activities like brush teeth, wash face, comb hair, get school bag will gradually help your child become more independent with their self care routine and time management. As your child becomes more independent other activities like 'make bed' can be added to the list.

Bedtime is another time when cooperation from your child is of particular importance to end the day on a positive note. When the bedtime routine is predictable it helps children to settle down to sleep. This requires creating a short routine before bedtime that involves quiet activities occurring in the same order every night. An example of such a routine could be snack time, dress for bed, brush teeth, use the bathroom and read one book. It is important that this routine remains the same every night as it will provide your child with cues that time to sleep is approaching.

Though routines are important, this does not mean that you must be a slave to them. There are some benefits to children experiencing some changes to routine from time to time. Such minor modifications will help your child to cope with bigger changes when the inevitably occur. Of course, how do you go about introducing bigger changes to a child's routine? Changes in routine are made easier if you and your child can prepare for them in advance. An example of preparation for a change may involve the arrival of a babysitter. Preparation might involve making a babysitter picture magnet and a chart with your child. An hour before the babysitter arrives you could have the child place the magnet on the chart and you can both talk about this change and what it will mean.

Visual schedules and routines are not instant cure-alls and it may take a little time for your child to become comfortable with moving to the next 'job' on her list. Also, just like us, our children can fall into old habits and poor choices especially for the sake of an extra 5 minutes in bed in the morning. However, the benefits of a structured routine far outweigh the negatives. By maintaining the routine your child will gradually become more independent with self care and this will help both of you save time in the morning. Additionally, a consistent routine with small changes that arise naturally will help your child become more accepting of larger changes as they inevitably arise.

Provided by "Incredible Years Limerick" <http://loveparenting.ie/importance-of-routine/>

LOVE PARENTING.IE

A one stop shop for information and support on positive parenting “because being a parent is the most important job in the world”

If you would like to contribute a piece to feature on loveparenting.ie include information on upcoming events, photos of events or general information sharing please contact Jeanne at info@loveparenting.ie
061 419388



START RIGHT CASE STUDIES

In the spirit of how the learning from Start Right highlighted the need for universal parental support, the launch of loveparenting.ie was twinned with the launch of five Start Right Case Studies. The case studies approach to evaluation was a deviation from the summative report model that generally accompanies a project's wind-up. Mindful of the need to present research that was accessible to all, the case stories present the opportunity to 'tell the story of Start Right'.

They are documented in a series from 1 to 5, all focusing on different components of Start Right's work. Meaningful engagement is the common theme throughout, as the cornerstone of achieving better child outcomes through prevention and early intervention work.

The dual launch day in January saw a packed-out room in Thomond Park, lively with the sounds of young children playing and parents visiting the stands of Parenting Limerick members. Among the speakers on the day, two parents shared their experiences as service-users pre and post intervention: Katriona Murphy and Amy Quinn presented the kind of anecdotal perspective that too often gets lost in formal evaluation.

The case studies can also be accessed electronically at <http://www.cypsc.ie/limerick/resources.372.html>

Case Study 1: Preschool Practice Manager: An Early Years Intervention

Case Study 2: Building Partnerships: A Start Right Approach to Mentoring in the Early Years

Case Study 3: Sunnyside Afterschool Club

Case Study 4: Early Years Manager's Network

Case Study 5: Partnership with Parents = Success



Eileen Humphreys speaking at the launch of the Start Right Case Studies



ABC START RIGHT UPDATE

In September 2014 the Limerick CYPSC received confirmation from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs that an application to the Area Based Childhood (ABC) Programme had been accepted. DCYA and the Atlantic Philanthropies are joint funders of the ABC Programme which will run until the end of 2017. The application submitted was very much based on the model and learning from the Start Right programme that ran in the south side of Limerick city for the past three years is now branded as ABC Start Right Limerick.

Although funding for the Start Right programme ended at the end of February 2015, many of the central elements of the programme continue to be maintained on the Southside of the city. The Limerick CYPSC view the development of ABC Start Right Limerick on the Northside and city centre as a further development in an overall early intervention and prevention strategy for Limerick.

Maria O'Dwyer has been appointed as Programme Manager for ABC Start Right and Aileen Kelleher has been appointed Early Years Coordinator. Both Maria and Aileen worked on developing and delivering Start Right on the Southside and are key in continuing the learning from that programme.

An operational group consisting of representatives directly involved in the implementation of programme activities called the Programme Management Committee (PMC) has been formed and met for this first time at the beginning of March. Following an intensive period of preparation, this programme will start to become more visible in the coming months in its target areas. The PMC is very much the working group component of ABC Start Right, with the Limerick CYPSC as the governing consortium.

POPULATION APPROACH ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN

In partnership with the Limerick Childrens and Young People's Services Committee and the Parenting Limerick Network, Start Right/ABC Start Right has designed a Population Approach to Parenting campaign, to promote and support positive parenting across Limerick City.

The Population Approach is a universal parenting campaign that complements the more targeted interventions that take place around the city. It is based on evidence and outcomes from the Triple P Programme in Australia where such a campaign was run with significant outcomes.

The design and development of the Love Parenting website www.loveparenting.ie was the first step in the Population Approach to Parenting. This next step will see an advertising campaign that will be visible throughout the city.

The campaign has a four-tiered structure:

(1) The design and development of a website dedicated to the promotion of positive parenting: www.loveparenting.ie. The main focus of all content on the site is positive interactions between parents and children, covering areas such as secure attachment, consistent disciplinary methods, play ideas, understanding teenage children.

(2) The use of signage on city-suburban buses, bill boards, local media, an official launch. The themes used in the campaign will change in 8-week cycles and include; valuing your role as a parent; mental health; Interactions; Physical health. All pro-

motional material will direct to loveparenting.ie

(3) Positive Messages will be carried on pharmacy bags across the City, used for all child-related products (i.e. medicine, toiletries etc.), while smaller-version posters will be displayed in community settings, such as crèches, schools, health clinics and GP surgeries.

(4) Workshops: Community partners in Parenting Limerick and beyond will provide practical advice, workshops and information that support the current theme.

The Population Approach to Parenting campaign, as part of CYPSC's prevention and early intervention strategy for Limerick, is premised on the belief that many small changes can have a greater effect on the whole population than major changes for a small proportion of the population.



PARENTING LIMERICK

An update on the Parenting When Separated programme – a multi-agency approach through the Parenting Limerick initiative being delivered by our partners in Barnardos, Limerick Social Service Council and Tusla.



In November Parenting Limerick supported four of its members to attend 'Parenting When Separated', an evidence based intervention for parents developed by Parents Plus. This training allows the four attendees to roll out a support programme for parents in Limerick. The pilot programme began at the end of April with further programmes envisioned for later in the year.

The Parenting when Separated Programme aims to support parents who are preparing for, going through or have gone through separation or divorce by:

- Improving how the couple communicate with their children around the separation
- Improving how the couple communicate with their children's other parent
- Helping the couple to cope with the impact of their separation on their children's lives
- Helping to solve co-parenting problems in a positive way to help both parents and their child
- Allowing the couple to meet other parents with similar experiences to them

This programme consists of six weekly sessions. One programme is available for one spouse and a separate programme is available for the child's other parent. It is recommended that both parents do the programme.

If you are interested in this programme and you would like more information visit <http://loveparenting.ie/parenting-programmes/>

CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING MARCH 2015

The Citywide Children and Youth Forum supported a two day "Train the Trainer" Child Protection programme in March which was delivered by the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). The training programme provided participants with the information, materials and opportunity to deliver the four hour Child Protection Awareness Programme, which is the standardised training programme for the youth work sector.

Participants are now trained as Child Protection Trainers and will deliver the course within their own organisations and to other Youth groups and projects in the City. Well done to all who took part and a big thank you to the Blue Box Creative Learning Centre who hosted the training.



Participants of the Child Protection Programme Training, March 2015

“KNOW MORE STRESS LESS” - A CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE CITY WIDE CHILDREN AND YOUTH FORUM



Limerick Citywide CHILDREN & YOUTH FORUM

The second Limerick City-wide Children and Youth Forum Conference took place in Thomond Park on March 23rd as part of the Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival 2015. The theme of the conference was “Know More Stress Less”. The main aim of the conference was to raise awareness of the importance of well-being for all who work and learn in youth and community settings. The conference offered various groups and projects an opportunity to network, share knowledge and experience.

The key note speaker Dr Fergus Heffernan spoke about the impact of negativity and how it suppresses us in our day to day lives and by having ‘hope, trust, compassion, we learn to own our story and tie everything together.’ A host of interactive workshops on a variety of

themes were on offer to participants – these included: Managing the Emotional Impact of our Work, Now that’s what I Call Gender 2015!, Not Like Us: Disenfranchised Grief in the Caring Professions, Tribal Drumming and many more as well

The conference was an amazing success with over 140 people in attendance – a comment from a participant sums up the day well - “I just wanted to congratulate the team that organised the Thomond Park event on a superbly professional and well organised event - it was a pleasure to be part of it and to work with you. I do a lot of different types of events and I can honestly say - by a country mile - this was the best organised.

Thanks of course to all who supported the conference by attending and also by the generous sponsorship we received. We look forward to putting all the learning from the day into practice!



Images from “Know more, Stress less” Youth Conference 23rd March

In February, Caitlin Lewis took on the role of Development Officer for the Restorative Practices project. In this issue, Caitlin introduces herself and looks forward to the work ahead.



My name is Caitlin Lewis and I'm delighted to be starting as Restorative Practices Development Officer. I'm very excited to join what looks like a thriving RP Community! I have big boots to fill from Ingrid Colvin, who I have not yet met, but whose knowledge, experience and

kindness I can feel emanating through the walls of my new office. I hope I can pick up where she left off, and continue her work in supporting Limerick's community, youth and education sectors to use restorative practices.

My background is in social justice education— working with people to feel empowered to create a more just and equal society, and have their voices heard. I spent two years working at Amnesty International on human rights education and youth activism, where I created opportunities for children and young people to stand up for human rights, lobby governments and advocate for human rights defenders, and question power relations and inequality. I also trained and mentored teachers to build a human rights culture in their schools in a practical, sustainable way. Prior to

this I spent four years doing academic research on contemporary social issues affecting women and girls, and a further two years working in Scotland on community arts and gallery education, particularly using art as a catalyst for social change and rehabilitation in healthcare, youth and community settings.

I became interested in restorative practices through my work at Amnesty Restorative practices are a natural fit for the rights-based approach, and much of my work with schools involved restorative principles and activities blended with human rights. However, this is my first role fully dedicated to restorative practices, so I am looking forward to learning from the skilled restorative work going on in Limerick. I'll be in post at Ceim ar cheim full time from 2nd march, where I'll be finding my feet and will also try to do as many visits as possible in the coming weeks, so I can get to know what's happening in the area, find out what support is needed, and listen to any and all new ideas on making RP work for Limerick.

Please feel free to email me at respracdevoff@gmail.com, ring me on 087-936-3010, or drop in and say hello! For more info on RP in Limerick check out our dedicated website www.restorativepracticeslimerick.ie

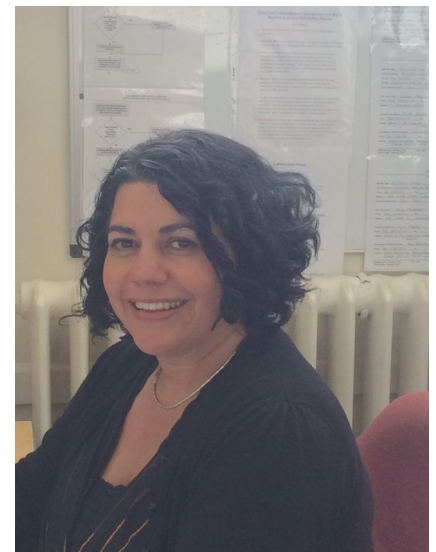
HOMEMAKER FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE UPDATE:

An Introduction from the new Homemakers Family Support Service Co-ordinator

I am Melinda Hughes the new coordinator of the homemakers project. I have recently taken up the post following Maura's moving onto other pastures, the project was very sorry to lose her. I intend to keep the spirit of the project and welcome engagement with all partners involved in children's lives.

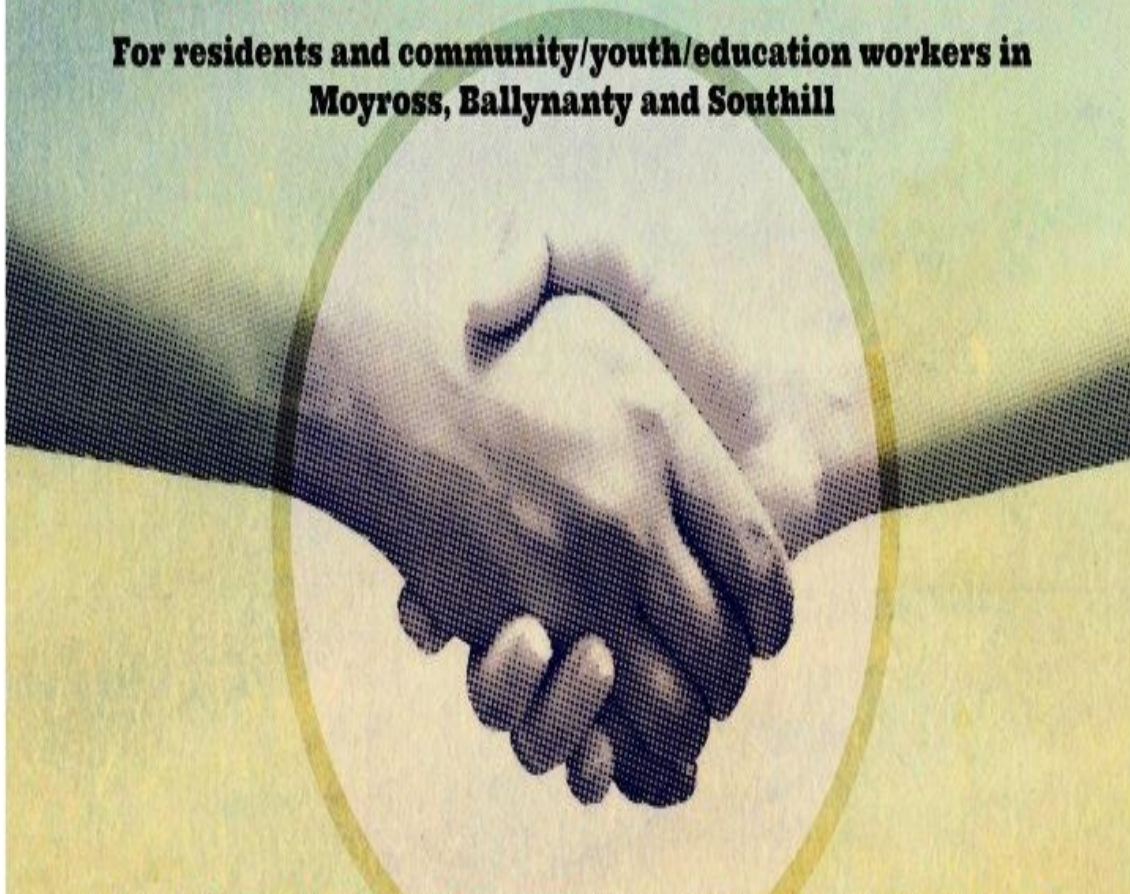
Homemakers is open to referrals and remains committed to supporting families to manage in times of stress. It has been exciting to hear from parents in my first few weeks that they are feeling less stressed and more supported. This has led to change in children's daily experience, one child said that mornings are quieter and earlier since homemakers started visiting. The outcome here is that she is accessing education prepared and ready to engage.

If any individual or service would like to hear more about how this service can work in your context please do not hesitate to get in contact with me at Melinda.hughes@barnardos.ie



FREE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES TRAINING

For residents and community/youth/education workers in Moyross, Ballynanty and Southill



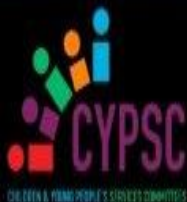
20-22 May Facilitators Skills Training HSE Offices, Raheen Industrial Estate

26 May Introduction to Restorative Practices Blue Box, LEDP, Roxboro Road

28 May Circles Training Blue Box, LEDP, Roxboro Road

Restorative Practices is a skillset that can help to build stronger relationships and communities. It gives you the tools to resolve conflict in a simple and fair way. Research carried out in Tallaght found that there was a 43% reduction in overall disputes in homes, schools and families through the use of restorative practices.

For more info or to book your place, contact Caitlin Lewis at respracdevoff@gmail.com or 087 936 3010



Restorative Practices



LITTLE VOICES UPDATE



There have been a number of new initiatives run as part of the Little Voices project in the last few months, while also continuing to run some of the ongoing activities as follows: -

Parents Programmes, with Kate Hayes, SLT, co-delivering with Marie Keane, Adult Education Tutor; which ran in Northside FRC Sunshine Creche and in Moyross Creche. This involved the parents coming in to work with the facilitators before joining their child in the early years room. They learned about the importance of their child's early language development, and prepared the language interactions they would do with their child that day when the group came together, and the facilitators modelled the language exercise with the group.

Language Stations using Talkboost Programme resources have been facilitated over a session series in the three pre-school settings, in Corpus Christi Pre-school, Moyross Creche, and Northside FRC Sunshine Creche; These exercises are facilitated by Kate Hayes with the help of the early years practitioners, and help promote the pre-school children's language development.

Two Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival events were facilitated by Little Voices, in collaboration with ABC Start Right. Children and their parents from Corpus Christi Pre-school enjoyed a 'Bringing Stories to Life' workshop in Watch House Cross Community Library; and, children from Moyross Creche Pre-school came to the Community Centre with their parents for their workshop. These sessions involve the child and their parents getting actively involved in the story using fun actions and arts and crafts activities. The sessions were also an opportunity for parents to meet each other and with Little Voices and Start Right as well as their early years staff in a relaxed setting, and chat about the benefits of exploring stories with their child.

Kate Hayes gave a guest lecture to 2nd years students in the B.A. in Early Childhood Care and Education in Mary Immaculate College.

Classroom-Based Programmes using Coaching and Mentoring Model for Parents practising language interactions with their child have been ongoing in St. Munchin's Girls' National School.

Talkboost Programme ongoing with Corpus Christi Pre-school Junior Infant classes this is a structured and evidenced programme that can boost a child's communication.

Joint development clinics ongoing with the Speech and Language Therapist meeting with the parent and their child following their appointment with the Public Health Nurse.

There is a 'No Pens Day' organised for Wednesday 3rd June in the two primary schools that are part of the project, St. Munchin's Girls' National School and Corpus Christi School – this will involve a speaking and listening event organised by Little Voices locally; highlighting that the ability to communicate effectively is the one that has the potentially positive impact on our lives. Conversations between adults and children characterised by high quality language learning interactions really make a difference. The initiative originates from the UK where The Communication Trust has run a national 'No Pens Wednesday' event over the last five years.



INCREDIBLE YEARS LIMERICK UPDATE

Since its introduction into Limerick City Incredible Years has continued to increase the number of programmes delivered and the delivery locations through out the City. There are currently over sixty IY programmes being delivered in seventeen locations ranging from schools, crèches and Family Resource Centres.

One of the key components of this expansion is to offer training to individuals and organisations that are presently engaged in delivery or those who are interested in the provision of IY programmes. With this in mind IY Limerick would usually schedule at least 2 programme training sessions per year. As the programmes become more established and better known the interest in taking part in these training sessions has increased.

In January of this year 25 people from 18 organisations took part in Dina in the Classroom training. The Dina in the Classroom programme utilises strategies that encourage children to learn non aggressive ways to solve everyday conflicts and problems. The programme also promotes social skills and better classroom behaviour. Evidence had shown that the Dina in the Class-

room programme improved children's social and emotional competence and improves their ability to do well academically in schools as well as help them to make and keep new friends.

As well as offering training to new group leaders IY Limerick recognises the importance of offering ongoing support and upskilling to those group leaders already engaged with IY, it is because of this that a number of workshops and consultation days are also available to group leaders through out the year. An example of this is the upcoming Dina in the preschool workshop on anger management which will give advice, tips and ideas for dealing with child anger. Ongoing training and the provision of support are part of a strategy to promote the sustainability of IY programmes in Limerick into the future.

For information on training and workshops please contact Barry Kelly at iyadmin@paulpartnership.ie

GARDAI YOUTH AWARD NOMINATION EVENT

On Wednesday 5th March 2015 Southill Area Centre was the venue where 10 of Southill Club2gether Youth Project's Junior Leaders received certificates of nomination for the inaugural 2014 Limerick Garda Youth Awards.

On the night Juvenile Liaison Officers Sgt Seamus O' Neill and Gerry Scanlon were on hand with a member of the Community Gardaí from Roxboro to speak to the young people about the awards and highlight the work their contribution in the community is making. In his speech Seamus encouraged the young people to enter the awards again next year and to keep up the good work they are doing in their community.

Unfortunately there were only 9 award winners in 2014 out of a total of 90 nominations and the stand-

ards were extremely high. Seamus went on to say, "its a pity we can't give everyone an award, these young people are doing excellent work and are becoming role models for other young people in their community".

The event was attended by the parents of those nominated also along with the youth work team based in Southill Area Centre and was the first time that the project supported not only an award winner in Jonathan Power but a total of 11 nominations in 2014. Well done to all involved.



ISPCC ANTI-BULLYING SHIELD CAMPAIGN



The ISPCC launched its very first Anti-Bullying Shield Campaign to help protect children from bullying in 2012. Bullying remains to be a complex issue amongst young people in Ireland today. For the last three years, the ISPCC's Shield Campaign has continued to go from strength to strength. However, bullying is still an issue that affects young people within our society.

In 2013 Childline received almost 8,000 calls from children and young people in relation to bullying. Last year 11,000 calls to Childline were relating to bullying which shows the widespread problem of bullying, and a very startling recent statistic reported that that 40% of children aged just 9 years old have experienced some form of bullying. Bullying can have a negative impact on self-esteem and increase social isolation. It can also lead to children becoming depressed, anxious and insecure. In desperation, some young people even consider suicide. These startling statistics clearly show that bullying is a very real problem in Ireland and one that is affecting children at a very young age.

The purpose of The Anti-Bullying Shield Campaign is to support, empower and equip the entire community to deal with the bullying effectively. The ISPCC Shield Campaign has a number of components which will help us to achieve our mission. In March, the ISPCC runs its Anti-Bullying Awareness Month. The ISPCC uses the month of March to create awareness surrounding the issue of bullying through the use of social and print media. Each week we tackled a new topic relating to bullying. Week one was dedicated to the prevention of bullying, while week two was used to discuss what to do about bullying. Week three addressed the roles of peers and bystanders and week four discussed online safety.

The ISPCC also ran a national media campaign which enlisted the support of many well-known celebrities such as Hozier, Colin Farrell, Saoirse Ronan, One Direction, Emeli Sandé, Brian O'Driscoll, Jessie J and many more, who all supported the campaign by being photographed with the ISPCC Shield. The Shield is a symbol of protection from bullying, one that children can easily identify with. Shield pins were sold nationwide in order to raise awareness and funds. As well as being sold by staff and volunteers, our pins were also sold by our corporate supporters M&S and Penney's. Shield bangles were also available exclusively at Penney's.

The Shield My School anti-bullying toolkit was launched in March 2013 and we have recently launched Shield My Club. It is a self-evaluation toolkit for schools and clubs which is free to download at www.ispcc.ie and we also offer supportive facilitation of the toolkit. The purpose of the toolkit is to help schools and clubs identify how effective they are in dealing with bullying and to help them develop a clear policy for tackling bullying in the future. To date, around 37,800 students have had a positive result from the use of the toolkit.

Standing up against bullying is not something that we can do alone - everyone has a part to play in highlighting this important issue. Hozier a new anti-bullying ambassador said *"the work that is done by parents, teachers and volunteers at the ISPCC to stamp out bullying is to be commended. By wearing the ISPCC blue shield we are showing that we are standing up to bullies and the whole issue of bullying"*. We cannot allow bullying to have such a stronghold over our children. We need to protect them; we need to Stand Up Against Bullying.

If you are concerned about a young person experiencing bullying the ISPCC has launched a new text bullying service available free of charge for young people who wish to discuss the issue of bullying. Young people can text the word "bully" to 50101 or to speak to a trained volunteer by contacting Childline on 1800 666 666.



Your support in this campaign will make a huge difference to vulnerable children and it would be fantastic if you could endorse this campaign which we hope will continue to be the biggest of its kind. Below are pictures of some of the celebrities who attended the 2015 Launch of this year's campaign & other ambassadors who are providing ongoing support to combat bullying in our communities.

On Wednesday 1st April 12 young people aged 15-19 years from Southill Club2gether Youth Project based in Southill Area Centre completed a 12 week Mental Health Awareness Programme called Mindout.

The group engaged strongly in communication exercises, moving debates, team building activities and discussions for ninety minutes each week centred around the topic of Mental Health and wellbeing. The aim of the programme is to support young people to take a positive approach to understanding their emotional and social health. The weekly sessions present a wide and varied range of strategies available to young people to cope with stressful or challenging situations from personal coping skills to informal networks of support to professional or voluntary support services.

During the final session the group of 5 boys and 7 girls had the chance to listen to a presentation by Michelle O' Connor from My Mind Counselling service which set up business in Limerick in 2014. Michelle outlined the range of affordable supports available to young people in the city and congratulated the group on the completion of their programme.

The highlight of the evening was a short presentation from Katie Whelan well known for founding 'Lisa's Light', Katie spoke about her experience of losing her cousin Lisa to suicide and how by throwing herself into the campaign gave her a sense of purpose and has led her on her own personal wellness journey in dealing with the pain of Lisa's loss. Katie was very impressed by the group saying "it was a pleasure to be invited to present the certificates, the group were so welcoming and it's great to see other people my age learning coping skills and techniques for looking after themselves, I can't wait to find out more about the programme".



The programme was facilitated weekly by Greg, Cathal and Iona from Southill Club2gether Youth Project. Thanks to Daniel Butler Northside DEPS, My Mind Counselling and Katie Whelan for their support.

For more information on upcoming youth projects in Southill Club2gether Youth Project check out www.southillareacentre.ie/club2gether or on Facebook www.facebook.com/southill.clubtogether

LIMERICK LIFELONG LEARNING FESTIVAL

The Limerick Lifelong Learning Festival ran from March 23rd – 29th inclusive and included over 150 events taking place right across Limerick City and County, all of which were free and open to all. The theme for this year's festival was 'Learning for Positive Living' and provided an opportunity for us to embrace new experiences and learning opportunities. There really was something for everyone, and in particular a great range of events was offered to interest children and young people and their parents. Here is just a selection of those events: -

- Loveparenting.ie was the "Lifelong Learning Festival Central" for all news on events and what Love Parenting recommends for parents and children.
- Limerick childcare Committee ran Basic First training for Parents. The training was delivered throughout the Festival week in a number of locations across the City and County, ranging from Newcastlewest to Abbeyfeale, including Watch House Cross Community Library.
- The City-wide Children and Youth Forum held a Conference at Thomond Park with the aim of raising awareness of the importance of wellbeing for all who work and learn in youth and community settings; and to share and learn new and exciting approaches to wellbeing.
- Art Workshops for Kids were run in the Limerick School of Art and Design; and parents and teachers were also invited to have a go!
- The Learning Hub facilitated workshops on 'Family Friendly Dinners' – cooking demos which are the purse too! There was also a demonstration on healthy option snacks.
- A Mindfulness Morning for Parents was facilitated by Ballyhoura Development with Colaiste Ioseof; with a second session being run in Castleconnell.
- Little Voices and ABC Start Right facilitated two workshops for parents and c children on the Northside of the City on 'Bringing Stories to Life'.
- Incredible Years Limerick facilitated a session for parents on 'Promoting Your Child's Self-Esteem' in the Parents Room in the LEDP.
- Kilmallock Library facilitated a session on Story telling for parents and pre-school children.
- Corpus Christi Primary School gave a talk for parents on healthy eating and fitness; and also ran an Easter Egg Hunt for Junior children in the playground.



PROTEST ART FOR KIDS

On the April 18th the Limerick Spring Festival of Politics & Ideas, together with the Limerick Printmakers, ran a workshop for children between the ages of 5 – 12.

The workshop was based on the festival theme of exploring the role of activism in society. For three hours that morning over 20 kids were listened to as they were given the opportunity to tell parents and festival organisers what they would like to protest about. Concerns were wide and varied, ranging from pleas to protect the ozone and make more cycling lanes for kids to immediate concerns appealing for more pizza and less homework!



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES COMMITTEES

Limerick

Limerick Children & Young
People's Services Committees

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Limerick Children & Young People's Service Committee would like to thank all of those who contributed to this newsletter.

We hope that this newsletter will provide an opportunity for all of those working with children, young people and families in Limerick to share information about their services, programmes and practices. If you would like to submit an article or if you would like information on an upcoming events or training programme included, please contact

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