



Rays of sunshine.

New Service Update

Individuals who have started to link in with the Howth/Sutton/Baldoyle service have been very busy over the last number of months connecting with their local community. David and Philip Malone have been working hard with Sutton Tidy Towns, volunteering every Saturday morning. The Committee values the time that both gentlemen have given to date and David and Philip both look forward to remaining valued members of the Tidy Towns team.

Adam Howard is also giving back to his community. Adam is now volunteering on Sunday mornings in St. Fintan's Church with the basket collection at 12 noon mass.

Claire Finn is gaining valuable work experience and is fast becoming a valued member of the reception staff team in Sutton Cross Surgery while Christina Montague and David Malone are both keeping fit by attending local exercise classes in the community.

Ruth Murphy, Adam Howard and Philip Malone worked hard in collecting for National Sunflower Day for their local St. Francis Hospice in Raheny. Despite the terrible wet weather, €144 was collected on the day - not bad for a few hours work! Prosper Fingal would like to thank the staff in McDermott's pharmacy in Howth for their warm welcome and support on the day.

The gang have also had the opportunity to let their hair down, whilst supporting the local arts! They enjoyed a night out at 'All Shook Up', performed by Baldoyle Musical Society. There was plenty of singing and dancing and the production was thoroughly enjoyed by all!



Isabelle and Grainne supporting Oliver's choice

The Importance of Communication

by Oliver Carey

"On these issues people with disabilities should be supported to have a much greater say in decisions."

When I first heard that I might have to be peg fed I was very confused and even angry. I was shocked when I saw how my food would have to be blended and my drinks thickened. However, after I had some communication sessions with Grainne Tinney (Senior Speech & Language Therapist) and Isabel O'Donoghue (Psychologist) I understood the problem and what was involved.

Grainne asked me to join herself and Isabel to make an important presentation at the National Federation of Voluntary Bodies Learning Seminar on "The decision is mine but you can support me". It was a big day for me and I was excited and nervous. I used my M3 computer really well to tell over 100 seminar participants how I felt when I first heard that I would have to be peg fed. Together we explained how they had supported me to develop my communication, to understand about the parts of my body involved in eating and drinking as well as what was involved in peg feeding. Working closely for many months, they discovered my capacity for learning, understanding and communicating and that I could make the important decision on whether or not I should be peg fed.

At this seminar I realised how my experience was important. I could express my opinions to an audience and was delighted when I heard the similar and other opinions, feelings and experiences of the other presenters. They discussed how Our Right to Choose sounds simple but there's actually a lot to it; how if we have had limited education or experiences or not enough information it's very hard to make choices, how we need people we know and trust to learn from and communicate our opinions and decisions, how normal it is to make mistakes in our choices and to learn for the next time. Sadly, we also heard about experiences when people could not communicate their wishes, when their decision makers made inadequate efforts to communicate and learn and when people's Right to Choose was ignored with tough consequences for all concerned.

There were lots of important people at the seminar – people with disabilities, family members, service providers and people making new laws about decision making. However, I was delighted that my manager and a number of Prosper staff from the Portmarnock Centre were there for me.



Follow the light

Olympic Torch

Gary O'Brien has done it again! When Olympic fever hit the streets of Dublin on 6th June, our award winning sportsman was one of only 40 "greats" selected to carry the Olympic flame on its way to the London Olympics 2012. This is an incredible honour for the Portmarnock man as he was chosen among such sporting legends as Paul McGrath, Ronnie Delany and Sonya O'Sullivan.

It was a very proud moment for Gary's family and friends and he even gets to keep his torch and tracksuit from the event. Perhaps we can ask him to tour the centres with it over coming weeks?

Congratulations

Congratulations to Alison Dunne (Rush) and her husband David on the birth of their son, Marcus, to Fiona Leahy (Portmarnock) and husband Niall who welcomed a baby boy, Noah, and to Venerina Legname (Q&S) and husband Sean on the safe arrival of baby Tadgh.

Congratulations also go to Aidan Doyle (Respite/Skerries/Piercetown) who married Pauline McNabola in Italy in June.

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Local News

Operation Transformation - Prosper Style!



I will transform!

A new and exciting programme designed to promote a healthy lifestyle was launched in June. "Operation Transformation" covers such topics as exercise, diet and personal awareness and aims to transform participants to a new and healthier way of living. Classes consist of a quick Weigh In, a one-to-one chat on diet and goals, a talk from consultant dietician Fran O'Connor and a 45 minute workout with sports instructor, Robbie Corr. The cost of the 10 session programme is €50 and full payment was required in advance from each of the participants to ensure a firm commitment to the course!! The 17 Service Users from the different centres who signed up have already completed three weeks of the programme and proudly boast of weight losses of up to 10 pounds!

Skerries - Douze (12) Points!

There was great commotion in the Skerries centre on Thursday 14th June when none other than Ireland's Eurovision duo Jedward paid a surprise visit! As there had been no warning or talk of the twins popping in, suspicions were gradually raised that maybe all was not kosher... Perhaps it was that the sparkly waist-jackets did not quite fit or the fact that the face masks started to slip or that the voices sounded very much like staff members Ann Sharkey and Duane Creen? Either way, the Service Users thoroughly enjoyed the visit and there was lots of laughter echoing around the centre.



S'up Catriona?



Piercetown are the champions

Bocce Cup and Plate

In March this year, the Bocce players from the Skerries and Piercetown centres took part in the Special Olympics Area Games. The seven different pairings performed very well and came away with 2 Gold and 6 Bronze medals and 4 Ribbons. This is the first competition in the race for places to represent Ireland in the 2015 World Games which will be held in Los Angeles.

Then in June the inaugural Prosper Bocce Cup was held in Skerries Bowling Club and this time it was centre against centre in a "Ryder Cup" format. Piercetown proved to be too strong for Skerries on the day and came out winners by 21 points to 9. Well done to one and all.

PROSPER Times



Tidy Towns Twins David and Philip Malone

Advisory Group Promotes Active Partnership

Following on from the success of Prosper Fingal's first ever community information sharing evening last January, the new service for the Howth, Sutton and Baldoyle area is continuing to network and seek advice from local community groups and individuals in the form of an Advisory Group. This Group was set up to support the initial stages of the project and had its first meeting in May. This initiative has provided advice and guidance for Prosper Fingal whilst also giving other organisations and agencies the opportunity to network and liaise, thus leading to strengthened community development.

Howth staff would like to thank all individuals/groups who have supported the project to date and look forward to continuing to develop and maintain a positive working relationship in the future.

It's Official!

The streetscape of Swords was changed by Prosper Fingal on 25th May with the official opening of its new service at 67/69 North Street.

On a beautiful sunny morning, a large gathering of Service Users, Board members, staff and invited guests came to welcome Minister for Health James Reilly as he officially opened this new facility. Also in attendance were Conor Sparks (Chairman Prosper Fingal Board of Management), David O'Connor (Fingal County Manager), Sheila Marshall (HSE General Manager) and Tony Lambert (CEO, Fingal Dublin Chamber).



A job well done Mr. Sparks

The North Street Service is now base to over 50 individuals who will have a service that they sought and helped design. It aligns with national disability policy where services into the future are delivered with the aim of connecting and including people with disabilities into the mainstream of society to the greatest extent. Being in the middle of Swords, the capital town of Fingal, opens up endless opportunities across all facets of a person's life including education, health, employment and leisure. This new service model enables people to be connected with their peers, be supported as and when they need it and is a vehicle by which they can express their views to advance services, not alone in healthcare, but across all aspect of community living.

The Minister received a personal insight into the service from Luke Moore, Mark Warrilow and Grainne O Callaghan who all spoke of the positive impact that this new model is having on their lives. Minister Reilly was moved by their personal stories and congratulated Prosper Fingal on its continued responsiveness and innovation.



The choice is yours...

Dinner is Served

Many Service Users like to cook at home but often need a lot of supervision to do so. David Mc Ginn, Ross Guinan, Rachel O'Connell and Tara Casey recently signed up for a cookery programme with a difference in Seatown Rd. The idea behind this programme was to enable individuals cook a main course of their choice, from start to finish, totally independently.

Aislinn Finn (OT) headed up the staff team and spoke with the budding 'chefs' and their parents in advance and listened to what they each wanted to cook. Each recipe was then broken down into easy steps with very detailed step-by-step pictorial aids. These guides showed the participants how to master their chosen recipe.

With proud parents and families looking on, they started cooking each Monday night during April/May. The chefs all followed the instructions on the guide to cook the same dish on each of the nights and after four classes they all had it mastered. On the final night a 'dinner party' was organised and the Service Users set the table meticulously for their invited guests. Parents, siblings, uncles and grannies all enjoyed the fruits of their hard labour!!

Parents were amazed at the progress made from the first night when support from staff was required to the final night when tasks were completed from start to finish independently. And the students really enjoyed the experience and are ready and willing to try a new recipe now!

David goes Global

David O'Brien is part of the Prosper Fingal North Street service in Swords. He has worked on a part time basis in the Botanic Gardens, Glasnevin for the past 4 years.



David is Chairperson of Down Syndrome Ireland. This role involves many responsibilities which include ambassador duties, developing awareness of people with disabilities both in Ireland and worldwide and attending conferences and meetings around the world.

In February this year David was involved in the SMART Tourism Project which took him to Rome as the Irish delegate. At the conference David presented a Dublin Tourist Guide in easy-to-read format which was designed for people with a disability. Other delegates from Rome and Lisbon were involved in producing similar information in Italian and Portuguese. The final document will be released in September 2012.

Then in March David travelled to New York and Washington DC for 5 busy days. In New York he gave a presentation to the UN regarding education, employment, equality, non-discrimination and awareness-raising. He went sightseeing in Time Square, Ground Zero and Central Park and also visited the Irish Mission and met with the Irish Ambassador to United Nations.

In Washington DC David gave a presentation to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems regarding the voting rights for people with disabilities. United Nations Enable Article 29 - Participation in Political and Public Life - informs people of their voting rights and was used by David in his presentation.

During his time in Washington David took many tours one of which was very special - a guided tour of the White House where he was brought into places that are not on the normal tourist trail. Whilst he was there he observed the President leaving in his helicopter!

David's future travelling plans include Denmark, Tullamore and Galway - more from this intrepid traveller later!

Creative People

In November 2011, a group from Seatown Road took part in a *Fighting Words Workshop* which is part of the Roddy Doyle Literary Centre. It is a not-for-profit project that supports children and adults to develop their creative writing skills. The success of the project is hugely based on the fact that large numbers of people volunteer their time, free of charge, to help the small staff team in Fighting Words to deliver this service.

Having participated in the workshop and being keen creative writers, both Laura Mangan and Mary Ellen Maughan recently decided to pass on their skills as part of the volunteer team in Fighting Words.

To date they have volunteered on a number of occasions and worked with primary school children helping them develop their writing skills. This has enabled both ladies to increase their level of confidence and highlight their ability to people in the community. The staff in Fighting Words have been hugely supportive to the girls in what is a mutually beneficial project. Well done Mary Ellen and Laura.



Laura Mangan



Mary Ellen Maughan



Piercetown captain Seamus Woodhead lifts the cup



A stroll in the park



Tom Fagan won a medal for Skerries



Tiernan - the Action Man



Just good friends



David O'Brien (Left) meets Miriam



Skerries visitors to Malahide Respite



Hanging around Carlingford

University Challenge

Carol Evans, Ryan Johns and Claire Adams are active members of the Connect People Network, a rights organisation which focuses on relationship issues for people with intellectual disabilities. Last month they were invited to become university lecturers for a day at the School of Social Work in Queen's University Belfast.



Where's Harry?

Most professional Social Workers will encounter and make important decisions regarding people with intellectual disabilities over the course of their career, regardless of the specific field they work in. Unfortunately, many of these Social Workers do not actually know people with intellectual disabilities. Carol, Ryan and Claire wanted to challenge the assumptions that student Social Workers might have about people with intellectual disabilities and their relationship issues. They wanted to share their opinions about having a disability and having relationships. And so, on May 11th, accompanied by Michael Feely (Prosper Fingal Social Worker) they arrived at Queen's University armed with speeches and PowerPoint slides. Clare was particularly impressed by the architecture: 'Wow, this place looks like Hogwarts!' Carol, meanwhile, had more stereotypical student interests: 'Yeah, but where's the student bar?'

The lecture proved a resounding success. Sixty-five students listened attentively throughout the presentations and then took part in a very lively discussion. In fact, the undergraduates were so interested and had so many questions that (most unusually) they did not want to leave after an hour and the session ran over schedule into lunch. The academic staff must have been impressed too because the next week Carol, Ryan and Clare got an email asking if they would be interested in returning to Queen's University to act as guest lecturers again next year. They replied that, subject to salary negotiations, they would!

Useful Tips

Here are some more helpful hints from the Parent Support Group which you might find useful:

www.netbuddy.org.uk - This is an award winning site which provides practical tips and information on supporting people with special needs.

An egg timer which is put into boiling water and changes different colours depending on what way you want your egg cooked i.e soft/hard boiled. It can be bought cheaply in the Euro Shop.

Special cinema screenings - the Cinema in the Pavillions has a screening on a Saturday morning for people with special needs whereby the lights are left on in the cinema and those attending are free to walk about.

Why not give your son or daughter a **small wallet** with loose change in it so that if they are asked for money from people collecting/begging in the street they can take out this wallet instead of their everyday one which might contain larger amounts of cash.

A Warning: A Service User had their phone snatched and stolen in Artane. A number of parents have heard of similar incidents in the North Dublin area, therefore vigilance is essential when using phones in public.



Veg - some of the good things in life!!

Student Learning with Communities

A group from Seatown Road recently received an award for their participation in a project with students from Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The project was developed through the DIT Student Learning with Communities programme that helps students in the college link in with people in the community and apply their training to real life situations. In turn the community partners receive the benefit of the student's expertise.

The project that Prosper Fingal was involved with set out to identify and design some supports that would help develop awareness of the importance of healthy eating. The dietetic students from DIT, who are all in their 4th year, visited Seatown Road to get an understanding of the programmes in operation there. Then a group of Trainees from Seatown Rd visited DIT in Kevin Street where they had a tour of the college and lunch in the canteen. They took part in a practical workshop with the students where they learned about healthy eating, the importance of exercise and how to make healthy choices to reduce the sugar intake in your diet.

The feedback from the Seatown Trainees was really positive as it allowed them the opportunity to experience what life in a 'big college' might be like. The students from DIT said the project was the best thing they had done over their four years of training - so well done to all involved.