

# Liffey Newsletter



# June 2024



Something I would like to do in my newsletters, is to include an area whereby you can meet some current members of staff and hear a little bit about them. For my very first article, I am delighted to be introducing Sharon Conway, our Sports Facilitator for the Dublin Liffey Region. Please read on to find out more about Sharon....



Read on to find out about our recent Friendship Event in Cookstown, thanks to Ian Byrne for all the information and photos



Ciara from Griffin Rath has been spotted ordering herself a beverage in a local hotel!



The Men and Women in Maple Walk have been very busy lately, turn the page to see what they have been up too...

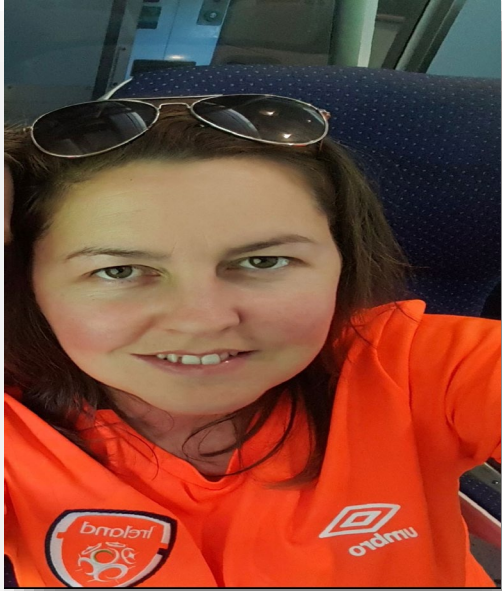
# This month the theme of the newsletter focuses on '**Support for Personal and Social Development**' which is in line with **New Directions**.



Personal development or self-improvement consists of activities that develop a person's capabilities and potential, build human capital, facilitate employability, enhance quality of life, and facilitate the realisation of dreams and aspirations.

Social development is about improving the well-being of every individual in society so they can reach their full potential. The success of society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen. Social development means investing in people. Please read on to see our recent success stories from across Liffey Region and how these stories connect with the individuals whom we support being able to experience personal and social development.

# Introducing Sharon Conway



Hi All! My name is Sharon Conway, I am the new sports facilitator for SJOG in the Dublin region. From a very young age I've been involved in sports and was a serious competitor in the annual community games which ignited a passion in me for all sporting activities especially soccer and GAA sports.

I have a passion for teaching and have specialised in teaching swim babies and swim disability coaching. I am also a qualified RLSS lifeguard. In 2018 I volunteered for the Special Olympics, and I absolutely loved it and knew this was an area I would like to explore more. When covid hit the world, I had an opportunity to reassess, and I completed my SNA - Special Needs Assisting course Level 5 & 6 which led me to applying for a position in SJOG. I have now been with the company over two years working in Dublin and Celbridge at the Pool and doing various sports activities with service users.

I am working closely with the sports and inclusion officers and Dublin City Council to set up activities in the Dublin area, recently we have set up Boccia and Boxing and Trishaw biking which has been very enjoyable. I am looking forward to meeting and working with you all and if you need any other information on sporting activities that you would like to join, please contact me at [Sharon.Conway@sjog.ie](mailto:Sharon.Conway@sjog.ie)



# Friendship Event



On Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> May, over 30 people attended the first Friendship Open Day / Meetup from 10:30am – 12pm in Cookstown. It was a ticket only event with attendees having booked their place on EventBrite (thanks to Sarah Boland for organising and paying the fee). It started with tea and biscuits and a little chatting.

Doris Delany, who helped organise the event and who rang all the community centres asking for their activity listings and participation, started proceedings by welcoming everyone to the first ever Friendship Open Day. She explained that the reason behind the event was for people to find clubs that they would like to join and ultimately make friends.

We watched 3 videos on why it's difficult for people with additional needs to make friends, why making friends is so important and the difference between good and bad friends.

We then had our five guest speakers explain about their club or organisation and how this could lead to friendship. Thanks to Sharon Crowe from South Dublin Volunteering. Sharon explained how Volunteering can have a club-like feel and improves mental health by allowing you to think of others instead of focusing on yourself.

Thanks to Sharon Devlin from Tallaght Arts Centre. She also mentioned the Art and Drama programmes and how the RUA Red café is a social hub. Thanks to Lisa and Michelle from Tallaght Leisure Centre, they explained about the swimming and gym activities and handed out free swimming vouchers. Thanks to Sharon Conway, she explained about the sports programs that she is running in Islandbridge; Bocce and Boxercise and plans to do 5 morning and 5 afternoon events. She is linked with the council and local partnerships for funding and there are actually available refereeing and coaching courses being run in July. She also mentioned about electronic bikes which can take 2 passengers and can be booked through her.



Thanks also to Lea from Kingswood CC. She explained the different activities going on in her centre; Choir meeting in the evenings and Tai Chi Yoga Line Dancing during the day. She is going to link with Avila students and her senior citizens to organise a Yoga / Tai Chi session and followed by tea/coffee and a chat to make it a social event.

Doris, Ian and Claire McDermot thanked all the people for attending.



# Maple Walk Day Service



Last month, the PPI Panel presented their EQUIP project research at Trinity College Dublin. The video they worked on was shown during the event and then the participants were presented with Certificates, well done to all.



David Deane, Laura Barry and Joe Nichol from Maple Walk Day Service graduated from Skills Encore in Greenhills College recently. An amazing example of personal and social development. A huge congratulations to you all!

# Griffin Rath Day Service

With this month's topic being around supporting the Men and Women whom we work with when it comes to personal and social development, I received the following image from the team in Griffin Rath and something struck me. Just to give a bit of context, in the picture below is a lady called Ciara and she has limited communication skills. Staff in the day service have been working closely with Ciara to enhance her communication skills and support her to build on her confidence in order to be comfortable in social settings. This photograph is Ciara in the Glenroyal Hotel, at the bar and ordering herself a drink without any support from staff. Afterwards, Ciara felt proud and empowered and even her family were overcome with emotion at this interaction.



I say this time and time again, there is no achievement that is too small, this is a HUGE success in my eyes and these successes are happening across all our Day Services. We need to be celebrating more of this 😊 Well done Ciara!



# Elvira Day Service



TD Snap was recently installed in Elvira Day Service, much to the delight of the men and women who attend our Bluebell location. The group received training on how to use the device. What is TD Snap you might ask? TD Snap is a flexible software offering professionals and families a choice of AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) solutions. It comes with a set of powerful tools and resources to empower people with speech and language disabilities to be able to better communicate. The device is flexible and has multi access.



# Islandbridge

Michael and Raymond, from our Day Service in Islandbridge, recently took part in a Photography Project called 'SEEING THE BIGGER PICTURE'. The aim of the project was to look at changes in the streetscapes of Dublin South City.

The end product will be an exhibition comparing archived photographs to newer images of the exact same places and how they look today. The newer images will have been taken by Michael and Raymond. This sounds so interesting, and I look forward to hearing all about the exhibition.





# Avila Day Service



Avila Day Service had a visit from the beautiful Toby, a greyhound and therapy dog with the charity Peata. The men and women were able to give him a rub and spend time with him in the centre. Already the gang in Avila are looking forward to the next visit. The smiles he brought lasted for days, I am told by Supervisor Claire McDermott 😊

For most people, the presence of an animal prompts the body to release serotonin, prolactin and oxytocin. These hormones generate a relaxation and stress-reducing response. This hormone release can lower symptoms of depression and sadness, helping support good mental health.



# Mulberry Day Service



Jason Murphy is a member of Mulberry Day Service and participates in an outreach programme. He was supported in making the choice to go for regular walks in the park, which enabled him to appreciate and enjoy the great outdoors, as well as enhancing his social development. Nowadays, he finds pleasure in hiking and below is a recent picture of Jason in the Wicklow mountains.

Claire and Jenny who also attend Mulberry Day Service recently enjoyed a visit to Kildare Farm in Rathmuck. Both got the opportunity to work on their social and personal development skills by visiting somewhere new and putting plans in place ahead of the trip.





# Maynooth Day Services

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> May, the cast of 'Real Life' went on a day trip to Temple Bar to take a tour of the Project Arts Centre, where they were due to perform their show in late June. Keith Foley attended from Rise Day Service and John Egan, Maurice Coll, Ella Jane Moore, Wesley Fairbrother and Conor Begley attended from Pathways.





# Euro Election Voting

Several students from Avila Day Service in Tallaght took part in a Voting workshop ahead of the European and Local elections on the 7<sup>th</sup> of June. The group looked at a presentation and video which explained how to vote and the importance of voting as well as what the European elections are about.

They then used mock voting ballot papers to cast their own vote. Although there was not enough time for them to go through the local election explanations, the students said that they enjoyed the overall experience. The students said that they would ask their families to assist them to vote.





# Liffey Voices Meeting

Thursday 25th July 2024

11am – 12:00pm



GreenRoom, St Raphaels, Celbridge  
or Boardroom Cookstown, Tallaght

Please email: [liffeyvoices@sjog.ie](mailto:liffeyvoices@sjog.ie) if you can come

We will also be hosting this meeting on zoom if you  
can't make it to Celbridge .



Meeting ID 474389762  
Password 054429



Scan Here to join Zoom



# Our Place project

The Our Place project funded by ReThink Ireland and co-designed with artists Alan James Burns and Dr Sinead Mc Cann in an interactive sound art project where groups from Liffey, Kerry and North East Service will work together to create 12 new sound art pieces and exhibit them in an inclusive space in Kerry and Dublin. This month the team from Kerry and Dublin got an opportunity to meet in person in the Carmichael centre and have a few online workshops. Patrick, David and Laura are three of the paid co-designers on the project and they have been busy planning the workshops and testing the tools. Patrick also attended the one day event hosted by ReThink on Impact of project on different people and how to grow our project





# PPI Conference

## in Limerick University



Patrick, Sarah were invited to present on the of four presentations at this years Ppi summer school at the University of Limerick this month. It was an early start with 7am train to Limerick. Patrick talked about his role as a paid co-researcher and co-designer in th eErasmus + funded projects. He also spoke about the Engage toolkit we developed in Liffey Services and how we do co-design. He asked the 140 researchers who attended the event to start to hire more people with lived experience onto their research teams.



# ReThink Ireland

## Impact Symposium

Patrick, Sarah Alan James Burns and Orla from the Our Place project attended the one day event hosted by ReThink on Impact of project on different people and how to grow our project. Here is Patrick's update from the event.



I went to the RETHink Impact event on Thursday the 13<sup>th</sup> June . First, we had morning coffee and got to meet people from other ReThink projects from across Ireland. Then, Deirdre the CEO of ReThink talked about why measuring impact is important. After that, there was a quick QR poll to find out what level we are at for Impact. We listened to Alison talk about what good impact measurement looks like, and Sam talked about using data in storytelling. There was a Question & Answer session too. We took a group photo before lunch, which was made by LOAF. In the afternoon, we went to different rooms based on our interests. Finally, we heard about the next steps for ReThink on how they can help us show Impact.



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# Thank You for Reading...

Finally, just a friendly reminder that my 'What is New Directions?' Online Engage sessions will be happening on the later date of Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 live from Crossroads Day Service at 10am and again at 1.30pm. We will be focusing on the New Directions support for Health and Wellbeing.



Please continue to send all your good news stories to me, no achievement is too small, we love to celebrate all the successes happening across Liffey Region's Day Services.

## Get in touch

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**st John  
of God**   
**Intellectual  
Disability Services**

This easy read booklet about New Directions information was made by Donna Hughes.

