**

*\*\*Photos will be issued by Clive Wassoon\* \**

**Donegal CYPSC, Launches the Children & Young People’s Plan 2018-2020 with a Learning Seminar entitled,**

**‘Re-imagining Disability, from Accepting Diversity to True Inclusion’**,

*“ Seeing the person first and the disability second is the overwhelming message of the day, a fantastic event putting the spotlight on disability services in Donegal” VoxPop comment from Lorraine Thompson, Donegal Youth Service*

**Wednesday 10th October 2018:** Donegal Children & Young People’s Services Committee (CYPSC ) celebrated the Launch of the Children and Young people’s Plan (CYPP) 2018 -2020 on the 10th October 2018, at the Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. This celebration, chaired by **Gerry Hone, CYPSC Chairperson, Area Manager Tusla and Liam Ward, CYPSC Deputy Chairperson, Director of Services, Donegal County Council,** included a multi-agency networking and information sharing event and learning seminar.

The learning seminar, ***‘****Re-imagining Disability, from Accepting Diversity to True Inclusion’*, focused on the challenges to social inclusion experienced by Children & Young people who have a physical, sensory or intellectual disability, and the challenges this poses for them and their families.

**Dr. Bronagh Byrne, currently Co-Director of the**[**Centre for Children's Rights**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/CentreforChildrensRights/)**and Co-Chair of the**[**Disability Research Network**](http://www.qub.ac.uk/research-centres/DisabilityResearchNetwork/)**at Queens University Belfast,** delivered a thought provoking key note address; *“The way we imagine disability is changing and needs to continue to change. It is not simply a medical issue, it is a rights issue. Disability is a fundamental facet of human diversity. It has always been and will always be part of the human condition. By challenging our perceptions of disability, we can recognise, accept and respect children with disabilities, and continue the journey to meaningful inclusion”*

Dr. Bronagh Byrne specialises in the area of disability and equality.

**Stephen Barrett, Donegal Local Development CLG** set the scene for the Learning Seminar with a Socio demographic Profile of Disability in County Donegal.

An informative overview of services from the Health Service Excutive was provided by **Anita Gallagher, Manager Physical & Sensory Team & Alvin Doherty, Manager Early Intervention Team.**

Three inspiring young people **Liam Wheldon, Eoin Rooney and Albie Dinsmore Clarke,** described their personal journey and how their involvement with various Foroige initiatives and activities made a difference to their quality of life.

*Commenting for the Vox Pop Marie Crawley, Manager Prevention, Partnership and Family Support, Tusla said “Inspiring, eye opening, as always nothing is as powerful as hearing the voices of young people”*

Local examples of Best Practice highlighted some of the simple changes any organisation can make to support the inclusion of this cohort of children & young people in their activities.

Drawing on her extensive experience working in this area **Wendy Mc Carry from the Bluestack Special Needs Foundation** challenged delegates to change their mindset and approach to children & young people with disability. **Gerry Clark, Letterkenny Tennis Club** focused on Inclusion in Sporting Activities. **Bairbre Cahill, Parent Hub Donegal** gave a presentation on Parent Support Training opportunities available via Tusla Prevention Partnership and Family Support. **Leona Mc Menamin Mevagh Family Resource Centre** described their Parent Peer Support group and **Garry Glennon** took us through the experience of **Letterkenny Youth and Family Services** in how making small changes can have an impact on inclusion for example running Sensory Santa for children with ASD.

Theenthusiatic **Bluestack Choir**, charmed the audience with their inspiring performance and rounded of the morning’s activities and sent us off to lunch on a high note with a spring in our step.

*“Brilliant content and very honest information showcasing the great work happening in Donegal. The Bluestack Choir was a great addition and feel very grateful to have seen this” Chloe Mc Ginty, Springboard Family Support Services*

Delegates also had the opportunity to; Network and view over 30 Information Stands from local service providers and organisations providing specialist supports to children & young people with disabilities and their families; Sign up for Disability Awareness training; Try out the Tusla Outcomes for Children Data and Information Hub, and enjoy the Donegal Down Syndrome Photographic Exhibition. **Ciaran McDonnell** one of the exhibiting photographers was on hand to talk about his work.

The Children & Young People’s Plan 2018-2020 launched by **Dr. Bronagh Byrne** and **Liam Ward,** Deputy Chair of Donegal CYPSC, was accompanied by a swinging performance from the Errigal Sax Quartet, (Donegal Music Education Partnership). Many thanks to **Eoin Bond,** **Rory McLaughlin, Caoimhe Drumm**, **Siubhan O’Donnell** and their tutor **Sean McCarron**.

Commenting on the Children & Young People’s Plan Liam Ward said, “As Deputy Chairperson of Donegal CYPSC, I am privileged to present the Donegal Children and Young People’s Plan 2018-2020. It is a credit to all members of the CYPSC who developed and will implement this plan, which is the end product of sterling work during a period of re-generation and re-focusing of Donegal CYPSC. The time and commitment given by all to establish and maintain Donegal Children and Young People’s Services Committee has been admirable.”

**Dr. Bronagh Byrne** also launched the  **Directory of Disability Services in Donegal** which wasdeveloped in a collaboration between Donegal CYPSC and the Bluestack Special Needs Foundation.

Donegal CYPSC would like to thank all the organisations who contributed to the launch event and seminar, bringing Information Stands, providing Speakers, or helping on the day. A very special thank you to all the young people who took part and helped make this a most meaningful, inspiring experience. Special thanks also to Fintan Gallagher and the rock band ‘Serial Twin’ for providing the sound system and to the Bluestack Special Needs Foundation who have also taken on the task of updating the Directory of Disability Services.

Together, we are Donegal CYPSC.

Is CYPSC Dhún na nGall muid i gcuideachta le cheile.

Keep up to date with CYPSC Donegal on Twitter (@CYPSCDL) and Facebook (@CYPSCDonegal).

*~ENDS~*

*If you would like further information please contact Anne Timony Meehan at 0873527651or email* [*anne.timonymeehan@tusla.ie*](mailto:anne.timonymeehan@tusla.ie)

**Notes to Editor**

* The Donegal Children and Young People’s Committee (CYPSC) was established in 2007 and aims to improve outomes for children and young people aged 0-24 years in Co Donegal.
* The purpose of CYPSCs are to bring statutory, community and voluntary agencies providing services to children and young people together to cooperate and plan and work in a coordinated way.
* CYPSC’s are funded through the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and Chaired by Tusla.
* They work towards achieving the five national outcomes in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020.
* The national outcomes are active and healthy with physical and mental well-being, achieving full potential in all areas of learning and development, safe and protected from harm, have economic security and opportunity and connected, respected and contributing to their world.
* Over forty organsiations across Donegal work in partnership to achieve these outomes.
* Further information on Donegal CYPSC can be found at <http://www.cypsc.ie/your-county-cypsc/donegal.229html>