

## Lord Mayor launches Exchange House's EU Adult Learning Modules and research on Domestic Violence

Being one of the largest service providers for Travellers in the city of Dublin and noticing the Domestic Violence issues some Travellers were facing Exchange House decided to do research so that we could come up with informed, reliable, factual, culturally appropriate responses and actions. Domestic violence is a hugely challenging and sensitive issue. We have engaged the problem as honestly and openly as possible without stigmatising the Traveller community since domestic violence is found in all communities and socio-economic groups. We hope that publication of the Report will be an important step in a constructive engagement with these issues. As a result of the intensive work which is reflected in the Report, 60% of Exchange House staff that

provide face to face support, have now received Domestic violence training. The research was done from the female perspective as well as from the male perspective. Exchange House is hoping to address a hugely challenging and sensitive issue from within the community. Exchange House hopes that these two reports will provide us with concrete recommendations for the development of good practice in the design and delivery of services to Traveller women experiencing domestic violence. A range of priority areas of action were identified and now we are eager to implement them. Our research also included a report that involved Traveller men. Exchange House wanted to explore the issue of domestic violence with Traveller men



*Dublin Lord Mayor, Councillor Paddy Bourke launches Exchange House's EU Adult Learning Modules and research on Domestic Violence at Exchange House's offices*

and to examine ways to engage them on the issue of domestic violence. It was considered important to examine ways in which attitudes and behaviour could be changed in relation to domestic violence from the perspective of Traveller men themselves. Domestic Violence is not an easy subject. The Domestic Violence

research would not have been made possible without the support of the Health Service Executive. We would like to acknowledge their ongoing support, commitment and contribution to the Traveller community.

*(See page 2 for EU learning modules...)*



**Local Training Initiative Programme Participants 2008**  
(back row L-R) Eileen Hanley, Christine Maughan, Emmie Berry, Margaret Maughan, Chrissie Connors, Anne Connors  
(front row L-R) Anne Grogan, Maggie Green, Mags Maughan, Ellen Collins

## LTI programme comes to an end

Our Local Training Initiative (LTI) Programme came to an end on June 27th 2008. The programme, funded by FÁS, has been running since 2000. All the staff of Exchange House will miss the women who made up the LTI and who have brought great fun and energy to the organisation.

*(More details on page 3...)*

## New homeless group

Our Family Support Team has set up a new Homeless Group. The Group is being piloted throughout the summer and is due to start this coming September. This group will run every Wednesday & Thursday. This Group will consist of informal and educational programmes aimed at Travellers living on the streets, or in homeless accommodation. To find out more please contact Joanne Ryan on 01 872 1094.

## Inside this issue...

Young Travellers visit Paris & the Somme  
European Commission's SOCRATES partnerships  
New education achievement awards  
Links with Dochas Centre's *Renew Project*  
Exchange House *Football League* results

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## Education Department



*Members of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee worked with Exchange House on the Irish input into the European Commission's SOCRATES Grundtvig Alpha-Beta project and MINERVA Alpha-to-Omega Project. Lord Mayor of Dublin, Cllr. Paddy Boyle (centre) is pictured with (L-R) Helen Geoghean, CEF, Bernadette Sproule, AEO, Mary McDermott, ALO and Margo Kelly, Tutor, of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee at the launch of modules for the two Alpha Projects*

## SOCRATES - Grundtvig & Minerva

A European Partnership developing new innovative learning materials for adults.

The Alpha Projects are transnational European partnership programmes sponsored by the European Commission under the Socrates-Grundtvig-Minerva initiative. Exchange House Travellers Services is extremely fortunate to be participating in the following two EU projects:

### Alpha-Beta

This is a project that targets new adult education services towards those with literacy difficulties. In partnership with agencies from Greece, Romania, Germany, Italy and Belgium this project is aimed at helping adult education teachers to utilise modern communications technologies to support teaching and knowledge acquisition. In collaboration with the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee (CDVEC) and the National Adult Literacy Agency, we have developed a learning programme utilising mobile phones for people with reading and writing difficulties. In partnership with our Drug Workers and VEC tutors we have also created, and piloted, two

additional information and teaching modules in relation to drug misuse and fire safety.

### Alpha-Omega

This is a programme which provides "New pathways towards volunteering and life long learning for "senior" European citizens." With partners in Greece, Austria, Romania, Belgium, Germany and Italy, Exchange House has developed and piloted new learning materials for senior learners in adult learning programmes. Exchange House invited Traveller senior citizens to share their stories and skills with the younger generation. In collaboration with the CDVEC we designed, and piloted, a "Living History" module which provides a forum for older people to share their memories, skills, songs, stories and expertise to the younger generation.

We would like to acknowledge, and sincerely thank, the Travellers who use our services and who agreed to assist us in piloting the learning modules we have developed. The success of these modules would not have been possible without their help and support. We thank you all.

## Community Employment



Linda Connors and Maggie Collins

The Community Employment (CE) Scheme has been operating in Exchange House since March 2007 within the Education Department and funded by FÁS. We are approved for 15 participants. Some participants are working with organisations outside Exchange House. These include Bradóg Youth Service, Bright Start Pre-School, Ballyfermot Traveller Action Project and The Irish

Traveller Movement. The remaining participants operate in Exchange House engaged in Information Resource Services, Administrative Support and Maintenance Work .

The CE workers spend a part of their project time involved in training and education programmes. The CE team is very diverse in terms of age and training/educational needs and as such we design Individual Learner Plans (ILP's) to ensure each learner gets exactly what they want and need. The ILP's are devised with maximum input from each CE learner while acknowledging the existing skills of the learners. The CE workers have undertaken a variety of training courses including Safety in the Workplace, Occupational First Aid (FETAC 5), Personal Effectiveness, The Management of Violence and Aggression in the Workplace, Telephone and Reception Skills and Computer Training. All of the training is underpinned with on-going

Basic Education. We acknowledge the support of the CDVEC in this regard.

The aim of the Education Department, as the CE scheme moves into its second year, is to ensure that each participant will be given the opportunity to work towards gaining a Major FETAC award. Learners will then ensure they have the added skills needed to progress to employment or further education.

Paula Cullen  
CE Supervisor



Lilyanne Power & Mary Joyce

## Annual Award Ceremony

The awards ceremony highlights and celebrates the achievements of learners engaged in the educational programmes in Exchange House, where learners receive their certificates of various FETAC achievements. We held our awards ceremony on 24<sup>th</sup> June in Exchange House. Mary McDermott of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee presented the awards. This gave the organisation an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate with learners their educational and training achievements. The ceremony also gave space for the learners to highlight their positive achievements in the fields of education and training. Some of the awards presented to learners were: FETAC Level 3 in Textiles; FETAC Level 3 in Horticulture; and FETAC Level 5 in Occupational First Aid. Well done and congratulations to all those who were awarded their certificates.

Cathleen McDonagh  
Education Department Manager

## Local Training Initiative

The Local Training Initiative (LTI) programme had eighteen participants. This year, many members of the group achieved FETAC accreditation in a variety of modules. They also took part in informal education modules. The subjects undertaken by the trainees are varied and cover subjects including Adult Basic Education, Food and Nutrition, Computers and Arts and Crafts. The LTI had been a long running

programme in Exchange House but sadly, it finished at the end of June. All the staff of Exchange House will miss the women who made up the LTI and who have brought great fun and energy to the organisation.



Participants of the  
LTI Programme at  
the Japanese  
Gardens

# News Travels

## Family Support

### A day in the life of a Family Support Worker

Due to the confidential aspect of my work I am not using real names or addresses but the content is very real.

What I love about being a family support worker is that no two days are the same, as they say *“variety is the spice of life.”*

At 9:10 am, I get a call from Lisa who I have worked with for the past year, she is on her way to

see me. She has left her three kids with her sister. Lisa has decided that she is no longer going to put up with her partner’s violent behaviour.

We head over to Dolphin House to get a safety order. While waiting to see the Judge, I receive a phone call from the women’s refuge informing me, that they have a vacancy for Lisa and her family. With this good news Lisa feels more confident about what she is doing. We talk about the new life she is going to make for herself. Lisa has decided once she gets



Members of the Family Support Services Department (L-R) Martina McGovern, Social Worker; Ronnie O'Donnell, Drug Outreach Worker; Heydi Foster, Director; Caroline O'Reilly, Drug Outreach Worker; Jules McDonagh, Family Support Worker; Rebecca Dunne, Family Support Worker; Aoife O'Brien, Social Worker; Lindsey O'Byrne, Student; Joanne Ryan, Team Manager; Patricia Sagasta, Family Support Worker (not shown)

settled, she is going to join the women’s group in Exchange House, as she would love to improve her literacy skills. As Lisa goes to see the Judge, I have to wait in the corridor. Within minutes Lisa is out waving her safety order in my direction. I congratulate her courage. We collect the kids and bring them all to the refuge. After lunch, I make a phone call to Jane who I give ongoing support to, to see if she had received her medical cards.

At 2:30pm, I leave the office and head for Clondalkin to visit Brigid and Jimmy, who

are new to our service. In between four cups of tea we fill out a Supplementary Welfare Allowance form. Then I head off to the local retail park to get quotes for bedroom furniture. Brigid was very pleased with the help as they have no car and she has got arthritis in her two knees. I made an appointment with Brigid to meet the following morning as she felt she needed some support to put her case forward to the Community Welfare Officer.

Rebecca Dunne  
Family Support Worker

## The Renew Project

The Drug Outreach Team at Exchange



The Dochas Centre

House has developed a new programme with The *Renew Project* at the Dochas Centre Women’s Prison centred on Substance Misuse Education. It is a five week course that is aimed at all Traveller women at the Dochas Centre with a view to engaging the participants in group work for the future. Each module is heavily based upon members input and is imagery based with an element of literacy training. Our programme is also part of our Student Placement programme for Addiction Studies. The programme consists of the following modules:

- Substance Misuse and the harmful effects on the body – This module is

aimed at education around the effects of both legal and illegal drugs on the body, it is carried out over two sessions.

- A module on the Wheel of Change is used to explain the cycle of addiction and how one must prepare themselves for recovery. It also aims to give an understanding around what an individual is going through while in addiction.
- A module of Harm Reduction is incorporated to educate participants around safer ways of using drugs and services available in Dublin city.

## Lifeskills Group

The family support team in conjunction with the Education Department are pleased to announce the introduction of a Lifeskills group for homeless people. This exciting new initiative commenced on Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May. The target group for this are Travellers who are currently experiencing homelessness and who have an interest in developing their literacy and life skills. The individuals that have been identified for the group are service users already known to the family support department who are currently living in homeless accommodation or on the street. This programme has been introduced to provide the opportunity for learning and education and to enable the group to share their beliefs, values and experiences. The premise is on increasing knowledge and developing skills through a solution focused approach and by utilising an educational component.



We hope to run the group twice weekly on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons for two hours. The focus of the Wednesday sessions will be literacy based with a literacy development worker who is experienced in building literacy into other activities. On the Thursdays we plan to focus on Lifeskills and we expect to organise a number of activities and trips to places of interest which have been identified by the group. The group will be co-ordinated by both the Education and the Family Support departments.

We look forward to providing future updates on the progress of the group.  
Martina McGovern  
Social Worker

(from page 4)

- The final module is based around discussion and an introduction to Group Work sessions.

Throughout the course of substance misuse education the group develops cohesiveness with other participants and the facilitators and builds up an element of trust within the group. It is an open group setting due to the nature of the prison and the arrival and departure of our members. To date it has been very successful in developing links with both clients, the staff at the Dochas Centre and the staff at Exchange House.

Caroline O'Reilly & Ronnie O'Donnell  
Drugs Outreach Workers



## Annual Report 2008

This year we decided to do an Annual Report that was easy to access and understand so it would be read as widely as possible. I hope the new format sees the report receive a wide circulation and readership. I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the Board, past and present, including that of Hugh McDermott as Chairperson over a number of years. I would like to recognise the hard work and commitment of the staff, led by the Director. In particular I want to acknowledge the contribution of Travellers at both board and staff levels. Before an organisation can deliver effective services it



needs to equip itself with the right internal structures, processes and people. The only constant in life is change and the Board appreciates the appetite shown by staff for improving how we are organised. Exchange House continues to work hard in making sure that our services are meeting the needs of Traveller families. We recognise that if we are not providing better outcomes for Travellers there is no purpose to our work. Finally, we are constantly evaluating our work to better meet the changing needs of Travellers. Special thanks to the Traveller families and individuals who continue to access our services and place their trust in us.

Pat Bennett  
Chairperson



Pat Bennett  
Chairperson

If you would like a copy of our 2007 Annual Report, please drop us a line at [info@exchangehouse.ie](mailto:info@exchangehouse.ie) or on 01 872 1094

# News Travels

## Traveller Youth Service

### Educational Away Programmes

Exchange House Youth Service run a number of Educational Away Programmes throughout the year. The aim of these programmes is to educate those we feel to be most at risk of anti-social behaviour, who would not access mainstream services due to family circumstances. We identify and engage with these young people on an educational level in a positive informal setting. We aim to build up relationships with these young people and work on social and communication skills. Our main trips this year were to Kilkenny, Carlingford and France.

After months of planning our first trip was to Kilkenny. Here 4 youth workers and 7 young people spent the weekend learning responsibilities like cooking for themselves, visited historical sites such as Kilkenny Castle and adjusted to overnight stays away from home. They did a weekend of teambuilding activities in order to get the young people to bond before they headed off to France.

Our next trip was to Carlingford. On this trip 2 youth workers and 5 young people headed off to Carlingford for a weekend of teambuilding, adventure sports and fun. Their first day was taken up with an orienteering activity. The youth workers and girls were left in the middle of a



*Sarah Byrne (left) & Emma Parsons (4th from left) Youth Workers, with Educational Away participants*

mountain with a map and had to find their way out of it. Needless to say they made it just before dark. After an “early night” the girls headed off for a morning of Archery. 7 girls, 2 bows and 16 arrows and one worried looking instructor made for good fun. Their next activity was the high ropes. You were harnessed in but had to walk up freehand a slanted log a tightrope and several hanging ropes where at the end you

had the option to dive off or abseil down. The girls were very excited and each took to it like ducks to water.

After we evaluated the weekend the girls said they had a ball, really enjoyed working together and would like to continue working together.

Sarah Byrne & Emma Parsons  
Youth Workers

## Paris, France - March 2008



*John Paul Collins (left), Jimmy Maughan (4th from left) Youth workers & William McDonagh (right) Team Manager, with Traveller youths at the Battle of the Somme Memorial in France*

Then came our next trip to France. This was a 10 day trip for the 4 youth workers and 7 young people. Once arriving and settling into their accommodation they

had a busy week. They visited several historical and famous places in Paris such as The Eiffel Tower, The Arc de Triomphe, The Louvre, The Champs Elysee, Cleopatra’s Needle and Disneyland. They spent a day visiting religious buildings around the city. They went one day to The Somme Battlefields where the young boys placed a wreath for all Traveller Men who fought in the War of 1914-1918 some of whom were relatives of the boys and youth workers there.

When evaluating our Away Programmes the each group sat down and discussed their trips.

*(cont on page 7...)*

# July 2008

(Cont from page 6...)

The feedback was very positive. The young people were motivated, enjoyed each trip, and expressed an interest in continuing working together. They learned about responsibilities, teambuilding, different cultures, and the history of the places they had visited. They had great fun!

## Exchange House Football League

The Youth Service has recently began the Exchange House U15 Soccer League. We have entered 5 teams from St. Margaret's Park, St. Oliver's Park & Bridgeview. The young people have been training since January of this year with their coaches Jimmy and John Paul. They will play with teams from Finglas. The teams have been



given names of real teams such as Liverpool and Barcelona. At the end of the tournament the winning team will receive the Exchange House Cup and medals will be awarded for best players and top goal-scorer. Four teams have played their opening matches of the league. The league has been postponed now until after our summer projects but the boys are still in training throughout the summer.

Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
LIVERPOOL	1	1	0	0	6	2	3
ARSENAL	1	1	0	0	4	2	3
BARCELONA	1	0	0	1	2	4	0
MAN UNITED	1	0	0	1	2	6	0
REAL MADRID	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
CHELSEA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

## St. Oliver's & Bridgeview Afterschools Projects



Some participants of the Afterschools projects

playground. The name chosen by the young people who use it. In partnership with each other, the after-school staff, young

St. Oliver's and Bridgeview after-schools has been running as a part of Exchange House youth service for 6 years. The aim of our after-schools is to offer educational and homework support to the young people living on this site.

With Julie, our co-ordinator, and her three staff members they offer 20 young people a range of different activities alongside their homework support. They do off site trips, computers, arts and crafts, hip hop dancing, musical instrument lessons and a summer project each year.

Newly opened in St. Oliver's and Bridgeview Park is the "Happy Days"

people and youth team have begun a project to paint a mural on the wall of the playground.

After interviewing our young people the wall will feature such favourites as High School Musical, Spongebob Squarepants and Horrid Henry. All 20 of the young people will each have a project on the wall which we hope to finish by the end of the summer.

Well done Julie and team. The arts and crafts lessons really paid off! Photos will feature in the next edition of our newsletter!!!

Julie McDonagh  
Afterschool Co-ordinator

## Exchange House Educational Achievement Award

Exchange House is launching an educational achievement award. We will be highlighting the educational achievements of people and also the overall value of formal education for the future of the Traveller Community. This is the first year of the award and we hope that it is a success. Through this award and other educational initiatives, we are striving to get the message across of the value of education and that formal education can open doors of opportunity for people. The date set for the award ceremony is Friday 14<sup>th</sup> Nov 2008.



Cathleen McDonagh  
Team Manager

Every person nominated will be entered into a raffle where the prize is a lap top computer for the winner and runner up prizes.

For more details please contact Cathleen McDonagh on: 01 872 1094  
Or fill out the form on the back page and send it in to us.

# News Travels

## A few words from our Director



Hello everyone,

I would like to welcome you to our very first edition of the Exchange House Travellers Service newsletter:

**NEWS TRAVELS!!**

A lot of work has gone into the design, layout and articles. This edition was coordinated by the lively and energetic Sarah Byrne from the Youth Department. The newsletter will be published on a quarterly basis and every department will be in charge of coordinating the newsletter

on a rotating basis. Paula Cullen from the Education Department will be coordinating the next edition.

Since it was set up in 1980, Exchange House has operated from many different locations because it wasn't possible to acquire a long-term lease. For the next 20 years, thanks to the Christian Brothers' generosity, we now have a very spacious building to provide our services: Youth, Education, Family Support, Drug Outreach, Community Development and Research & Policy - for the very first time in 30 years - all under the same roof. Come and visit us when you can.

I hope that the newsletter will give you an insight into the daily work of every

department and an appreciation of the commitment and dedication of a very skilled and professional staff committed to improving the lives of Traveller families.

There are a number of new and exciting projects taking place at Exchange House which you can read about in this edition.

Hope you enjoy the newsletter - we are always interested in hearing your views and opinions so if you have anything you want to share don't be shy and get in touch.

Have a smashing, hot and sunny summer!!

Heydi Foster  
Director

**Educational Achievement Award for members of the Traveller Community**  
14th November 2008  
Dublin City Council

Criteria for Exchange House Educational Achievement Award

People applying for this award will have sat and completed the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate, A Levels or O Levels in the year 2007/8.

- completed all exams
- quote reference number
- open to any age group
- open to all members of the Traveller community in the island of Ireland
- closing date Monday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 08

Every person nominated will be entered into a raffle: 1<sup>st</sup> 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**

I/We wish to nominate: .....

Name: (Block letters please): .....

Address: .....

Telephone Number: .....

Fax number: .....

Email: .....

Reference/Exam number: .....

School/Training or education centre .....

**Nominated by**

Name: (Block 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