

## Barnardos "Helping Hands" Volunteer Awards 2004

If you know a young person whose voluntary work has made a big impact on you or others or if you are a volunteer who has had a very rewarding volunteer experience and you feel your volunteer activity has made a difference, tell Barnardos about the experience. Volunteers nominated must be under 25 years of age on 31st Dec.2004. There will be three volunteer awards and also a prize of a Personal Computer.

Deadline is 30th Sept., 2004.  
For full details contact Barnardos,  
Tel 01-4530355 / Fax 01-4530300.  
e: [volunteers@barnardos.ie](mailto:volunteers@barnardos.ie),  
Website [www.barnardos.ie](http://www.barnardos.ie)

## Credit Union Youth Endeavour Award 2004

Credit Union Youth Endeavour Award 2004 is a competition to reward young people in our community who have enhanced, changed or touched the life of another. Contact your local Credit Union for an application form.  
Deadline is Friday 29th October 2004.

### FORUM WEBSITE



The website of the Galway City Community Forum is getting a major overhaul in the coming months. You'll be able to access information on meetings, see reports from your Representatives, download policy documents, advertise events you are holding, ask questions to Forum members and much, much more. Call me with your ideas at 536844 and keeping checking .....

## A Word from your Mayor

*The new mayor – Catherine Connolly – says the Galway City Community Forum is a strong voice for Galway*

Sandra Bunting

Galway Mayor Catherine Connolly has praised the Galway City Community Forum for providing a much-needed voice for the community. The Labour councillor, who was voted mayor on June 21, said that she looks forward to an even stronger profile for the GCCF in the future. Complimenting the forum on its submission document on the draft Galway Development Plan 2005-2011, she encouraged members of the forum to take their involvement a step further by attending council meetings. This, she said, will make them familiar with the system and allow them to act more strategically.

A role Catherine Connolly would like to see taken on by the Community Forum is the monitoring of the Barcelona Declaration. City Council is reviewing progress every three months on Galway's commitment. More involvement would be welcome from the community sector. One of the Community Forum policies that stands out for her is housing. She says we have done great work analysing figures and noting the weaknesses of the strategy. She agrees that public transport, with provisions for safe walking and cycling, is the way forward for Galway. Transport is a issue she says the forum could make more specific recommendations. She is pleased that it is taking a stand against incineration.

In response to the fact that one of the strengths of the Community Forum is that it is not political, Mayor Connolly said: **"One should be proudly political. I'm proudly political. When councillors do good work for the community, when they work for a socially just society, when there is an active citizen, that's all political."** She urged forum members not to hide behind the a-political banner but rather be non-aligned and support any party on issues relevant to the forum. She recommends testing different party's policies.



Concerning the forum's announcement that councillors would be monitored according to

their campaign promises and support given to forum policies, Mayor Connolly says this would present no problem. She recommended they be monitored on the basis of issues and would like to see members attend more council meetings, address the council on a regular basis and keep a record of voting patterns on city council. "It (GCCF) has produced a vision", she said. "Let's implement it together".



# TRIBE VIBES

Newsletter of Galway City Community Forum  
AUTUMN, 2004

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New members to the Forum are always welcome,  
Simply contact  
Joanne Reilly,  
Forum Co-ordinator,

Post : Galway City Community Forum, City Hall,  
College Rd, Galway

Tel : 091 536844 or  
Email: [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie)  
Website : [www.galwaycityforum.ie](http://www.galwaycityforum.ie)



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## COMPETITION FOR YOUTH REPORTER

Be a reporter for Tribes Vibes, Galway City Community Forum Newsletter



Be the 'Tribes Vibes' youth reporter. There may also be the prospect of some 'on-the-job' experience with one of the city newspapers!! Simply write a short article about something of interest to youth in the community. Be sure to write your name, address, phone number, email and school. Competition open to students 16 to 18. **Deadline: 1st November, 2004**

## WIN A COOL MINIPOD!

Send your article to Joanne Reilly, G.C.C.F. City Hall College Rd, Galway.  
email: [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie)

Joanne, the Forum Co-ordinator, will compile a round-up of grants, conferences, campaigns, meetings, etc. that are of interest to Forum members. Email details of your events to [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie). Preferences is given to events happening in Galway and surrounding counties. For more information on grants etc. consult [www.activelink.ie](http://www.activelink.ie), [www.comhairle.ie](http://www.comhairle.ie) and the local and national newspapers.

### GRANTS

**1**  
Arts Council Revenue Funding 2005  
The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon would like to receive all applications for revenue funding in 2005 between Monday 9 August and Friday 10 September 2004. contact: The Arts Programme Department. t: 01- 618 0275, e: [rgu@artscouncil.ie](mailto:rgu@artscouncil.ie); w: [www.artscouncil.ie](http://www.artscouncil.ie)

**2**  
The Ulster Bank Sir George Quigley Award makes a single annual award that aims to help the community and voluntary sector achieve long term sustainability for their work. Closing date is 10th September 2004. For further details contact Nikki Bradford by emailing [nbradford@communityfoundationni.org](mailto:nbradford@communityfoundationni.org) Tel: 048 9024 5927

**3**  
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust grants open to Irish projects  
The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust (JRCT) seeks to support charitable work which promotes justice and equality within the social and political structures of society. Next deadline: 20 September 2004. More information on how to apply and contact details available at [www.jrct.org.uk](http://www.jrct.org.uk)

## What is the Community Forum?

The Community Forum acts as the representative, collective voice of community and voluntary organisations in Galway City. The Forum was established in 2000 and meets every 3 months.

### What is its role?

The Community Forum

- acts as a platform for Community & Voluntary groups in the city;

- nominates representatives to several local authority bodies including the City Development Board (CDB) and the Strategic Policy Committees (SPC's) of Galway City Council;
- supports those representatives;
- develops and promotes policies, which feed into the work of the CDB and SPC's;
- works with other agencies and bodies where appropriate.

### How do I get involved?

- Talk to Joanne Reilly – Forum Co-ordinator at 091 536 844 or by email at [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie).
- Complete a Registration Form (Available from the Co-ordinator) or online at [www.galwaycityforum.ie](http://www.galwaycityforum.ie)
- Come along to the next Community Forum Meeting, which will be advertised in various media in advance.

## New Co-ordinator of the Galway City Community Forum

Sandra Bunting

The Galway City Community Forum has appointed Joanne Reilly as its new coordinator.

Originally from Kilkenny, Joanne has come to the community sector through a fascinating series of studies and travels.

Completing undergraduate studies in zoology at Trinity College Dublin, Joanne organized expeditions to Mauritius and Rodrigues in the Indian Ocean to look at bird and bat colonies. She went on to study elephants in

Sumatra which formed the basis of her PhD. It turned out to be the first doctorate on elephants in Indonesia.

Strangely enough, it was this work that led her to an interest in Community Development. Through her focus of study, human-elephant conflict, she came to realise that local people were not consulted in the matter of animal conservation. Finding that local people had no voice on something that had a major affect on them, she concluded that if people are left out, conservation won't work.



Through her work with the local community in Sumatra, Joanne honed her project management and research skills and became adept at drawing up action plans and making presentations. She built websites and formed e-groups to join disperse people with similar interests. These groups allowed people scattered around the world to share information.

After obtaining her PhD, she moved to Galway and continued on with her studies, completing a Diploma in Community Development with NUI Galway through its Outreach Programme in Ballinasloe. The course gave her further skills towards working in Community Development. She began her job as coordinator of the Galway City Community Forum in early summer.

Although it is a part-time position, Joanne has already been working on plans to improve the forum in the city. Her overall aim is to broaden the remit of the forum and to make it more inclusive.

*"I want it to appeal to the smallest sporting club as well as to the more established issue-based organizations. It's all about giving people a voice."*

Joanne Reilly can be reached at 091-536844 or [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie) or in her office in city hall Monday & Tuesday.

This edition compiled by Sandra Bunting, Eleanor Hough & Joanne Reilly. Views represented are not necessarily those of the Galway City Community Forum.

## Community Representation in Local Government: Just a Façade?

by Brendan Smith, Community Representative, Galway City Development Board, 2002-2004

During my four year tenure as a community representative on the Galway City Development Board(CDB), I have often been asked a number of pertinent questions that go to the very essence of 'community representativity':

- Is the whole 'community-local authority' consultation process, as exemplified by the CDB and Galway City Council SPC's, a façade?
- Is it a never-ending series of meetings designed to suck us into a system that offers no real power and little meaningful change in the quality of life of ordinary Galwegians?
- Is it part of a great state conspiracy designed to transform 'political troublemakers' from 'poachers into gamekeepers'?

It is only right and proper that these questions are continually raised so that we can self-monitor and assess our involvement in a process that can eat into the professional and domestic lives of unpaid volunteers. Attending a litany of meetings on behalf of the Galway City Community Forum does take tremendous commitment. It can also divert us from participating fully in the community organisation that initially nominated us to the Forum.

Yet without hesitation, I can honestly say that the experience for me has not only been enjoyable but that I feel the Galway community and voluntary sector has achieved, by its active participation, significant results that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

However the key to success for our sector, that largely comprises un-paid part-timers and volunteers is 'active participation' in the round-table decisions that are the raison d'être of meetings. First and foremost, we have to actually attend the SPC/CDB committees that we were elected to by the community of Galway. Furthermore, as we are equal partners sitting at the top table with the captains and kings of commerce, industry and council, we have to be able to tenaciously defend our position. Being present in the room and not contributing to discussions on issues that affect Forum policies and its constituent organisations is a negation of community representation.

Over the years, where I have seen most progress being achieved in the multi-sectoral committee structures, is where our representatives have clear well-thought out policies that they strongly argue. Of course I am not naive enough to think that we can achieve everything inside the confines of the committee rooms. Sometimes the odds are too stacked against us and we find that we have awoken a sleeping giant that seeks to devour us. As a committed 'street democrat', I am of the opinion that community campaigners should use public mobilisation through the form of marches, petitions etc to turn the political decision-making process in our favour.

**What is the Galway City Development Board Strategy?**  
The Galway City Development Board was set up in 2000 as part of the 1996 initiative 'Better Local Government' which attempted to re-invigorate the local government by involving all the main local stakeholders in developing the area and its' services. Actually, the real catalyst was European Union legislation that required all member countries to ensure greater consultation with the social partners at local level.

The board includes Galway City councillors, city officials, IDA, Garda Síochána, Western Health Board, Fás, Dept. of Social, Community and Family Affairs, Ireland West Tourism, Chamber of Commerce, Galway City Partnership, the Vocational Educational Committee and Udarás na Gaeltachta.

Two years of intense and oftentimes fiery CDB meetings led to the compilation and publication in March 2002 of 'Gaillimh

Beo agus Briomhar! A Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development 2002-2012'. The document's ambitious goals, objectives and its multi-sectoral authorship represents a milestone for the city. I was pleasantly surprised at the challenging and progressive contributions consistently emanating from many other Board members which ultimately had a positive effect on the Strategy's content. It is fair to say that our Forum does not have a monopoly on truth! That said, the spirit of the Forum underpins much of the Strategy that will shape (hopefully!) the destiny of Galway for the next six years. So what is so good and radical about the Strategy. Well, for instance, it proposes:

- An Accessible, Equitable City
- A City with a Sustainable Economy, Community & Environment
- Improved Opportunities for Skills Development, particularly for the Unemployed...and People with Specific Needs
- Increased Opportunities for 'Life-Long Learning' in the city
- A City that fosters Civic Pride & a Sense of Ownership adopting Participative Decision-Making Models
- Development of a Safe City-Wide Pedestrian-Friendly, Cyclist-Friendly & Child-Friendly City
- Implementation of a Strategy for a 'Safe City' to reduce crime...
- Improving the range, quality and accessibility of 'Health Care Facilities for All'
- Protecting & Revitalising our Built Heritage, while embracing Change
- Supporting and Fostering Gaelic Traditions in the city
- Increasing Multi-Cultural Activities in the city
- Promoting, Preserving and Enhancing Flora & Fauna Habitats
- Creation of Wildlife Corridors
- Development of the Cultural Infrastructure
- Preparing and Implementing a Homeless Persons Action Plan
- Developing Amenities & Community Facilities in tandem with Residential Development
- Fostering Participation in Sport, Recreation...for All & Further Developing appropriate Facilities
- Promoting the use of Renewable & Clean Energy

The current Community representatives have done an excellent job in laying the foundations for a more sustainable Galway. Take a bow folks!

It is now up to the new generation of representatives to build on these successes and to use the Strategy as an essential weapon in improving the quality of life of all our citizens. Every city development plan and proposal should be measured against this enlightened document.

### Duties of Community Representatives

- To fulfil one's role as a representative of the Forum, one must:
- Endeavour to attend all nominated SPC/CDB meetings
  - Realise that one represents the whole Forum and not one specific community organisation while serving on the SPC/CDB committees
  - Promote and defend the Galway City Community Forum Policies at all SPC/CDB committees (NO Sleeping!)
  - Complete the official reporting templates after each SPC/CDB meeting attended (these will be posted on the Forum's website- [www.galwaycityforum.ie](http://www.galwaycityforum.ie))
  - Be conversant with the policies of the Galway City Community Forum
  - Be conversant with the contents of the Galway City Development Board's –'A Strategy for Economic, Social & Cultural Development 2002-2012.
  - Attend training/briefing sessions organised by the Forum
  - Attend the quarterly Fora.

Good Luck to all our nominees in Thursday's (19/09/04) Elections for Forum Representatives.

### EDUCATION

Certificate in Interpersonal Skills for Volunteers: The distance learning course, run by the Department of Voluntary Sector Studies at the University of Wales covers many areas essential to voluntary sector workers such as: Communication Skills, Working with Groups, Confidentiality, Counselling Skills, Decision Making, Dealing with Aggression, Meetings, Negotiation. Tutor support is available via its Virtual University, telephone and email. This and other courses can lead to a Degree in Voluntary Sector Studies.

For further information, check out the website at [www.volstudy.ac.uk/rsvp](http://www.volstudy.ac.uk/rsvp), email [rsvp@volstudy.ac.uk](mailto:rsvp@volstudy.ac.uk) or tel +44 (0)15 7042 4785.

### MEETINGS

Quarterly Meeting of the Galway City Community Forum, Menlo Park Hotel, Headford Road, 7-9:30pm. Call Joanne Reilly, 091 536844., E: [joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie](mailto:joanne.reilly@galwaycity.ie)

"Best of Galway in Lorient, France", takes place around the October holiday weekend, from 22 to 24 October 2004 and covers music, dance, exhibitions, a mini-oyster Festival, a Galway Fair and a series of parallel exchanges across the voluntary and cultural sector. The organisers, the Galway-Lorient Committee, expect upwards of 200 people from Galway to be travelling for the event.

Contact Michael Diskin at 569755 or [tht@galwaycity.ie](mailto:tht@galwaycity.ie)

## CONFERENCES

1. Sexual Violence Against Males conference (Galway, Sept 25-26) Male Abuse Survivors Centre (MASC), Galway hosts and presents a conference entitled Sexual Violence Against Males - Impacts, Identity and Survival Strategies on the 25th and 26th September 2004, Galway. Contact MASC, 3 Ruxton Court, Dominick St., Galway. Tel 091 - 534594, email: [mascman@eircom.net](mailto:mascman@eircom.net); website: [www.masc.ie](http://www.masc.ie)

2. The past, present and future of Ireland's Native Woodlands Conference September 8th - 11th, 2004 Galway Mayo Institute of Technology, Dublin Road, Galway City. The Conference is aimed at landowners, foresters, ecologists, researchers, students, policy makers and native woodland stakeholders. Contact Cara Doyle at (01) 2849329. E. [woodsofireland@iol.ie](mailto:woodsofireland@iol.ie)

3. Preventing Homelessness, the 2nd conference run by the Galway City Homeless Forum, will take place in the Ardilaun Hotel, 25th Nov with Fr. Peter Mc Verry and Sean Healy as guest speakers. Contact Helena Martin, Galway City Council at 091 536509 for details. Threshold are organising a seminar for Landlords on Rental Sector Changes to take place on 8th Sept in the Harbour Hotel. Free tickets from 091 563080, ring in advance.

4. DIVERSITY IN DOMESTIC ABUSE (conference, Limerick)

Exploring the experiences of Women from different segments of society - Learning Together to Work Together. Venue: Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick Date: November 30th and December 1st, 2004

Organised by ADAPT Services, Limerick. Contact: Rabiya Ali & Ann Caulfield on (061) 412 354 Email [policy@adaptservices.ie](mailto:policy@adaptservices.ie);

## Alive and Wanting to Help You

Jacinta Barrins

One of the most common difficulties facing volunteer groups, apart from lack of funding, is finding an extra pair of hands to complete everything that has to be done. NUI Galway now has a programme to help. Going into its second year of operation, ALIVE, or A Learning Initiative and Volunteering Experience course was established to encourage students to contribute to the community. Many students have been volunteering on their own over the years but the programme is able to put support structures in place, put a framework around it and give recognition in the end. The aim is to help the student and the organisation get as much out of it as possible. Over 40 students took advantage of the programme last year and more are expected to participate this year.

Volunteer groups are asked to register their placement needs with the CKI office at NUI Galway. The office, which runs the scheme, is working with the Galway Volunteering Network Association, which is in itself trying to create a complete register of all volunteer groups requiring volunteer help. The Community Knowledge Initiative, or CKI, at the university had hoped to receive applications for placements by mid-August of this year.

For the student, the scheme contains two components: 12 hours of lectures or workshops and 45 hours of volunteering over two semesters. Students choose their own organizations from a list provided.

What the student gets back is the satisfaction of helping the community, development of personal skills, an introduction to life-long learning and a possible edge in a job interview.

The CKI asks organizations to provide the basic training to allow students to carry out their work. Courses on Personal Development, Communication Skills, Teamwork, Self Management and Civic engagement issues will be given at the university. At reflection sessions, students present personal portfolios and share their experiences.

Another scheme is in place in relation with the Departments of Geography, Economics, Sociology and Politics, Health Promotion and Experimental Science to volunteer as a module for credits or not for credits. This is an area which may be expanded. A service learning specialist will be on hand from this month (September) for this purpose.

It is hoped it will be another great year for volunteers at NUI Galway and that many groups

involved in the Galway City Community Forum will benefit from the youth and enthusiasm of the students.

For information, Visit the website at: [www.nuigalway.ie/cki](http://www.nuigalway.ie/cki) or contact Jacinta Barrins, project manager [jacinta.barrins@nuigalway.ie](mailto:jacinta.barrins@nuigalway.ie) Telephone: (091) 512 341



### Clashes with Ashes

As I strode down by Dominick Street  
In June 2-0-0-4  
A hand shot out with a fag in place.  
Hot ashes just about missed my face.

I wonder as to what to do  
When next to my surprise  
Great big puff of smoke all went askew  
And landed right between me eyes!

What WOULD sean-Phadraig say  
From his perch beside the Browne  
Doorway?they've moved Him down towards  
Claddagh Quays,  
Sure he's missing the ructions in Fibber  
Magees!

Oh! Do ye remember those days of yore  
When ye'd stub yer butts on the sawdusty floor  
And linger awhile in that smoke-happy hub,  
Have the craic, laugh and joke down the back  
of the pub.

Now I know ye miss the happy bliss  
Of the way things used to be.  
Ye can huff and puff but come what may  
That Smoking Ban is here to stay.

## Galway Area

### Basketball Board

Local Community Participation Role

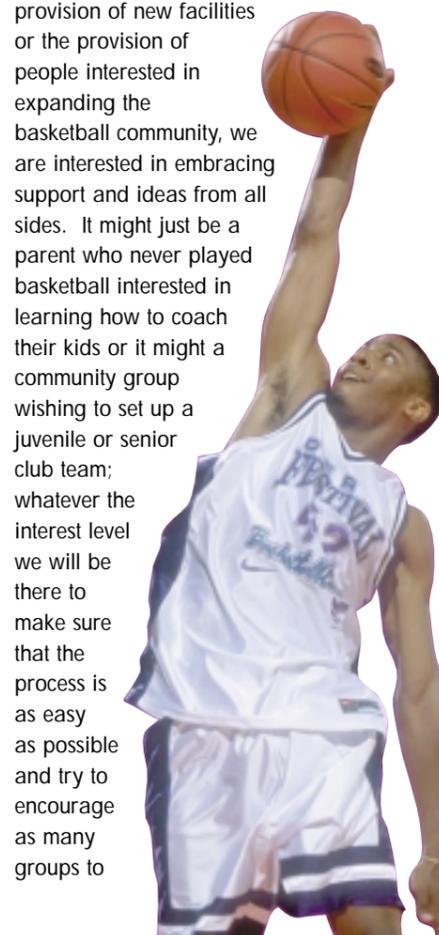
With the launch of the new Galway Area Basketball Board (GABB) Structure at this year's AGM on September 6, 2004, incoming Chairman Paul Hewitt announced a number of new roles on the board to help develop the sport in the City and County. The Galway Area Basketball Board is part of Basketball Ireland and as such has as a core objective to develop Basketball across a number of groups including Juvenile, Senior and the local community.

One of the new roles introduced this year is the Community Participation Officer to help basketball groups improve facilities and training and get new groups set-up quickly and easily.

"One of the biggest obstacles for people interested in setting up basketball clubs or developing a facility for the youth to play in is lack of information and support," explained John Grealish, the newly elected Community Participation Officer.

In order to achieve a steady improvement in facilities and participation, the GABB is looking for help from all quarters and especially from the Local Authorities and Community Groups.

John Grealish added: "Whether it be in the provision of new facilities or the provision of people interested in expanding the basketball community, we are interested in embracing support and ideas from all sides. It might just be a parent who never played basketball interested in learning how to coach their kids or it might a community group wishing to set up a juvenile or senior club team; whatever the interest level we will be there to make sure that the process is as easy as possible and try to encourage as many groups to



take part as possible."

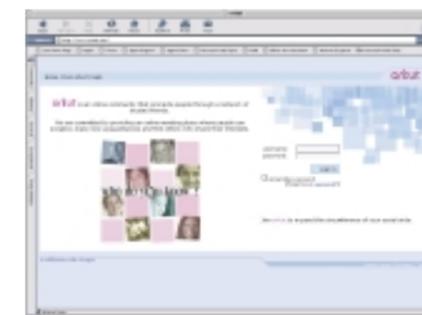
Galway Area Basketball Board  
Community Participation Contact:  
John Grealish  
Mobile: +353 86 8752988  
Email: [johannygrealish@hotmail.com](mailto:johannygrealish@hotmail.com)

### On-Line Networking: Social Exclusion Into Global Social Inclusion

Brendan Smith

An internet-based facility, Galway Community Voice, is being set up to provide interested parties with a means of discussing ways of improving the quality of life of the inhabitants of the city. The Galway project is planned to be the first step to connecting people with similar interests across Ireland to an online social network.

The idea came as a result of work at the Digital Enterprise Research Institute (DERI) based at NUI Galway. DERI is engaged in developing new structures and frameworks for the next phase of the World Wide Web. Researchers want to attract people to join the Galway forum. Members, however, don't have to stop there; they can use it as a means to connect to other 'online communities' on whatever topic that interests them.



Galway Community Voices is hosted on Orkut, a facility developed by a researcher at Google, the world's primary internet search engine.

Membership in Orkut is by strict invitation in order to maintain a group of organically grown trusted friends. If you go to their webpage, and click join, there will be a message saying that you can only join if invited by another member. However, optimistically, it says "if you know someone who is a member of orkut, that person can invite you to join as well. If you don't know an orkut member, wait a bit and most likely you soon will."

4. EU Funding for Nature Conservation Project [LIFE - NATURE 2005]

Applications for projects aimed at conserving natural habitats and species within Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas or those species of flora and/or fauna listed in the EU Habitats and Birds Directives. Project costs should exceed 500,000 euros.

Deadline is 5:30pm, 22-10-2004. Enquiries to Ronan Whelan, tel. 01 6472362 or email [natureconservation@environ.ie](mailto:natureconservation@environ.ie)

5. EU Funding for Innovative Ideas on the Environment [LIFE - ENVIRONMENT 2005]

Applications invited for projects in respect of demonstration type projects that contribute to EU environmental policy under the areas of : land-use, water management, waste management, integrated product policy and reducing the environmental impact of economic activities. Projects should be between 1-5 million euros.

Deadline is 5:30pm, 22-10-2004. Contact Paul Morrissey by phone (01-8882488) or email [paul\\_morrissey@environ.ie](mailto:paul_morrissey@environ.ie)

6. EU Equal Initiative - Round2: Applications

Approximately Euro18.5 million in European Social Fund monies is available to fund innovative and trans-national projects between 2005 and end-2007 that aim to identify and tackle all forms of inequality and discrimination on the labour market. EQUAL will also take account of the social and vocational needs of asylum seekers. Deadline is Friday, 17th September 2004.

For more information: contact EQUAL Technical Support Structure Tel: 01 8723100; E. [info@equal-ci.ie](mailto:info@equal-ci.ie); W. [www.equal-ci.ie/index1.html](http://www.equal-ci.ie/index1.html)

7. 2004 Scheme of Community Support for Older People

The Scheme of Community Support for Older People aims to improve the security and social support of vulnerable older people by providing grants for: small-scale security equipment designed to strengthen points of entry to the dwelling such as window locks, door locks and door chains, security lighting and the once-off cost of installing socially monitored alarm systems and smoke alarms.

Contact the Department at: Voluntary and Community Supports, Telephone (01) 6473237 / 6473239 / 6473021 or check out the website at [www.pobail.ie](http://www.pobail.ie).  
Deadline is :5.00pm on 13 September 2004.

INFORMATION / AWARENESS

1. Galway Learning Week organised by the Strategic Learning Network of the City Development Board, will run this year from 18th-22nd October to celebrate and promote learning in all its forms. Free events sponsored by learning providers will take place across the city.

To participate call Gary McMahon at 091 536543 or email [gary.mcmahon@galwaycity.ie](mailto:gary.mcmahon@galwaycity.ie)

2. Voluntary Arts Ireland is currently working on creating and developing our on-line directory of voluntary arts groups, artform umbrella bodies and resource agencies that make up the voluntary arts sector.

Contact Olive email [olive@vairland.org](mailto:olive@vairland.org) or T: 028/048 4483 9327 or see [www.vairland.org/directory](http://www.vairland.org/directory)

Galway Sports and Recreation Forum 'Walking the Camino'



By Mary Flanagan

For 1000 years people from all over the world have travelled across northern Spain along the 'Camino' or pilgrim route to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, devoted to St. James.

I had the privilege of being a pilgrim (peregrino) for 10 days in May/June when I undertook to do the Multiple Sclerosis (MS) walk.

Frantic fundraising events took place prior to departure for which I thank all sponsors and all supporters and musicians who gave generously of their time and money.

Our walk began early Day 2 when we climbed through the Pyrenees on the French side initially and then over the Spanish border. The day was passed chatting to new people from all 'walks' of life. It was constant movement until Day Four when we stayed in the same city for two nights.

We had the honour of being invited to a mayoral reception in the city of Burgos. The reception made the headlines in the local newspaper the next day, complete with a photo.

The countryside varied almost daily from the mountains to the "meseta", a vast expanse of open countryside with Galician thatched houses of Celtic origin to beautiful medieval towns and cities.

Along the route were many oratories for prayer and a memorable mass was celebrated in Galicia and in the cathedral in Santiago. Both were moving experiences with singing led by Anne Melia of Galway, concert flute by Cormac Mac Fhianlaoich of Dublin, myself on accordion with an Irish air and Catherine on guitar.

We stayed one night in the convent of the Poor Clares where an 11 pm curfew was imposed. The most emotional and spiritual experiences occurred on Day Eight. We had been advised of the tradition of pilgrims bringing stones from their native countries to be placed at the iron cross outside the almost deserted village of Forcebador. On dropping the stone there, pilgrims could relate who or what they were doing the walk for. There were many sad stories about loved ones who were suffering or had died. It was a subdued group of walkers that left the area, the idea being that you hand over your problem to a higher power, and walk on.

When we had arrived in the region of Galicia, I thought I heard traditional Irish music. But when I raced to the shop to be told it was Celtic Galician music – "home away from home for



me"! It is difficult to describe the tumult of emotions on reaching the hill overlooking the city of Santiago knowing the walk was almost over and you would be returning to your 'other life' and leaving the new friends made there. We donned our T-shirts and were led singing into the city by Ken, an Englishman, waving the Irish flag. We were welcomed by our MS supporters and gladly downed champagne at our journey's end. Our two pilgrim priests concelebrated mass in a side chapel of the impressive cathedral with music and singing by our MS group. I hope other people will undertake this MS walk and benefit from this unique experience as I have.

Hopefully Not Only For Christmas!

Sandra Bunting



Galway City on Ice is coming here this winter. For the first time ever. Galway has its very own real outdoor ice rink. This Christmas skating experience will take place on Nimmos Pier, South Park from December 4, 2004 to January 9, 2005.

The ice rink will serve to bolster the Christmas spirit. The 600-square-metre-rink, made of real ice, will be covered making it suitable for skating regardless of the weather. Beside the rink is a viewing gallery, which provides a sanctuary for those too nervous to put on their skates. or a venue to enjoy hot chocolate overlooking the Corrib River and Spanish Arch.

On the site a huge marquee will house Santa's Ice House where children can visit old St. Nick, receive a present from him or post their letter to the North Pole there. A 40ft. Christmas tree will stand floodlit. Christmas Carols will ring out in the background and warmth and refreshments are offered in the white-canopied hot chocolate tent. It's straight out of a scene from a Christmas card. Children can visit Santa in his Ice House, receive a Christmas present from him and even post their letter directly to the North Pole. The event can be booked through Ticketmaster.

Another skating rink will be set up to celebrate the magic of Christmas at Ballybrit Race Course and will run from the 28th November to 9th January. It will also be fully covered with a play area and cafeteria. It is still subject to planning permission. More details will be available at [info@fundeweb.com](mailto:info@fundeweb.com) or [info@galwayonice.com](mailto:info@galwayonice.com)

While it is exciting to have a skating rink for Christmas to create the illusion of a white Christmas. there are some groups in the city that would like to have a year-round facility, or at least ice-skating in the winter and roller-skating in the summer. It is an activity that is attractive to the whole family., is good exercise and provides a healthy environment for teenagers to meet each other in. Assuredly it will be a treat at Christmas but would be even more magical if there were to be a permanent skating facility in Galway.

Galway City Community Forum to Keep a Watchful Eye on City Councillors

Brendan Smith

The Galway City Community Forum has decided to produce an annual report that will review the progress of each individual city councillor's written commitments outlined in their pre-election literature as it pertains to their organisation's own policies.

The Community Forum gives a collective voice to the community and voluntary sector and includes amongst its membership resident associations, arts organisations, environmental campaigners and social inclusion support groups.

Members of the Forum's steering committee have already met with most councillors on the new council to discuss the policies and vision for Galway as outlined in the Forum's May submission to the Galway City Council Draft Development Plan 2005-2011. The organisation has also written to the Mayor requesting an opportunity to address a full meeting of the City Council in September.

According to a Forum spokesman, "It was refreshing to see political parties and candidates from all hues embrace so many of the policies of local community groups in the run-up to the June 11th elections. Issues such as quality bus corridors, a pedestrian/disability friendly road infrastructure, implementation of proper standards/security of tenure on private rented accommodation, 'Garda-on-the-beat' scheme,



immediate provision of city-wide recreational facilities for all age groups etc. are now happily part and parcel of a diverse range of campaign literature.

However it would be an interesting exercise in local democracy and public representative accountability if the actions of the successfully elected councillors were independently monitored annually and judged against their pre-election promises. The publication of such a yearly review could help ensure that commitments made are actually carried out."

Galway Homeless Having a Say

A research project has been launched in the city so that homeless people can evaluate services available to them. Cope, an active member of the Galway Community Forum, initiated the study to gather information to be used to help plan improved services in the future. Cope is Galway's largest charity supporting homeless people.

The scheme is to help a group of people who have experienced homelessness to evaluate, from their own perspective, what the city has to offer them.

A group of eight people who have experienced

homelessness is in the process of being set up. One of the team's tasks is to interview others who are or have been homeless. In an innovative format, the study will be designed, conducted and completed by this group.

Cope runs a number of hostels for the homeless in Galway and provides Meals on Wheels as well as drop in services for Galway's older residents.

For more information, contact Cope at (091) 563190

3. Domestic Violence Response materials launch (Galway, Sept 29)

The launch of the Domestic Violence Response products from the Equality for Women Measure Training programmes, will take place on Sept 29th in NUIG, Galway. For further details and booking contact [dvr@indigo.ie](mailto:dvr@indigo.ie) or 095 - 34793.

4. Online Directory of Women's Groups/Services in Ireland

The Women's Studies Centre at the National University of Ireland, Galway has launched the first stage of its Directory of groups working with, and providing services to women in Ireland. The Directory is available free of charge.

Contact the Women's Studies Centre at NUI, Galway on [wsc@nuigalway.ie](mailto:wsc@nuigalway.ie) or call 091 750455

5. Galway Website. A new information portal has been created to list services available in Galway. The site is still accepting application for what is basically free advertising. It is a free service to the public offered by Galway City Council. When the site is up and running it can be accessed at [www.galwaycity.biz](http://www.galwaycity.biz). Call Charlotte Farrow, at 536576, Email [charlotte.farrow@galwaycity.ie](mailto:charlotte.farrow@galwaycity.ie)

6. Developing your volunteer policy (Galway, Sept 7)

Developing your volunteer policy with Volunteering Ireland on Tuesday 7 September 2004 (10.00am - 4.00pm) at the Victoria Hotel, Eyre Square, Galway. This one day course is suitable for any organisation that already involves volunteers in its work, or that intends to do so in the future.

Contact Nancy Nunez or Lorna Melody at tel: 01 - 872 2622 [info@volunteeringireland.com](mailto:info@volunteeringireland.com),