

# PROSPER Times



## Carers Association

A new division of the North Dublin Branch of The Carers Association has been established in Skerries.

The Skerries group meets on the second Friday of the month at Skerries Mills, above the craft shop, at 10 30am and the next scheduled meeting will be on 11th April.

Membership costs €25 for 5 years.

At these meetings, carers meet with other carers in an open friendly environment, share local information and coping strategies, as well as offering emotional support and developing friendships. The group also regularly invites guest speakers, expert in an area, to share their expertise with the members.

The local family support officer for North Dublin is Jacqueline Millman, 086-0213798. Jacqueline would welcome any enquiries.

Please note that anyone attending the Skerries branch would need to be able to climb a fairly steep stairway.

## HIQA Arrives in Prosper

The Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) is the independent authority established to drive continuous improvement in Ireland's health and personal social care services, monitor the safety and quality of these services and promote person centred care for the benefit of the public.

HIQA has statutory responsibility for:

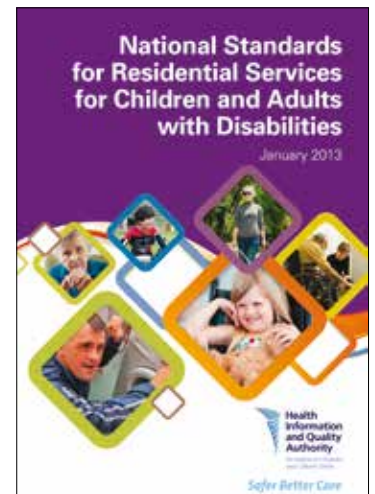
- Setting standards for health and social services
- Inspecting that these standards are in place
- Monitoring healthcare quality and safety
- Health technology assessment
- Health Information

All organisations that provide a Residential Service for people with intellectual disability must now be registered as a provider and monitored on an ongoing basis.

Prosper Fingal has three designated centres which fall under this brief. Our residential houses, Seal Cove and Knock Cross, make up one designated centre, Cherrygarth House (Respite) is the second and Lambay House (Respite) is the third.

HIQA carried out their first inspection of two of our designated centres in late February. The inspections proved to be very educational and positive experiences for all concerned. The inspectors met with Service Users, staff and managers. They gave verbal feed-back immediately following the inspections and their full formal report will be sent within the coming weeks. This report will be uploaded onto the HIQA website and can be accessed by anyone who wishes to read it.

Prosper Fingal looks forward to working with HIQA with the common goal of improving and delivering a better quality service.





What a stunner!

## Look at me now

**Kim Doyle, Rush Service, decided she wanted to make a change to her diet and lifestyle to become healthier.**

**"I really wanted to lose weight and eat healthily". Kim loves fashion, make up and everything girly, so knew that improving her health would also improve her figure and enhance her appearance. She joined Rush Fitness Gym and got to work on a programme that would help to strengthen and tone all her muscles.**

Kim learned that working out would not be enough to become healthy and that she also had to look at her diet. But she was determined and so began to eat more fruit and vegetables, cut out snacking and started to drink water instead of fizzy drinks. "It was hard at first. When I was buying my sandwiches in the shops I had to think of what was the better filling to get or if I went out for dinner I would try to find the best thing on the menu".

All the hard work was worth it. Kim has lost over three stone and is now maintaining her healthy weight as well as her fantastic figure! She is finding that she has much more energy which is great for running around the shops to pick out clothes that will complete how awesome Kim looks and feels.

"Kim is an inspiration and has influenced her group in such a positive way through her hard work and dedication." (Karen Redmond, staff)

## Grasp the Opportunity

I went to Trinity College for two years (studying for a certificate in Contemporary Living-2010-2012), says Eilish Conaty - North Street Service. I loved it there and learnt lots of new things.



Eilish and Sarra - New Roomies

I also made lots of new friends in college. These friends had travelled from all over Ireland to attend this course. One day Mags, one of my new friends, rang me and asked if I would like to move in with her and another friend, Sarra. I told her that I would love to live with her. I am an adult now and am old enough to live with my friends. My parents also thought it was a brilliant idea.

Mags, Sarra and I, along with our three mothers, all met in a hotel to plan the next move. We saw a house in Blanchardstown that we were all happy with, and we eventually moved out of home and in together on August 1st 2013.

I was already on the Council housing list which meant that I could apply for rent allowance and my social worker in Prosper Fingal helped me with this. My mother helped me with my budget – for paying bills and buying food. If things go wrong in the house though, for instance if the washing machine is not working, we ring the landlord and we don't have to pay for that. I do my washing and cooking and clean up after myself. I love living with my friends, though I still go home to my parents most weekends.

During the week I am very busy. I get two buses from Blanchardstown to Swords to meet with my keyworker, go to my cookery class or meet up with friends. I am also still involved in the "Trinity Club" and my two housemates and I can meet up with other friends there. I also go to classes in Blanchardstown in the evening, near to my new home.

I am really glad I went to Trinity because I met my new friends there and now I am living independently. It is brilliant, I love it.

## The Three 'Rs'

My Name is Cormac Jones and I attend the Rush Service. One of my personal goals was to improve my English skills and so I decided to do a Level 2 Certificate in General Literacy in the Adult Learning Centre in Balbriggan. The course was held every Tuesday over two years - 2011 to 2013. I learnt how to spell, read and write and also to do maths. The course was a bit hard but I really did enjoy it. One of the tutors (Fiona) was especially good.



First step achieved

My mum came with me to my Graduation ceremony which was held in the Bracken Court Hotel on the 6th February 2014. She was very proud when she saw me in my cap and gown and I was delighted to catch up with some of my former fellow students. I was very excited to achieve this personal goal. I am now doing the Level 3 course which will run for three years.



The new look men's basketball team



Chilling out in Cherrygarth - HIQA style



The new look ladies basketball team



Any minute now....



John Reilly at 60



Sonya at work On the Rails



Simon Reddy at 40



## My Life - My Right

Grainne O'Callaghan attends the North St. Service and recently attended the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies conference on the new **Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Bill** which was held in Portlaoise. She gave us the following report on what she learnt about the new Bill:



Next stop...Equal Rights

"Under the Lunacy Regulation Act of 1871 I do not have the right to be treated equally before the law. That legislation states that I can make decisions about small things in my life, such as what time to get up, what to wear, what bus to get, but I have no right in law to make the big decisions. If the Assisted Decision Making Bill is passed, I will be able to make bigger decisions in my life.

The office of The Public Guardian will assist me in making decisions. Under the new Bill I will have equal rights. The Circuit Court will appoint assisted decision makers, who can be a family member, who will be supervised by the office of the Public Guardian to help me to make these bigger decisions. The current Ward of Court system will be abolished.

Things have changed a lot in the last fifty years since I was a child. Everybody has the right to make mistakes, it is how we learn. I think this new Bill is a good idea. It will make life better for people with intellectual disabilities."

## Advocating Romance?

In December last year Siobhan Dunne and Fiona Savage (Balbriggan Service), with the support of staff member Ann Sharkey, travelled to the Ashling Hotel in Dublin for a conference on advocacy. On arrival, disaster appeared to strike when the lift was out of service in the hotel. This meant that Siobhan, who is a wheelchair user, was unable to attend the conference.



Siobhan decided to head to the bar for a coffee to pass the time while she waited on Fiona and Ann. There she met a young man called Graham who attends St. Michael's House in Coolock who was in the same predicament as Siobhan. They got chatting about their dilemma and how disappointed they both were being unable to attend the advocacy conference.

Before the day was over, a new friendship had been formed and phone numbers exchanged. A week later Graham called Siobhan and asked her if she would like to meet him in Swords for a coffee and she agreed. Graham had taken the time and trouble to make up a file on advocacy for Siobhan on what they had missed at the conference. Since then, their friendship has blossomed and on Valentine's Day Siobhan was presented with a single red rose and a card! Who knew what a broken lift could lead to!

## Important Reminder - Disability Allowance (DA)

A large number of the individuals we support receive a Disability Allowance from the Department of Social Protection. This is a weekly means tested payment for people with a specified disability, aged between 16 and 66, whose income falls below certain limits.

It is really important that you remember to let the Department of Social Protection know of any relevant changes in the individual's circumstances as soon as they happen. There have been occasions when the Department has stopped payment of the DA because of some non disclosure. There are a number of changes you need to inform the Department about, some of which may apply to you, for example:

- If you take up a FÁS Course or Community Employment (CE) Scheme
- If you commence a full-time or a part-time course of study
- If you take up employment or become self-employed
- If there is any change in the amount of income you receive

There is an information leaflet available called Disability Allowance SW 29, which is published by the Department of Social Protection. This gives full details about the allowance. You can contact them at:

**Disability Allowance Section,**  
Social Welfare Services,  
Government Buildings,  
Ballinalee Road,  
Longford.

**Phone (Lo Call):** 1890 92 77 70  
**Website:** [www.welfare.ie](http://www.welfare.ie)

Please let your keyworker know if you need any further help, advice or support on this matter.



Cecil accepts his award

## Gotta Lotta Colour

The Rush Service had three great wins in the local Credit Union Art Competition. Firstly, Cecil Moore's boldly painted 'Weather Wonder' impressed so much that he won the 2nd place award in the Adult Mainstream category and 1st place in the Special Needs category. His painting now goes forward to the Regional Finals. Carol McCabe's quirky painting of a smiling face that changed expression depending on where the viewer was standing earned her 2nd place in the Special Needs category.

Finally, the icing on the cake was when the entire Rush Service was honoured with a merit award for its contribution to art and creativity in the community. Well done to one and all.

## Movie Review Group

Claire Adams thought the idea of a Movie Review Group would be interesting and a good way of socialising with other Service Users in Seatown Road and so decided to set one up. Eight other movie buffs teamed up with Claire and their plan is to go to the movies every few weeks and write a review for the Centre newsletter. Their first outing was to see The Lego Movie which was a great hit with them all.

"It was great fun and a great day out with my friends. I will buy the movie on DVD and watch it with my family".  
(David Richardson)

# Jean Stapleton Remembered

Jean was one of our original Service Users joining the then Fingal Workshop back in 1978. She spent over 25 years in the Skerries Day Service before transferring to Piercetown. She was the life and soul of whichever centre she was in and her infectious laugh echoed throughout the halls.



Jean - Lived life to the full

We remember her many performances in the Skerries Christmas shows, her great love of music ensured lively singing and dancing. She was often accompanied by her then boyfriend Pat Murphy and watching them perform 'Grease Lightning' was an uplifting experience. She later broke Pat's heart by transferring her affections to Simon Duffy who bought her an engagement ring, which became her prized possession, and regularly presented her with flowers.

Jean's beauty regime was renowned and she insisted on completing her make up each morning, for you never know who you might meet and a lady should always be seen at her best! It was glitz and glamour all the way – bright pink colours to match her sunny personality and love of life.

When her Mam died she moved temporarily into Cherrygarth House and treated it as her own home welcoming everyone else staying there as visitors and looking after them. She regularly supervised activities and kept a watchful eye on staff from the comfort of the sofa!

In 2010 she moved into our Residential House, Knock Cross and from the outset changed the atmosphere for the better for all who lived there. Her love of the good things in life, especially culinary, meant gone were the boring ham and cheese sandwiches and in came chicken wraps and ciabattas, garlic prawns in sweet chilli sauce and cheesecake and cappuccinos! She was the house peacemaker and was always the one to see the good in everyone no matter what the argument. In her last two years, her declining health gave fellow residents the opportunity to help care for someone else rather than being cared for themselves.

Jean died on 21st February 2014 and we extend our sincere sympathies to all her family and friends.

## Our Helping Hands

Two individuals from the Rush Service decided to use some of their many talents to help others.

Sonya Hayes recently completed a trial period with the local St. Vincent de Paul and was thrilled when she was offered the chance to continue on as a volunteer in the shop. She works each Wednesday checking stock and sorting clothes, CDs and DVDs. "I love the job and it's really good for me. My co-workers are very friendly and I like working for a charity".

Mary Ellen Maughan is very good at talking to people and making them feel at ease and so decided to apply for a position in the Rush Nursing Home. She volunteers two days a week and had to get Garda clearance and fill out a number of forms before she could start work. "I really like working with the people at the nursing home. I think I'm very patient and good company for people and I enjoy playing cards with the residents and listening to them".

## Congratulations

Congratulations and Happy Birthday to two gentlemen who celebrated special birthdays recently. Firstly Simon Reddy (Skerries and Knock Cross) had a week-long celebration with friends and family to mark his 40th Birthday.

Popular man John Reilly (Piercetown) went all out to celebrate his 60th Birthday in style in the Balrothery Inn with family, neighbours and over 50 friends from the different Prosper services (Skerries, Rush, Piercetown, Sea View).



Yes Chefs!

## "Fine Dine at Mine"

Everyone at Seatown Road would like to wish Marie McCarthy and David Sharpe all the best in the All-Island cookery competition called "Fine Dine at Mine". It is a competition run by the Restaurants Association of Ireland that occurs once a year and is open to schools and training services alike. It is a chance for students with a passion for cookery to master their skills.

Entrants have to pick one of their favourite meals in a restaurant and adapt it to create a tasty, healthy and affordable meal. Marie and David thought long and hard about this and the meal they perfected is 'Spinach and Feta Turkey Burgers and Cajun Wedges'. This is presented to a judging panel and, if successful, the two will qualify to the final stage where they will cook their meal for the judges at a weekend away in Sligo.

Both David and Marie mastered the skills to create this tasty and healthy meal independently. This is no surprise as they both have a genuine interest in cookery and often cook for themselves, their families and friends at home.

**Contact Clare Murray**  
086-3867592 or email  
claremurray@eircom.net

## "Pass the Hydrogen Peroxide"

Erupting volcanoes? Foam fountains? Mini rockets? Dancing raisins? Home-made lava lamps? Just another day in the Seatown Road science experiments class. As part of the Choice programme Service Users suggest different classes they would like and science proved a popular choice.



There she blows

To make things interesting the group decided that we should do experiments to see what happens when we mix different things together. We made our very own lava lamps one week. This involved mixing together water, vegetable oil, food colouring and the magic ingredient - Alka Seltzer - in a clear plastic bottle. Once we dropped the tablet in the effect was amazing. We turned the lights out and shone a torch under the bottle and filmed the results which looked spectacular.

To make our very own green foam fountain we had to get some hydrogen peroxide. Using something like this meant we had to use rubber gloves and be careful when we were pouring. We used food colouring to make it green and the foam was made by mixing yeast with the hydrogen peroxide.

One of our favourite experiments was when we made our own erupting volcano. We asked the pottery group to make a model volcano from clay. To produce the oozing lava we mixed red and yellow food colouring with vinegar and Fairy liquid to great effect!

We plan to mix lots more things together. We don't mind if things turn gooey, slimy or if things go bang! The group is just enjoying seeing what happens when science takes over.

## 2 Become 1

A new venture between Swords Basketball Club and Special Olympics Ireland was officially launched recently by Mayor of Fingal, Kieran Dennison.

The new Club offers basketball training to people with intellectual disability in the Fingal area. Over 20 athletes have already registered and train at ALSAA on Mondays at 7pm (Ladies) and Thursdays at 7pm (Men). New athletes are very welcome and a waiting list will apply once teams are full.



Laura and Amy in new club colours

Swords Basketball Special Olympics Club aims to provide people with an intellectual disability with the opportunity to participate in year-round sporting activities in their local community as well as providing training for area, regional, all-island and World Games through the Special Olympics competition programme.

Many Service Users from Prosper Fingal have signed up for the new Club and are already playing league matches in their new colours. New players wishing to sign up should contact Paula on 087 8166231 or email sbbsecretary@hotmail.com