

CDB NEWS

European Year Puts Focus On Disability Rights **Cork City Council Signs Barcelona Declaration**

Disability rights will be at the top of the EU agenda during 2003, which has been designated the European year of people with disabilities. Thousands of activities and events will take place during the year across the EU. They will be linked by a march through Europe which will go through all the Member States of the EU, ending in Italy in December 2003.

Activities and events along the march will be organised by the disability movement, and a campaign bus is expected to visit Cork this summer.

For further information about the European Year contact the National Disability Authority - www.nda.ie, telephone 01 6080400

Cork City Council joined with hundreds of local authorities across Europe committed to promoting equal opportunities for people with disabilities, when it signed the Barcelona Declaration in May 2002. This international declaration arose from the European Congress "The City and the Disabled" in Barcelona in March 1995 and is the most important European convention on accessibility.

The aim of the Declaration is to promote better awareness among local authorities and the general public of the rights, needs and potential of people with disabilities, and to encourage local government to make provision in its services for the needs of people with disabilities.

The Declaration recognises that disability affects society as a whole and not only individuals and their families. Thus local authorities will endeavour to provide the necessary supports and resources that will promote equal opportunities for all its citizens.

Under the terms of the Barcelona Declaration each local authority which signs up must devise an action plan for the implementation of the Declaration and establish structures for ongoing consultation with people with disabilities and their representatives.

As part of its commitment to the Barcelona Declaration Cork City Council will undertake disability awareness training with frontline staff. More information on the Declaration can be downloaded from the Institute for De-

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Inside this issue:

<i>Blackpool's Musical Celebration of Cultural Diversity</i>	2
<i>Cork City RAPID Update</i>	2
<i>Cork City Learning Forum Inaugural Meeting</i>	3
<i>Support for Cork's Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Community</i>	3
<i>CDB Lobbies for Change</i>	4
<i>CDB & RAPID Progress Reports</i>	4
<i>2003 List of Childcare Courses in Cork City</i>	4

Work Underway on Cork City Access Guide

To coincide with the European Year of People with Disabilities, Cork City Council, through the Dept of Community and Enterprise is preparing an access brochure for Cork City Centre. When completed, this brochure will serve as a guide to accessible venues for people with disabilities who are living in or visiting Cork. The brochure will include information on those venues which are accessible under the following

headings - Accommodation; Transport; Leisure; Shops/Shopping Centres; Bars, Pubs & Nightclubs; Cultural venues; Banks and Post Offices. These venues will then be rated as to the level of their accessibility. The guide will also contain other useful contact details.

The City Council has established a steering group to assist with the development of this guide. This group



meets each month and includes representatives from 11 disability groups, representing both the physical and sensory disability sectors. Work on the brochure began in February and it is anticipated that the brochure will be completed before the end of the year.

Blackpool's Musical Celebration of Cultural Diversity

Blackpool Community Centre was the venue for a unique musical concert which celebrated Irish and world music and dance on 26 January.

Organised by the Blackpool Community Centre, with the support of the Cork –



Deputy Mayor Cllr Kathleen Lynch TD & Martin Ogbemor, who compered the evening

About Cork, One City, Many Communities

The “Cork – One City, Many Communities” partnership aims to promote acceptance of diversity within the City, highlight the positive aspects of an intercultural community and ensure that Cork is a comfortable environment for all people, irrespective of ethnic origin, religion or culture.

The group includes representatives from NASC (Irish Immigrant Support Centre), Cork City Council, Cork City Partnership, Cork Social & Health Education Project, YMCA, Comhlamh, Mahon CDP and others in the city. With the support of the KNOW Racism initiative, the group is preparing a “Newcomer’s Guide to Cork



One City, Many Communities partnership and RAPID, the Blackpool Community Rainbow concert provided an opportunity for local people to meet with their neighbours, in an evening of song, dance and fun.

The concert attracted many local residents, of all ages and nationalities, filling the centre to capacity. Cllr Kathleen Lynch TD, Deputy Lord Mayor opened the concert and congratulated the Community Centre on this unique initiative, which responded positively to the cultural changes taking place in Ireland today.

Commenting on the concert, Chair of the Community Centre Tom Walsh said it would pro-

vide “a chance to enjoy the great wealth of talent – home grown and newly arrived – in the area. We’ll have a chance to meet some new neighbours and perhaps be less shy to say hello in future”. The Centre hopes that the concert will be the first of many such initiatives to bring the community together in the



Performers included the Mandela's Children Music Choir

Cork City RAPID Update

City”. Area Implementation Teams (AITs) continue to meet regularly in RAPID areas. The Teams have become a focus for service integration at local level and a resource for responding to local issues. Positive relationships continue to be developed between agencies and communities. A number of task groups have been established across all four areas and are looking at subjects as broad as:

- support to families and individuals
- the environment
- community facilities
- education and training

Some of the initiatives such as the

health action zones and the springboard initiative are progressing and additional resources have been allocated to each RAPID area for community education. Communities continue to be actively involved in RAPID through community liaison groups and participation on AITs.

A recent seminar, chaired by Councillor Sean Martin, for agency AIT people was very well attended with presentations by Pat Ledwidge, Director of Services - Community & Enterprise, and Jerry Murphy, National Co-ordinator for the RAPID Programme. The seminar was very well attended with positive feed-

Cork City Learning Forum Holds Inaugural Meeting

Over 60 delegates representing all strands of learning attended the first meeting of the new Cork City Learning Forum, which took place at City Hall on 28 January. The meeting was chaired by Dick Langford of Cork City VEC, and Professor Áine Hyland gave the keynote address. The creation of a city-

wide Learning Forum is an action from "Imagine Our Future", the CDB strategy, and brings together all those involved in education and training in Cork City, from early childhood learning to higher education, work based learning to community education.

stakeholders the Forum will facilitate better dialogue and communication. It will focus on facilitating collaboration and not duplicate the work of other groups. The Forum will also seek to promote Cork as a City of Learning, where access to learning is available for all levels and to all ages.

By bringing together all

At the first meeting, participants broke into workshops to discuss:

- The promotion of lifelong learning
- Barriers to participation
- Economic aspects of learning

Each group has identified a task on which it will work between now and the next Forum meeting, which takes place on 27 May. A report on the first meeting of the Forum is available from Elmarie McCarthy at the Department of Community & Enterprise (tel 4924104) and will be also be available shortly on the CDB website (www.corkcity.ie/)



L:R Prof Áine Hyland, Mr Richard Langford and Mr Pat Ledwidge

Needs of Cork's Gay, Lesbian & Bisexual Community to be addressed

A new inter-agency steering group has been set up to identify and address the unmet service needs of the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities in Cork City. In a recent report the Equality Authority acknowledged the "hostility, prejudice and systemic exclusion that are all too often the experience of lesbian, gay and bisexual people". This has led to the marginalisation and social exclusion of many members of these communities.

As part of its ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life of all citizens in the city, particularly those most at risk of social exclusion, the Rapid programme, under the aus-

pices of the Cork City Development Board, identified the need for a co-ordinated response to these issues.

An inter-agency steering group was created following a city wide meeting on 28th November 2002 of the various statutory and community/voluntary organisations engaged in work with the gay and lesbian community in Cork City. The first task of the group will be to conduct a service needs analysis. This research will focus on agencies, in particular those involved in mainstream service provision, across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors.

The research will also include a clear set of recommendations for new and existing agencies and will inform the way services are delivered to the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities and ensure an accessible and inclusive level of service provision across the City of Cork.

This is the first time the needs of the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities have been addressed in this way and both the establishment of the steering group and the proposed research will be of local and national significance.

CDB Lobbies for Change

At its February meeting, the Cork City Development Board agreed 3 submissions to Government which seek to improve the lives of Travellers and asylum seekers.

1. Firstly the CDB has urged the department of Education and Science to introduce a pilot scheme which would allow primary resource teachers for Traveller children (RTTs) to transfer with Traveller children to secondary school for the first ten weeks. During this transition the risk of children dropping out is particularly high, and a disproportionate number of Traveller children drop out of the education system before the end of their first term in secondary school.

The proposed ten week period of support would allow time for Traveller children to form a sustainable bond with the secondary resource teachers, and by so doing increase the chance

that children will remain in school.

2. A second submission has urged the Department of Agriculture to develop an incentive scheme for farmers to encourage them to rent land to Traveller horse owners. This would help provide suitable land for Traveller horses and avoid potential conflict between Travellers and members of the settled community which may arise as Travellers are forced to look after their horses in unsuitable locations.

3. In a third submission, the City Development Board has called on the government to grant the right to work to asylum seekers where the Government has not definitively processed the asylum application within six months. This would enable many asylum seekers to support themselves financially, reduce the financial cost to the state of providing welfare, in-

crease the taxes paid to the state and help address local labour market and skills deficiencies.

Access to the labour market would also enable asylum seekers to regain their basic dignity and self-respect, facilitate their integration into Irish society, and help combat prejudice and racism.

CDB Calls For:

- Pilot scheme to support Traveller children
- Incentives for farmers who rent land to Traveller horse owners
- Right to work for asylum seekers waiting more than six months for a decision

CDB & RAPID PROGRESS REPORTS

Reports on the implementation of the CDB strategy are available on the CDB website.

Rapid progress reports can be accessed on the Cork City Council website, in the section on the Dept of Community & Enterprise – www.corkcity.ie/services/index

Copies of the RAPID progress reports can also be viewed at:

Mayfield, Mahon, Ballypheane/Togher Togher, The Glen, Faranree and We The People Community Development Projects

Mayfield East, St Joseph's, Mahon, Blackpool, Faranree and Gurranabraher/Churchfield Community Associations

Knocknaheeny, Mayfield & Blackpool Citizens' Information Centres

2003 LIST OF CHILDCARE COURSES IN CORK CITY

A schedule of childcare courses, lectures and seminars taking place in 2003 has been published by the Cork City Childcare Company. For a copy of the leaflet tel 4309454 or email: corkcitychildcare1@eircom.net