



New Directions, April 2025 Newsletter



Christina Suresh, who attends Green Gables Day Service, recently began her work placement as a hairdresser. This experience led Christina to need to self-advocate. Please turn to page 16 to read her interview about the experience...



Goodbye Polly Walsh, hear all about Polly's Leaving Do on page 8, she will be missed.



Doris Delaney took to the stage once again to star in The Secret Garden alongside Crumlin Drama Society.



The Men and Women from LEAP recently visited the World of Illusion experience!

This month we explore the fourth pillar which underpins New Directions, we look at **‘Support for Accessing Education and Formal Learning’**.



What is Formal Learning?

Formal learning refers to organised, structured learning in educational institutions and/or training programs. It is typically intentional and has clear objectives, often leading to certification or accreditation. Examples include attending a university, taking a vocational course, or completing a structured training program within a company.

Introducing Staff Member Claire Earley



Hi, my name is Claire Earley. I am from Kildare but live in Portlaoise with my partner and our dog Charlie.

I am a nurse working in Pathways Day Service in Maynooth. I have been working here since July 2023. I absolutely love working with the men and women in Pathways.

I love helping them achieve their full potential and searching for opportunities in the community that cater to the various needs so that everyone can have a fun day out.

I love walking my dog, reading, and travelling in my free time.

Meet the
STAFF

Reminder: Hazelwood's Sunflower Competition

To follow up on last month's newsletter, I wish to remind you all that the Day Services (Hazelwood, Ash Tree and Mountainview) in Tessa House are running a Sunflower growing Competition. They have a limited number of free packets of seeds available. If you are interested in participating, please contact

Emma.long@sjog.ie or vivian.mahady@sjog.ie.



The tallest plant on 30th July 2025 will be deemed the winner and the attached centre or house will win a small gardening related prize. Instructions will be supplied with the packets of seeds!

GOOD LUCK TO EVERYONE...

Reach Day Service hosts a Love is Love presentation!



On Tuesday, 8th April, Doris Delaney and Ian Byrne visited Reach Day Service to host a Love is Love Presentation. The group learned about friendship, sexuality, identity, and acceptance, and was very engaged throughout the presentation. If any other Day Service locations are interested in booking a similar event, please contact Donna.hughes@sjog.ie to book in. Thank you

Art Vision Day Service



David and Daniel from Art Vision Day Service took part in a gym class in Leixlip Amenities with Gym Instructor Dee recently. Regular physical activity offers numerous benefits, including reduced risk of chronic diseases, improved mood and sleep, increased energy levels, and enhanced cognitive function. It also contributes to better bone health, muscle strength, and weight management.



Thomas Campbell from Art Vision recently celebrated his big 30th Birthday by having a party with his friends and staff. I think my invite got lost in the post!

Mulberry Day Service



The tour guide staff of the Islamic Cultural Centre Ireland welcomed a group of men and women from Mulberry Day Service to the Islamic complex, including a mosque in Clonskeagh, Dublin 14 recently. The group warmly engaged with the tour guide, as they enjoyed exploring the many areas of the Cultural Centre. The interest and engagement from the Service Users was very well received and welcomed by the Cultural Centre Staff.



Farewell and Good Luck to Polly Walsh!



One of our longest serving Staff Members from the SLT department, Polly Walsh, recently attended her Leaving Party in Pathways Day Service, Maynooth. The event was attended by 7 other locations; Connections, Rise, Ice, Leap, Crossroads, Horizons and Griffin Rath. Polly was a Senior SLT and was with the organisation for 20 years, she will be sadly missed by all, we wish her all the best in her next role. A special thanks to Mitos for the write-up and photos.



Ash Tree Day Service



Ash Tree and Mountain View Day Services in Tallaght recently hosted the National Advocacy Service (NAS) who gave a talk to the men and women. The presentation explored what NAS can offer adults with disabilities and the supports they can provide. A huge well done for organising such an important talk and highlighting the importance of advocacy to the Service Users.



Re Nua Day Service

The team in Re Nua would like to extend a very warm Re Nua welcome to Tina, the new CNM2. Tina commenced her role in March and everyone wishes her all the best in her new role.



There was cause to celebrate recently in Re Nua Day Service. Best wishes to Garrett who has moved into his new home in The Manor. Garrett has said he is very happy with the move, we all wish you well.



Las Granadas Day Service



Thomas Barry from Las Granadas Day Service in Tallaght, along with his Keyworker Jessica, went to see THE DEVIL SPINE BAND at the Civic Theatre on the 19th of March 2025. As part of his outcomes, Thomas had informed Jessica earlier in the year that he wanted to go to the show. Both had dinner at his choice of restaurant, The Betelnut Café before the show and had a fantastic time taking in the performance. Thomas said he thoroughly enjoyed it and cannot wait to attend more shows, he is a very sociable person.



In other Las Granadas news, a group from the location recently had an Easter themed art class and created colourful headbands which were modelled around the Day Service. Art classes offer a multitude of benefits, from enhancing creativity and fine motor skills to fostering social skills and boosting confidence. They can also improve memory, focus, and stress relief. Keep up the good work everyone.



LEAP Day Service



Paul Ferris from LEAP in Maynooth started working at Nik's Tea a month ago in Rathcoole, Co. Dublin and is loving it! Major thanks to his job coach, Niall Carew.

Madeus Zorila, Niall Gillen and Peter Cahill who attend LEAP Day Service all thoroughly enjoyed social farming recently at Val and Una Cross's farm in Drumsru.



Padraig Tracey from LEAP got accepted onto a course around Independent Living Skills in TUD. A huge congrats to you Padraig.

Movie name: DEATH OF A UNICORN

CRAIG'S PIC 'N' FLIX

HI MY NAME IS CRAIG, HELLO EVERYONE, I LOVE PIC 'N' MIX AND MOVIES! I LIKE MOVIE QUOTES AND MOVIES CROSSOVERS AND I AM GOING TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT THEM AND SCORE THEM OUT OF 5 PIC 'N'MIX!

STORY	CHARACTERS	ACTING	SPECIAL EFFECTS
IT IS ABOUT A FATHER AND DAUGHTER LOOKING ON A MAP AND THEY KILL A BABY UNICORN.	REILY ELLIOT THOMAS,TOM AND GWEN LEOPOLD	THE ACTING WAS FUNNY	THE UNICORN LOOKED COOL, AMAZING AND FANTASTIC
QUOTE	MESSAGE	CROSSOVER	MUSIC
"CALLED IT, NO NEGOTIATING WITH MONSTERS "	IT'S IMPORTANT TO TRY UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER	ZOMBIELAND! ZOMBIES AND UNICORNS	DOA BY ST. VINCENT IT IS BRILLIANT

I LIKED

THE ENDING OF THE MOVIE, NO SPOILERS

movie review

- Death of a Unicorn is a movie about Elliot and Reily, a father and daughter who are on a trip to the mountain house of the rich Leopold family.
- While driving, by surprise they hit with their car a baby unicorn. The Leopold family want to use the blood of the unicorn to cure sickness.
- It is a horror comedy, it is both funny and scary.
- Jenna Ortega's character Reily, tries to save the unicorns
- I am a big fan of horror movies, and I loved this movie, and if you like horror movies, you might love it too.



Green Gables Day Service

Christina Suresh began her work placement last month in a hairdresser. She was very excited and looking forward to it. Christina has a busy schedule in Green Gables and her favourite day to attend is Friday. She goes to Sister's shed and buys her lunch in The Square with friends. When she found out her work experience was changed to a Friday instead of Thursday, she felt very down. Christina decided to self-advocate on this matter and promptly spoke with the manager in the salon.

Christina asked to change her work placement day to a Thursday instead of Fridays. The manager at the hairdresser agreed and said that they are very happy with Christina as she is such a great worker. Staff and friends in Green Gables are very proud of her. WELL DONE CHRISTINA!

Christina Interview

How is your working placement going?

- Work is very good, I greet the customers, tidy up and make tea and coffee. I like chatting with people in work experience.

Why did you want to change your days?

- On Friday I have sister shed, drama and lunch out. I don't want to miss out on seeing my friends in sister shed and now I can do both.

What helped you speak up?

- In Green Gables we learn about speaking up for ourself in classes. I spoke to the staff for advice about my problem. I was confident with my manager in work when I asked.



Daniel Moses from Green Gables met with Paul Kelly from Brown Bag Films recently. Paul has worked with Disney Studios for over 10 years and was a part of the illustration team on movies such as The Land Before Time, Anastasia, Thumbelina, and An American Tale. Paul brought some original movie scene illustrations and he gifted a movie scene illustration from An American Tale to Daniel. Daniel was thrilled to meet Paul, and receive mentorship in the area of design and illustration, which relates to his own career goals.

Paul was so generous with his time and advice to Daniel. None of this would have been possible without the help from staff member Alan Byrne from Evergreen who arranged this meeting with Paul. Supervisor Aine, Daniel and the team in Green Gables are so thankful to both Paul and Alan for organising this meeting with Daniel.



Tessa House Day Services



As part of National Tree Planting week, Tessa House Day services (Hazelwood, Ash Tree, Mountain View), planted two trees to represent their units, namely a Mountain Ash tree and a Hazel tree, kick starting their courtyard garden. The trees were kindly donated by John Kirberd of Stepping Stone Forests. Well done to all involved...



**NATIONAL
TREE WEEK**
2025
Planting Trees Growing Together



Tree Council
of Ireland

COILLTE

#TreeWeek2025

Rowendale Day Service

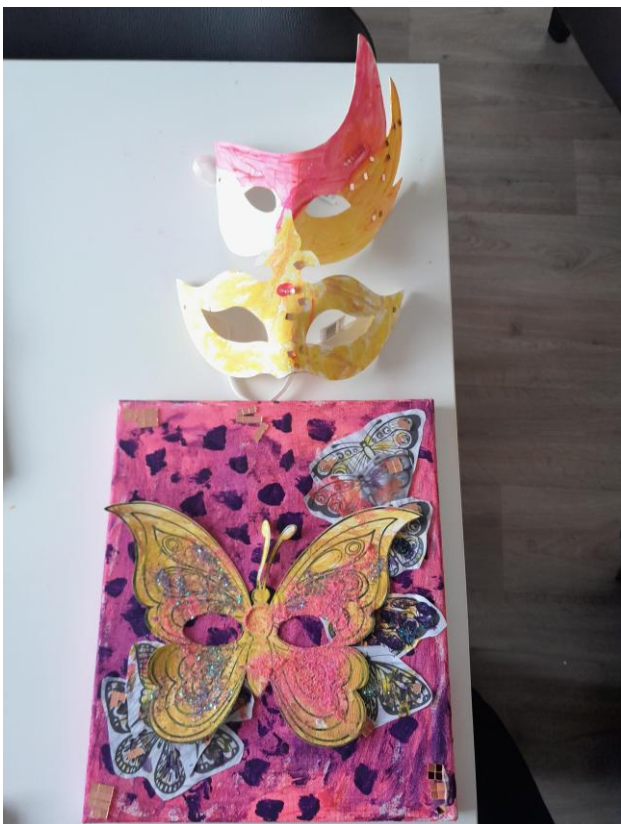


Rowendale Day Service in Celbridge recently had a lovely visit to Bray. Jamie and Niall enjoyed the sunshine and gorgeous ice cream on offer along the promenade. Bray is a coastal town in north County Wicklow and is situated about 20km south of Dublin city centre on the east coast, and parts of the town's northern outskirts are in County Dublin. It has a population of 33,512 making it the tenth largest urban area within Ireland. Windmill and a few of our other Day Service locations are big fans of Bray, if you have not been, we would highly recommend a visit this Spring or Summer.

Windmill Day Service



The photos show some beautiful artwork pieces which were created by Ken and Aileen who attend Windmill Day Service in Crumlin, the creations have been entered into an Art competition. The theme is 'Paint on canvas and mixed media'. The very best of luck to you both in the competition.



Avila Day Service

Avila Day Service held their first walk and talk group on Thursday, 10th April. The group extended the invite to all other day services and had three lovely guests join them from Mulberry day service in Clondalkin. It was a beautiful day, and the group walked around Sean Walsh Park in Tallaght while chatting. The men and women commented on how nice it was to see some old friends. The hope is that they will get even more people to join next time. Supervisor Claire McDermott said, “We hope that by facilitating this group, we are providing opportunities for connection, relationship building, and health and exercise! ”





At our April Liffey Voice meeting, we shared updates on the new Liffey Voices website. Fatima and Patrick have been working closely with the group to design and plan the website together. We have also welcomed a new intern, Karl, who is helping us build the website. The group has been meeting every Thursday to work on it, and we want to thank Kehinde, Amy, and Doris for all the time and effort they've put in so far. The website will be up and running this month at LiffeyVoices.ie

We also spoke about the Liffey Voice Men's Group. They will meet next Wednesday to decide what activities they want to do together in May. Everyone is welcome to share ideas for fun or interesting things the group can do.

Other topics included transport and how people are getting around. A group from Celbridge took the new W6 bus from Celbridge to Tallaght. They said it was great and they will do it again. We talked about the Way Finding Centre and how it might help people get around and we are organising a visit. The Self-Advocacy Toolkit was also discussed, as it will help people speak up for themselves. Our next Liffey Voice meeting will take place on 29 May 2025, and we hope to see everyone there to keep working on these great projects together.



Co-Design our Personal Plans



We are delighted to share an exciting update on our collaborative Co-Design Project between 30 Co-Designers from across Liffey Services and 25 Computer Science students from TU Dublin. These passionate teams have been working hard to redesign and co-create a more accessible and meaningful iplanit and Personal Plan App for Plan Owners.

Over the past few months, our co-designers have developed new skills, explored inclusive design, and shared their lived experience to shape something truly special. Their creativity and dedication have been incredible to witness.



On April 4th, the teams proudly presented their designs to St. John of God Managers and the app development company Aspirico. The feedback was glowing – the co-designers' contributions were essential to the project's success. One student said,

"We couldn't have built this without the co-designers – they showed us what matters."

As part of the project, we even introduced AI tools to support co-designers in creating their prototypes, helping students understand what worked well and how to make the app more user-friendly. This hands-on approach empowered co-designers and sparked new confidence and creativity.

Beyond the tech, this project has opened doors to important life skills and inclusive higher education opportunities. Our co-researcher, Patrick, is now leading two focus groups with all co-designers and support staff to explore what worked well and the impact of this unique co-design experience.

One co-designer summed it up perfectly:

"I loved doing it. It was great because the students were listening to us, and we got to build things, go to college, and hang out."

This project shows what's possible when people with lived experience and future tech leaders come together. We're so proud of everyone involved and excited for what's next!

Tony Davis Helps Shape the Future of Assistive Technology in Ireland

On April 4th, Tony Davis, one of our amazing DigiCoaches and self-advocates, participated in an important workshop with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Irish Government. Tony gave his thoughts on the WHO recommendations, spoke up for people with lived experience, and showed how important it is that people who use services are part of the decisions about them.

This workshop was about ensuring that Assistive Technology (AT)—such as communication devices, hearing aids, and other helpful tools—is available to everyone who needs it in Ireland.

Over the last six months, WHO has been working in Ireland. They met with people all around the country to learn:

- What is working well with Assistive Technology?
- Where are the problems or gaps?

WHO then developed some ideas and solutions and used a special tool called ATC-C to help Ireland understand how to pay for, provide, and improve AT for all.

These ideas were shared at the workshop, and Tony, Christine Cannon, SLT and Sarah Boland from Liffey Services, along with 40 experts from other services, the HSE, Enterprise Ireland, universities, and the Government, discussed them and gave feedback.



Tony did a fantastic job showing why it's important to have people with lived experience involved, and he echoed "Nothing About Us Without Us."

Tony helped ensure real voices were heard and showed how people with disabilities can help create better plans and services for everyone.

Thank you to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration, and Youth for hosting this important event and to all those who participated.

We are so proud of Tony for being a strong voice and leader!



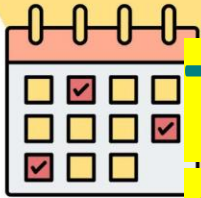
LiffeyVoices.ie



Liffey Voices Meeting

Thursday 29th May 2025

11am – 12:00pm



TALLAGHT or Celbridge

Or Zoom PLEASE REGISTER

Please register:

<https://forms.office.com/e/B8Va65uG2X>



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



Meeting ID 474389762
Password 054429



Scan Here to join Zoom

Thank You for Reading...

On a final note, I just wanted to let you all know that my 'What is New Directions?' Online Engage sessions will be happening on Thursday, 1st May at 10am and again at 1.30pm for anyone who cannot make the morning. We will be focusing on the New Directions pillar 'Support for Maximising Independence'. Thank you and I look forward to chatting to some of you then!



Could everyone please continue to send all your good news stories into me, we love to celebrate all the successes happening across Liffey Region's Day Services.

Get in touch

Donna Hughes,
Unit 15,
Block A,
Gleann na hEorna,
Tallaght,
D24 AD62



087 1734186



Donna.hughes@sjog.ie



**St John
of God** 
**Intellectual
Disability Services**

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

