



Lifeskills makes a difference

John & Michael with their handmade facemasks that they made in Arts & Crafts on the Lifeskills Programme

Through the work at Exchange House, the Family Support Department identified that there was an increasing number of homeless Travellers accessing the service. After detailed research the *Out Of Homelessness Project* was born. The project entailed building up the capacity of individuals and families to help them to address their own needs and empower them to maintain their own accommodation. The target group were Travellers who were made homeless due to issues directly related with addiction. Clients who are experiencing homelessness may be sleeping rough, accessing the night bus, in B&B's or

wet hostels. Because of lack of stable accommodation these clients spend most of their days on the street. Exchange House's *Out of Homelessness Project* offers these clients respite from the stress of being constantly on the street. The clients have one day in a week where they can come in and take refuge from the hardship of the streets. As part of the project the Family Support Team worked tirelessly with a number of individuals and families to address their accommodation and addiction needs over the past year in a structured manner. An individual

package of care was put in place for the target group and staff and clients have been working together providing practical and emotional support. The programme that is on offer is a holistic one that addresses clients'



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Family Support Service

addictions and related issues in a subtle yet effective manner.

The Lifeskills Group has been running weekly at Exchange House for the past year. We all need Lifeskills to live comfortably and to deal with life changes and the programme was designed with this in mind. The programme has been a fantastic experience for all involved; and a number of the Family Support Team have been involved in its running. We have taken lots of photos to remind us of

Crafts where we offer an experience to the clients that they would not otherwise have in their daily lives.

The outings have also proved to be a huge success for the clients. As part of this programme we run an outing once every four weeks so that clients can gain some respite from the stresses of their daily lives. This has also been a fun educational experience. For 2010 perhaps the most exciting trip was to the Dublin Zoo. The participants had never been to the Zoo



Some participants and Staff of the Lifeskills Group on the trip to Dublin Zoo [from left to right] Caroline O'Reilly (Addiction Worker), Helen Green, Martina McGovern (Social Worker), Majella Maughan and Sarah Murray (Student Social Worker)

the fun times we have experienced throughout the year. At present the coordinators of the programme are evaluating it with a view to continuing on in the future due to its success. The participants of the programme have also been heavily involved in this process as have all the staff on the Family Support Team. There are a number of highlights for the past quarter which will be pointed out.

Since Christmas the Lifeskills Group has been experiencing record levels of attendance. The programme has covered a variety of modules, whereby the core activities are Cooking & Nutrition, Outings, Arts & Crafts, Holistic Therapies and Literacy. This quarter, perhaps the highlights for the members have been the Outings, Holistic Therapies and Arts &

before and could barely contain their excitement when the day finally came. A great day was had by all.

The Plains of Africa proved to be a huge hit where a fight ensued between the Rhinoceros, the monkeys played and the Hippos were in full view for feeding time. However, the Elephant House was perhaps the most impressive for our Group. The sheer size of these animals was a treat for the children and adults alike and was a sight that may only be seen once in a lifetime for some.

As we wound down our trip everybody was exhausted yet invigorated and some members were surprised at how much they enjoyed the trip and immediately asked if we could go again.

A highlight of the Holistic Therapies module this year has been the Heat

[front page, inset picture] A collection of Valentine's day card made by some of the participants of the Lifeskills Programme.

Treatment Manicures. The ladies had never experienced anything like this and as a treat for excellent attendance at the group this was something that could not be missed. The start of the beauty treatment was a relaxing hand massage with a combination of oils and sugar was used to massage and exfoliate their hands. This was then followed by an application of moisturisers.

Without a doubt, the most luxurious part of this treatment was the heated gloves! After this part of the process nails were filed down, cuticles were tidied up and a choice of nail polish was applied. The ladies were amazed at what beautiful nails they had and expressed their delight at this treat. It was a welcome luxury for these ladies who live chaotic, busy and often distressing lives.

This quarter we had Valentine's Day and Mother's Day so we took the opportunity to incorporate this with our Arts & Crafts classes. In keeping with tradition, the participants made personalised Valentine's and Mother's Day cards and picture frames. While the clients create artistic gifts for family and loved ones they gain some therapeutic time to think, reflect and talk about family life. This can be an emotional space for clients and is facilitated by a Social Worker and an Addiction Worker to ensure that all needs are met as they arise.

For the future we will continue this project as our clients are reaping the benefits from it and this is reflected by consistent attendance and progress with clients in terms of their addiction and homelessness. In order to participate in the group members must be service users of Exchange House. If you know anybody who might be interested, and fits the criteria, they may gain access to the group

by meeting with members from the Family Support Service. Please call us or drop in to make an appointment or for more information.



Caroline O'Reilly,
Addiction Worker

A few words from our Director

Welcome to our sixth edition of *News Travels* where we will be informing you of the latest news affecting Traveller families as well updating you on what we've been working on in Exchange House.

Despite the recession and the financial crisis affecting everyone in one way or another, at Exchange House we are trying to remain positive, adapt, make the best use of resources and continue providing services to our Traveller families. Since December 2009 we have seen an increase of 25% in our clients accessing our services.

There are lots of things going on in Exchange House. Right now we are planning our 30th Anniversary celebration! We hope to highlight the good work of Exchange House over the last 30 years and to launch training packs on Domestic Violence and Intercultural Awareness as well as premiering our Domestic Violence video. In 1980 the Eastern Health Board asked the Dublin Committee for Traveller People to respond to the needs of a group of Traveller children and teenagers who were sleeping rough and misusing solvents on the streets of the city. A night shelter and day care provision for these young people was established in Exchange House on Exchange Street in Dublin. As a result of this location, the organisation became known as Exchange House Traveller Family Support Service, or simply, Exchange House.

Exchange House National Travellers Service is currently the largest provider of dedicated services to the Traveller community in the country. A range of services spanning social work/family support services, drug addiction and homeless services, domestic violence intervention services, education and youth services are provided to Travellers across the Greater Dublin area. It can be seen that Exchange House's combination of services spans a continuum of youth, educational and community services for the general Traveller community and more specialist social services which meet the particular needs of some of the most vulnerable Traveller families.

The Family Support Services continue to be incredibly busy providing services in six prisons. [See the article 'A Day in the Life of ... An Addiction Worker.] The *Out of Homelessness*

Project has had very positive reviews from their clients and family members. The Domestic Violence Support Group has started running in Rathmines Women's Refuge every Tuesday morning. It is facilitated by a Social Worker and a Family Support Worker. As usual our student placements are a pleasure to have and they bring a breath of fresh air and a sense of youthfulness to the organisation.

The Education Services Department was recently awarded FETAC accreditation. Later this year we will have our third National Educational Achievement Award, which seeks to recognise achievement and build positive role models across Travellers and wider communities. The award for members of the Traveller Community, on the island of Ireland, who have achieved their Leaving or Junior Cert or A-Levels or G.C.S.E.s. The event is being co-sponsored with Dublin City Council and generously supported by CDVEC, HSE and Poster Mania. [Please see a nomination on the back page.]

Youth Services is currently running all programmes to full capacity with different groups meeting almost every night of the week. Groups are generally mixed; on site groups tend to be larger with groups going between 20 and 30 per session; due to logistics with transportation, off site groups are smaller with 13 youngsters per session. Current activities consist of: homework help, cookery, health and nutrition, I.T. skills, physical exercise, dancing, football, arts and crafts and personal development.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *News Travels*, and wish you a long hot Summer!!!



Heydi Foster
Director

News Travels

A day in the life of ... an Addiction Worker

An important aspect of my role as Addiction Worker at Exchange House is to provide support and counselling for clients who are incarcerated in prison. In practice this involves visiting each client once a week in Mountjoy, Wheatfield, St. Patrick's Institute and Cloverhill Prisons.

My experience has been that most of the Travellers in prison are there, in one way or another, because of, or connected to their addiction. For example, clients have been sentenced for crimes committed whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs; or are committing crimes to secure alcohol or drugs. For many people the need to escape from their present reality and engage in some form of delusional activity gives them a quick high or false sense of freedom, which in turn traps them into a destructive pattern of behaviour which can become very chaotic.

The experience of prison sentencing has a long lasting effect on the client. I have only encountered this to be a negative experience. For example, treatment for addiction within prison is limited; in fact many clients have spoken of increased problems of addiction within prison; the impact of prison on their sense of self-esteem can be demoralising; clients have spoken of self-harming, hopelessness and shame. Equally, the families of prisoners have described their experience in similar terms.

The Irish Prison Service aims to provide a range of care services to prisoners to a similar standard of that in the wider community. Amongst these services are drug rehabilitation programmes.

Addiction can allow people a temporary escape from their



Ronnie O'Donnell
Addiction Worker

problems, and can develop from many activities; alcohol, drugs, gambling, eating etc. A counsellor can help a person suffering from addiction to start to face, look at, acknowledge and/or understand their emotional needs and face the realities of life with more hope of addressing the underlying problems attached to their addiction. Individual counselling offer clients a chance to build their self esteem and self respect.

Exchange House brings a vital link of support to the Travellers on release from prison. As part of our service, plans are put in place to help reintegrate them back in the community to avoid re-offending. While counselling is ongoing clients are also linked into FÁS schemes and LTI schemes being run by the Education Service in Exchange House. The Family Support Service serves as a link between clients and other services in Exchange House as well as outside organisations. Support is provided with housing, health, legal and family issues. In cases where there is a need, clients are linked in with rehab and/or treatment centres. In most cases these plans are put in place while the client is in prison to enable a smooth transition from prison to the community. In some cases, through counselling, clients are helped to address family relationships that have been damaged with their family members.

From the 14th April 2010, AA meetings commenced in Exchange House. The meetings are held every Monday at 6pm and the response has been very good. The purpose of the meetings, being held in Exchange House, is to help break barriers that Travellers who are affected by addiction are faced with. It is hoped that this will give them a sense of confidence as they will be meeting people from all walks of life. All the members attending the meetings have one thing in common as their lives have become unmanageable and AA provides the support they need.

Integrated services give a sense of hope for the clients, a sense of belonging, and a sense that they will be supported through the complex issues that they face.

“Drug rehabilitation programmes for prisoners involve a significant multidimensional input by a diverse range of general and specialist services. The programmes seek to reduce the demand for drugs within the prison system through education, treatment and rehabilitation services for drug addicted prisoners.”

(www.irishprisons.ie)

My Experience as a Student Social Worker



Sarah Murray
Student Social Worker

I had been so busy in UCD since September with assignments, study and exams that I was looking forward to both a change of pace and of scenery in January. I was excited to begin my placement but also terrified! I have wanted to do social work for as long as I can remember. I was eager to start in Exchange House as a student social worker in the Family Support Service. The work placement is an invaluable learning experience for student social workers to apply theory to practice and get hands on experience of the profession. With this in mind I don't think I slept the night before my first day at Exchange House!

I started on the 6th of January 2010. My first day passed by in a blur with so many new faces and names to remember. My first two weeks involved agency visits, shadowing team members and getting a grasp on what the Family Support Service, Education Service and Youth Service does. During this period I developed a better understanding of what Exchange House stood for, its mission and vision. Throughout my placement I saw the values and beliefs of the agency being implemented through the staff's belief, dedication and positive attitude towards their work. Exchange House is a multi-disciplinary organisation and this is

evidenced in the services provided.

As a student social worker on a fourteen week block placement I carried a case load and was fully exposed to the world of social work. I had the privilege of attending workshops, presentations and networking with various agencies and this served to lay the foundation for future working relationships. The programmes I was involved in gave me a comprehensive understanding of group facilitation and dynamics.

The Exchange House *Out of Homelessness*



Sarah Murray with Helen Green at Dublin Zoo

Project aims to help empower Travellers who are affected by addiction and homelessness. The project aims to assist them through various ways to address their addiction and to help them get out of the circle of homelessness and to ultimately secure and sustain their own accommodation. I had the opportunity to take part in the *Out of Homelessness* Lifeskills Group every Thursday

afternoon. In these groups a wide range of issues were addressed and the participants benefited greatly. During some of the sessions participants brought their children with them and the inclusive family approach helped foster the bond between them.

I co-facilitated the Domestic Violence Support Group in the Rathmines Women's Refuge on Tuesday mornings. This support group came about as a result of Exchange House's 'Domestic Violence: Developing a Response'

research recommendations of 2007.

This group is facilitated by a social worker and a family support worker and it provides a safe space for non-judgemental discussions. During these sessions information ranging from Barring Orders, Safety Orders, self care, safety plans, legal, welfare and financial rights was provided.

Every day in Exchange House is completely different from the last. My experience here has opened my eyes to what the job of a social worker involves. I was supported through supervision on a weekly basis by my Practice Teacher. Consultation, peer and informal support was also readily available which I found to be invaluable. I have truly been shown what family support is about. My studies in college could only provide me with practice scenarios, and could only teach me the theory of what being a social worker is all about. My

experience here has challenged me and taught me more about the profession than any book could! On leaving Exchange House I feel more confident in myself as a student social worker. I feel really lucky to have had the opportunity to be part of such a dedicated team. The atmosphere and work ethic of the Family Support Service is admirable.

"Find a job you love and never work a day in your life"

Confucius

News Travels

Youth Service

Education Away Programme ... London



Sarah Byrne,
Youth Worker

In September 2009 the Exchange House Youth Service selected eight boys from three different sites to go on an Educational Away Trip. We chose the cultural city of London. In doing this we hoped to raise intercultural awareness and develop social and communication skills. The trip took place from the 16th to 21st February 2010.

In preparation for the trip the group participated in a research project about the city of London and various cultures within the city. We also compiled a list of interesting sites and attractions to visit in London.

Over the course of the six days we visited several attractions such as the Tower of London and London Bridge. We did the London Bridge experience and the tombs of London which proved to be very exciting. In doing this we learned about



With one of the Queen's Horse Guards

the history of London over the last 1000 years, including the great Fire of London in 1666.

We visited Westminster Abbey and the famous Big Ben, which was 150 years old

different areas of London including the East End which has many different cultures all living together side by side. In contrast to this we visited the busy and popular upper class area of the West End



Sherlock Holmes Statue on Baker Street [from left to right] William McDonagh (Team Leader), Martin McDonagh, Paul Power, James Joyce, John Maloney, Emma Parsons (Youth Worker), Martin McDonagh, Stephen Maughan, John Paul Collins (Youth Worker), Thomas Stokes and Jonathon Berry

in May 2009. We visited St. James' Palace which is now the residence of the Princess Royal and Princess Alexandra. We visited the Ministry of Defence and Downing Street. We also visited Trafalgar Square and Buckingham Palace, home to the Queen of England. We took in the London Eye and the H.M.S. Belfast, now a museum ship permanently docked on the River Thames; it was used to serve in World War 2 and the Korean War.

We visited the National Army Museum where we learned interesting facts about several wars throughout time such as the Boer War, World Wars I and II, the Gulf War, the troubles in the North of Ireland, Afghanistan, the Falklands and many more. We visited Madame Tussauds Wax Museum, where we saw many wax figures of popular and famous political, sport, music, movie, television and religious figures throughout time.

During the course of the week we visited

and theatre district. The young people were amazed at the difference and contrast between the two areas.

In doing this we showed the young people how a multicultural society can prosper side by side. It was interesting to hear the young people draw comparisons with the way Dublin is ever changing towards a more multicultural society. They made very positive comments and were quite surprised to see different cultures within the police force. They commented that Traveller sites in London are still of a very low standard and how other cultures are encouraged to prosper whereas Traveller sites are still isolated. One comment was "ah sure it's the same all over."

The trip was a huge success and greatly enjoyed by all. The boys' comments were positive and they learned a lot about the history of London and different cultures living together in the city.

June 2010

Back to Titanic...



[from left to right] Ned Stokes, William McDonagh (Team Leader), Martin O'Brien, Ned Casey, William McDonagh, Archie Power, Johnny Power, Rocky Power, Patrick Stokes (Youth Worker), Tommy McAleer and John Stokes

to be the ship's cargo hold and boiler room. Steam to power the *Titanic's* engines was provided by 29 boilers. Six thousand tons of coal were needed to propel the Ship across the Atlantic. We then entered a room which had a temperature control and set in it was an iceberg which we were all able to place our hands on and feel how cold it was and imagine what the water surrounding it at the time the *Titanic* sank would have been like.

We ended our journey by taking our boarding passes to the Memorial Wall to learn if our passenger and travelling companions survived or perished. When each of the young people learnt their fate lay at the hands of the *Titanic* there were some sad and some happy faces. It was a very enjoyable and interesting trip, where a lot was learned.



Emma Parsons,
Youth Worker

As part of ongoing After Schools Education trips we visited *The Titanic Artefact Exhibition* in Citywest. 19 eager children quickly took a replica boarding pass of an actual *Titanic* passenger upon our entrance. These boarding passes gave each of the group a name of a person who was on board, their age, who they were accompanied by, their reason for travel and most importantly their class (by this we determined fast who were the rich among our group). We then started our journey through *Titanic*. We learnt a lot on our journey, such as the Ship's construction, life on board, the ill fated sinking, and the amazing artefact rescue efforts.

We ventured through different areas of the *Titanic* and saw replica rooms from the 3rd class bunks to the 1st class suites – there was a noticeable difference – and the young people were sure if they were to pick which one they would like to sleep in it would be first class. We then entered a room which was set out



[from left to right] Annemarie Stokes (After Schools Assistant), Holly Harper, Christine Stokes, Ashley Power, Bridgie McDonagh, Emma Parsons (Youth Worker), Shania Stokes, Ciara Sullivan (After Schools Teacher) Caitlin Power, Angel Kiely, Julie McDonagh, Julie McDonagh (After School Co-Ordinator), Gypsy McAleer and Joeleen O'Brien

News Travels

Traveller Men's Group, Ballymun



[from left to right] Martin McDonagh, Thomas Mongan, Bernie McDonagh, Jimmy Maughan (Youth Worker) Eoin McDonagh, Martin Maughan and Hughie Maughan

On the 4th March the Traveller Men's group in Ballymun visited Collins Barracks and Kilmainham Gaol as part of their group activities. We first went to Collins Barracks where we

got to see lots of First and Second World War memorabilia and a lot of war materials used in the Indian and British Empire wars and their activities at that time. We then went to see the Declaration

of Independence and the UN Peace Keeping room.

After we had lunch we visited Kilmainham Gaol, which is a former prison, located in Kilmainham in Dublin and is now a museum. It has been a museum since the mid-1980s and is run by the Office of Public Works (OPW), an Irish Government agency. The Men's group did the tour of the gaol. We learned that the gaol has played an important part in Irish history as many leaders of the Irish rebellions were imprisoned, and some executed, in the prison by the British, and then later in 1923, by the Irish Free State.

The men greatly enjoyed learning about the history of Ireland through these visits.



John Paul Collins, Youth Worker

National Traveller MABS - Ballyfermot Credit Union & Labre Park

Up until May 2010, people living in Labre Park, Ballyfermot had to join Inchicore Credit Union. Residents of Labre Park argued that they should be allowed to join Ballyfermot Credit Union as they lived, shopped and schooled their children in the locality and had to get a bus to Inchicore to do business there.

After several years of advocating for an extension of Ballyfermot Credit Union Common Bond, National Traveller MABS are pleased to announce success in this area and residents of Labre Park can now officially join Ballyfermot Credit Union.

If you have an existing account with Inchicore Credit Union and wish to open an account in Ballyfermot Credit Union, your shares can be transferred over once your new account is open.

Benefits of the Credit Union:

- Save for a number of weeks (usually 13) before getting a loan (first loan usually either equal to share amount or 1.5 times your

share amount)

- Short and long term borrowing – cars, vans, trailers, weddings
- No fees and charges
- Repayments very flexible – can pay extra off at any time and pay loan earlier.
- Reduce repayments if in difficulty by discussing your situation.
- Pay by cash, cheque, standing order
- Death benefit available – loan dies with you, shares given to nominated person
- Encouraged to save as you repay loan so as loan goes down, savings go up.

If you need any more support or information, please contact:

Ballyfermot Credit Union

01 626 5458

Inchicore Credit Union

01 454 0594

Ballyfermot MABS

01 623 5443 or 01 623 3900

National Traveller MABS

01 864 8510



mabs
Money Advice & Budgeting Service

Education Service

Spring is in the air and a lot is happening. One of the high points for us is that Exchange House has secured FETAC Quality Assurance and is now a FETAC provider in our own right. Having FETAC Quality Assurance ensures that we can create and provide programmes within the department which we can deliver nationally.

FETAC certification is important for learners too because it maps out a person's educational and training achievement equally with the rest of the nation. FETAC certificates are transferable and relevant within education and employment systems. Having these certificates opens up progression routes including further training, educational and employment opportunities to people which would otherwise remain closed.

We have created an educational and training environment where quality and excellence are the norm. We provide our services in a user friendly and respectful environment.

The Blocks

For years Traveller people have missed or have lost out on receiving the benefits of a good formal education. The reasons for this are varied, but sometimes underlying this is a lack of belief from services providers, in the ability of people to achieve. With the best will in the world the attitudes to Travellers can be patronising and condescending resulting in poor attainment.

Positive Perceptions

At Exchange House a learner's life experience is acknowledged and their potential is respected, endorsed and facilitated. Socrates argued that education was about



Cathleen McDonagh,
Education Service
Team Leader

drawing out what was already within the student. The word education comes from the Latin *educere* meaning "to lead out". At Exchange House learners have opportunities to explore and develop their potential within a learner centred environment of respect, efficiency and equality.

Services Outlined

FÁS

FÁS funds two schemes, a Community Employment scheme and a Local Training Initiative. With these FÁS schemes in place we can provide learner centred training and education to people, most of which is certified. There is a lot of variety offered. We work closely with the FÁS Community Development Officers on each scheme Brenda Long (SCDO), Community Employment and Jim Reynolds, Local Training Initiative.

City of Dublin VEC

CDVEC supports us and provides invaluable educational services for people who use our service. We work in partnership with the ALO Mary McDermott and CDVEC Tutors in providing an educational service which aims to provide people access to education at many levels, from basic literacy to FETAC level 6.

Third Level Access

Exchange House offers progression information, guidance, initial and continuing support to access third level.

Adult Basic Education Service

We provide educational opportunities for youths and adults in basic literacy, further education/training and support to accessing third-level education, training & employment. These services are available to people who are not engaged in the programmes.

The National Educational Achievement Award

Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award highlights academic success in the Traveller community. This award is presented to members of the Traveller community who have completed Junior Certificate/GCSE or Leaving Certificate/A-Level examinations. The award is open to nominees from all over the island of Ireland. The key objective of the award is to highlight positive role models within the Traveller community, the benefits of formal education and to celebrate the significance of what people have achieved both individually and collectively for the Traveller community.

The Ethos

We have created, and will continue to ensure, that we have a standard of excellence in the work we do, and encourage this in others. We have an obligation and a responsibility to invest in people and provide the best education and training possible. The services we provide are learner directed, of the highest quality and are contemporary, relevant and useful to people. We do not pre-judge anyone nor try to limit their potential or take from their responsibility.

"Healthy, successful societies depend on creating the conditions in which each individual is supported in developing their own gifts, talents and skills. That support is critical if we, as a nation, are to commit to ensuring equal opportunities for every man, women and child on this island."

President Mary McAleese
Opening of Exchange House Nov 2007

News Travels

Community Employment Scheme



Paula Cullen,
CE Supervisor

The Education Service, with support from FÁS and CDVEC, provides a range of educational opportunities to adult Travellers. Our learner directed approach has attracted learners from all sections of the

Traveller community. There are equal numbers of men and women on our programmes and an age range from 18 to 64.

Maggie Collins and her grandson John Collins are very different in terms of age and previous formal education. They are working side by side however, to achieve their own personal educational goals. Though their individual starting and finish points are completely different, at Exchange House they can undertake their journey together.

Maggie Collins was born Margaret McDonagh in 1945 in Ardee in County Louth. Maggie was one of 15 children. Her family lived in a tent on the side of the road. Maggie's mother died when she was 9 and her father then bought a barrel top wagon to raise his family in. "He was like a mother and a father to us all, reared us

all and got us married", Maggie recalls.

"I had no schooling at all but I was very proud of my Traveller culture, even though there was too much discrimination", Maggie said. Neither Maggie's mother nor father could read or write and Maggie first learned to write her name when her cousin Nellie, who attended school, taught her.

Maggie's first experience of formal education was recent; she attended a training centre in the months before she came to Exchange House at the age of 63.

"Since I came here [Exchange House] I can write and spell my name. It means an awful lot to me".

Maggie's family are so proud of her achievements that her daughter has some of Maggie's handwriting work displayed on her fridge and shows it off to any visitors who come to her house. Maggie works on her reading and writing with her tutor Margo Kelly.

Since Maggie has come to Exchange House she has achieved a FETAC level 5 Occupational First Aid, Textiles and Food and Nutrition, both at FETAC level 3.

Johnny Collins was born John Collins in the Rotunda hospital in 1991. He is the eldest of three children. Johnny lived in Manchester for a short time before coming back to live in Dublin. He lived in



John & Maggie with Helen Mahon & Margo Kelly, Exchange House Tutors

Cappagh Field for a while and has lived in a house in Finglas ever since.

Johnny attended a mainstream integrated school from age 5 to 16, leaving school in 5th year. He achieved his Junior Cert in five subjects at age 15.

When asked what he likes most about attending Exchange House as an adult learner, Johnny said "Working with different people". There is a strong camaraderie between the male learners and they support and help each other in their learning

When asked about his future, Johnny says "I would like to work as a Youth Worker".

Johnny is currently taking part in FETAC 4 Communications with his tutor, Helen Mahon to prepare him for a third level course in Youth Work.

Maggie and Johnny have very different experiences of education but their hopes for the future are clear. Maggie is a committed lifelong learner who wants to continue her education to help her family. Johnny wants to pursue academic qualifications to ensure a secure future for himself and his family. As Maggie said "I hope for a good future for Johnny because he is entitled to it". At Exchange House Education Services we couldn't agree more and will continue to provide access to first and second chance education for all adult Travellers.



Maggie and John Collins

Interview with Ann Connors, LTI Learner



When did you join the FÁS LTI?

I joined last year.

Why did you come onto the FÁS LTI?

I came on for my education, to learn more, for my reading and writing and spellings. And the computers, I didn't know

anything about them. I was never on one of them before I was in here.

What kind of education had you got before you came on?

I didn't get very much schooling at all. I was more days off than I was in, but I left at 12. I was out of education for many years.

Why did you decide to come back now?

My daughter is in school, I couldn't help her with her homework. She was learning things that I never heard about.

What type of programmes do you do on the FÁS LTI?

I do computers, maths, reading and writing, sewing, art and health. I think it is very good for me because I'm learning more. I can spell things that I never could before.

What do you enjoy the most?

I enjoy everything here; I haven't really got just one. I like the reading and writing. I like the art. I like it all. The

computers, I didn't like at first. They were very complicated at first but now it's okay. It's still a bit complicated but it's good. I was very nervous of them at first, that I would do something to them.

The staff are very nice here. The group is very nice too. I think we all get along just fine.

Do you know what you would like to do when you finish up here?

Not yet. I would like to get a job in something but I don't know yet.

What advice would you give to someone who was thinking about coming onto the FÁS LTI?

I would tell them to come in and go on it because I think it would be a good help to them, wouldn't it? It helped me a lot anyway.



Caoimhe Kerins,
LTI Co-ordinator

Catch the Spirit

Exchange House National Travellers Service has been selected as a partner in the EU Youth in Action, *Catch the Spirit*. The youth exchange will take place in August in Innsbruck, Austria. The other partners are organisations from Austria, Slovakia, and Germany. The theme of the project is Poverty and Social Exclusion and a DVD will be produced by the youths taking part. Five Traveller youngsters will work on the project in Exchange House and then bring their work to Austria in August where it will be included in the final DVD which will be used as a training tool for young people in different settings. There will be twenty young people taking part from the four partner countries, all from minority backgrounds.



GD Bildung und Kultur

Programm „Jugend in Aktion“

Denise Chaila - Transition Year Student

Denise Chaila did her work experience with Exchange House, Family Support Team, for two weeks. She is a Transition Year Student at The King's Hospital School in Palmerstown. For the period she was in Exchange House, Denise shadowed different workers and got to know what different professionals' roles are.

Denise stated that the sole reason she chose this placement was because she wants to be a social worker. She said 'It is a profession that allows one to have and show compassion to the clientele one works with. I find it difficult to be objective when dealing with people and in social work one has to have a mindset where you see people as people without being judgemental about where they are or where they are coming from.' 'Being in Exchange House for two weeks gave me a glimpse of what is behind the scenes with social work, family support work and addiction work, the calls taken, how to deal with crisis situations, the care and compassion displayed by staff' she

reiterated.

She stated that she watched the Domestic Violence DVD and this was very informative. Denise highlighted that 'I had always equated Domestic Violence with physical abuse but after watching the DVD I realised that it was more than that and that it did not necessarily manifest itself physically. It gave me insight on how situations like that are dealt with and that to help a victim of Domestic Violence they have to be given the space to make their own choices and that those choices need to be respected.'

Denise spent some time with the *Out of Homeless* Lifeskills Group where she was involved with making picture frames and cards. She helped around the office with filling, designing and colouring posters. Denise was very interested about Traveller culture and was always asking questions and eager to learn.

We wish Denise all the best in her future endeavours.

News Travels

STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...STOP PRESS...



...In 1980 the Eastern Health Board asked the Dublin Committee for Traveller People to respond to the needs of a group of Traveller children and teenagers who were sleeping rough and misusing solvents on the streets of the city. A night shelter and day care provision for these young people was established in Exchange House on Exchange Street in Dublin. As a result of this location, the organisation became known as Exchange House Traveller Family Support Service, or as it became more simply known, Exchange House.

Today, 30 years on, Exchange House National Travellers Service has become the largest provider of dedicated services to the Traveller community in the country. A range of services spanning social work and family support services, drug addiction and homeless services, domestic violence intervention, education and youth services are provided to Travellers across the Greater Dublin area, meeting the particular needs of some of the most vulnerable of Traveller families.

In November, Exchange House will host a week of activities, conferences and exhibitions showcasing various aspects of the services we have provided to the Traveller community over the last 30 years. Keep an eye out for more detailed information that will be coming your way soon...

National Educational Achievement Award for members of the Traveller Community
November 2010
Dublin City Council

People applying for this award will have sat and completed the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate, A Levels or O Levels in the year 2009/10.

- completed all exams
- quote reference number
- open to any age group
- open to all members of the Traveller community on the island of Ireland
- closing date Friday, 8th October 2010

Every person nominated will be entered into a raffle: 1st prize is a laptop computer, and runner up prizes.

You may use this nomination form to nominate someone. Please detach and send to the address on the form.

Nomination

We wish to nominate:

Name: (Capital letters please):

Address:

Telephone Number:

Fax number:

Email:

Reference/Exam number:

School/Training or education centre

Leaving Cert Junior Cert Other

Nominated by

Name: (Capital letters please):

Address:

Email:

Organization and Title: (If applicable):

Relationship to the nominee:

Signature: Date:

Please include additional information you think might be relevant

Office Use Only:

Please return your nomination form to:

Cathleen McDonagh
Exchange House Travellers Service
61 Great Strand Street
Dublin 1
Ph. 01 872 1094



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