

WEST - NORTH WEST REGIONAL NEWSLETTER



ABI Ireland Celebrating 10 Years
Making a difference 2000-2010
Issue 1 - Summer 2010



Louise Farrelly Presenting Local Services Manager Teresa O Boyle and Psychologist, Dr Caroline Mc Grath with a wall hanging for the Transitional Living Unit. Louise worked on this beautiful rug over a period of 4 months while she was engaging in the Rehabilitation programme at the TLU. Thank You Louise, it will take pride of place in our sitting room.



Eric, Aneta and Louise with Avril Patterson working very hard on the Brain Awareness stands in the Quayside arcade in Sligo during Brain Awareness week 2010. Aneta crocheted some easter chicks for the stands, which proved very popular with the children and adults.

Welcome to new staff members on the ABI Ireland Team, West/North West.



Dr Caroline Mc Grath, Psychologist
Emma Daly, Assistant Psychologist,
Steve Orme, Regional Manager.



L-R: Lydia Rogers, Sligo Weekender,
Teresa O'Boyle, LSM ABI Ireland, John Walshe, runner up prize winner, Fiona Coyne, 1st prize winner, Steve Orme Regional Manager ABI Ireland, West/North West.

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, Sligo, Leitrim and the Sligo Weekender teamed up to promote Brain Injury Awareness Week, from March 8th - 13th. Local secondary school pupils were invited to design an official Acquired Brain Injury wall chart or poster, which would go on display in the Community Brain Injury Transitional Living. The winners were,
1st Prize: Fiona Coyne, Castletown, Corballa, Enniscrone, Co Sligo. Fiona is a fifth year student in Jesus Et Mary Secondary School, Enniscrone, Co

Sligo who won an I Pod Touch.
Runner up Prize: John Walshe, Ballinabole, Ballinacarrow, Co Sligo. John is a second year student in Summerhill College, Sligo, who won a €60.00 "ALL - in - One" Voucher.



Phil Giblin, Patricia Henry and Denise Togher, all travelled to Lourdes in September 2009 with Concepta Mc Gowan. The Girls spent 5 days in Lourdes and from all accounts of the holiday, much fun and craic was had by all. They assure us that we were all prayed for in Lourdes. This was a trip Phil, Patricia and Denise had said they would love to do and worked hard at planning and organizing it over a period of 6 months.



My name is Cathy and I acquired my head injury six months ago. I came to the ABI Ireland Rehabilitation Transitional Living Unit after being discharged from the National Rehabilitation Hospital in Dun Laoghaire

and I am finding it very helpful. The staff are very nice.

As part of my rehabilitation, I attend physiotherapy in Sligo General Hospital. I had an immense fear of water but as part of my programme, I used the pool in the hospital three times and have learned to control my fear of water whilst staff are nearby to support me. I am now using one of the local public pools with staff support. This is something that is very important to me.



Getting ready for Summer Gardening 2010,



The newly Refurbished Motorcycle with its team of experts - Darren Rhodes, Michael Gillespie, Vincent Mannion and Michael C. Missing from the picture are Gordon Ryan (Tutor) , Ronan Kilgannon and Eric Boyle.

Michael Carroll, proudly shows his art work in the newly published booklet , "Journeys to Recovery through Community Rehabilitation" to Dr. Caroline Mc Grath and Assistant Psychologist, Emma Daly. Michael was very involved in planning, organizing, designing and doing the art work for the booklet of personal stories of people who availed of the services of the Brain Injury Team in Sligo/ Leitrim.



It was all hands on deck for Brain Awareness week . The ABI Team had stands in Carrick on Shannon and Sligo on three days of Brain Awareness week as part of their efforts to promote awareness of Brain Injury and the Services which are available, to the person with the injury and their family, following an Acquired Brain Injury . Included in the photo are :L-R: Steve Orme Regional Manager ABIIreland, Phil Mc Goldrick, Case Co Ordinator , HSE, Rosemary Dillon, Snr Occupational Therapist, HSE, Dr. Caroline Mc Grath, Psychologist, Emma Daly, Assistant Psychologist, Alberto Conz, Rehabilitation Assistant ABIIreland, and Teresa O'Boyle, Local Services Manager, ABI Ireland.

Brain Awareness week 2010



1st Picture: Steve Orme, Phil McGolderick, Rosemary Dillon, Caroline McGrath, Emma Daly, Alberto Conz, Teresa O'Boyle.

As part of Brain Awareness week, Agnes Mooney, Community Resource Officer with Brainwave, came to the Transitional Living Unit at Tonaphubble and gave a very good talk on Epilepsy to a group of 12 people who all had an interest in this area. The talk was very interesting and Agnes answered questions from the group. The presentation started off

with a questionnaire for everyone to complete in order to get us all thinking about how much we really know about Epilepsy. Afterwards, Agnes presented the group with a "Brain Game" and she joined us all for a very pleasant cup of tea and carrot cake, compliments of Denise Togher.



2nd Picture: L-R, Back Row- Agnes Mooney, Frances Rogers, Michael Carroll, Emma Daly, Stanley Devaney, Louise Farrelly, Teresa O Boyle. Front Row: Darren Rhodes, Mary Jordan, Catherine Coen Devins.

Truck-Fest

In August we supported the Northwest Truck-Fest in Milford in Donegal, €2000 was raised.



Everyone really enjoyed the weekend, especially the lads who got to look around all the top of the range HGV's



and trucks, and there was a convoy through the town on the Sunday night which brought with it some great noise and excitement.

Baby Boy joy



Congratulations to Staff member Karen Gallagher and her husband John-Paul on the Birth of their Son David-Cathal Gallagher, pictured here with Client Declan Hughes. We wish them every happiness.

Graduation



Well done to Michelle Lagan on her recent graduation from SkillVEC level 5. It was held in the Helix in Dublin, Certificates were

presented by three different people, and they were the CEO City of Dublin VEC Jacinta Stewart, National HR Managing Director Martin McDonagh, Pat Carey T.D. and also FETAC awarding body- Angela Lamkin. Afterwards there were light refreshments.

Gardening Project

We are delighted to announce the coming together of our Gardening Projects which we are setting up here in the Letterkenny house - it is going to be run by the clients in the house and the clients in our outreach services, we are hoping to build two raised beds and a dug out plot to begin with and a path that the wheelchair users can avail off. Staff member Brendan Peoples and service user Liam Emery are currently on the job. Liam is leading the project on behalf of the clients due to his experience in this area. We hope to grow some produce that we can use for our home cooking and so that it will be a therapeutic activity to all involved.

Staff member Michelle and client Michael finishing off some window baskets, Client Declan also put in a lot of hard work.



New Staff members

We would like to welcome new staff members, Jennifer Bye and Marie James, to the Donegal residential service. We hope they settle in well.



St Patricks day Celebrations



St Patricks Day Was Celebrated in style in the Donegal house, Client Declan Hughes and staff member Jennifer Bye took a lot of time and effort to decorate the house in St Patrick's Day decorations, the four clients went to Glenveagh National Park for the celebrations where there was traditional music and dance, face painting and Birds of prey display.

Coffee Morning and radio coverage for Brain awareness week

We would like to say a Thank you and well done to Steve Orme West/North West Regional Manager and Dr Mark Hogan, Clinical Psychologist who did radio interviews with Inishowen FM

and Highland radio to raise awareness of an acquired brain injury.

A coffee morning was also held in the



Ramada hotel Letterkenny on the 11th March 2010 to raise awareness of Brain injury, it was organised by members of the Acquired Brain Injury Ireland Donegal Team and in conjunction with BRÍ, Dr. Mark Hogan did a presentation on the effects that a brain injury can have on both the individual and their family members and there was an information stall for those attending.



A thank you to all who attended and donated generously, a sum of € 95.30 was raised.



We hope you enjoyed our short update and viewing the progress and good work that we have done. This newsletter reflects significant achievements in Acquired Brain Injury Ireland in the Donegal Service and achievements we are proud of. Thank you for taking the time for reading this!!

Brain Aware Training Programme

Castlebar, Mayo December 2009



Front Row L- R: Wally Rouse, Susan Hughes, Catherine Garvey, Jackie Costello, Caroline McGrath, Imelda Walsh

Standing L- R: Una Kinane, Donal Fortune, Marian Gibbons, Mary Molloy, Marian Tighe, Melissa Kiely, Mick Smyth

In October 2009 Acquired Brain Injury Ireland, ran a very successful training programme called **'Brain Aware'** for those caring for people with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) in Castlebar, Co Mayo. Funded by Pobal, ABI training programme allowed carers to develop their knowledge of an acquired brain injury and its effects on individual and family life.

It was held in the TF Royal Hotel every Wednesday morning from 9.30 to 13.00 for 6 weeks in a supportive environment where the carers came together to share information and learn from each other's experiences and knowledge.

The modules of the programmed helped carers to better understand ABI and its effects of brain injury on a person's emotions, behaviour, communications, attention and memory. Attendees learnt how to cope with the emotional and psychological aspects of the role of 'carer' and how ABI can affect the family environment. New friendships and peer support were formed within the group.

The sessions were run by staff members of ABI Ireland and external professionals.

Tus Nua (New Beginnings) Social Club Galway



The very first meeting of a Social Group for people with an acquired brain injury took place on 30th September 2009. On the night, 2 main decisions were taken by the group.

1. The name of the social group is to be **TÚS NUA (New Beginnings)**
2. Meetings will take place:-
In **Lohan's Bar and Restaurant, Salthill** At **7.30 pm**. On the **3rd Wednesday of the Month**

Each night there is someone there to facilitate the meeting but the idea is really to come together for tea/coffee etc., food and a chat!

Whoever is facilitating the meeting brings along information on upcoming events in and around Galway. The group decide themselves whether or not they want to organise a small group to attend any of these upcoming events.

Mayo Head Injuries Support Group

Initial Exploration Meeting took place on - 22nd July 2008 and was facilitated by Finbarr Colfer and Imelda Walsh Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Aim:

Provide opportunity for persons in Mayo to meet with others in similar circumstance. Advocate for positive change in the lives of people with Acquired Brain Injury and their families/carers.

The Group:

Meetings commenced initially in July 2008. As a result of the organisation contact with a number of people in Mayo, who requested such a forum as a means of addressing the feelings of isolation felt as a result of a brain

injury impacting on them and their families. Also as a result of a meeting with the HSE, Mary Warde Disability Services Managers and Case Manager for Mayo, Noreen Brophy - who expressed concern for people with ABI and asked the Organisation to assist with supporting the establishment of a Support Group in Mayo

Presentations were given on Acquired Brain Injury, the causes, and effects on both individuals and their families.

Imelda gave a resume on her role as Resource Worker in Mayo, providing information and pathways to people with ABI and their families, networking with the HSE and with other service providers in the Mayo region.

Information was given on other support groups such as those in Donegal, Galway and Midlands.

Discussions took place on the possible function of an ABI Support Group in Mayo - the following were identified as possible objectives:

- **Meet with others affected by acquired brain injury**
- **Develop constructive relationships with local HSE**
- **Advocate for the provision of specific services**

Opportunities have been given to the group to discuss any issues they may have. A number of people have shared their own stories around how brain injury has affected them and their family, and their experiences in relation to supports or lack of supports.

Discussions took place in relation to how the group might be able to raise awareness of the need for specific services in the Mayo area, with the possibility and engaging with the HSE in this regard.

It was agreed that the group should be independent of all organisations/groups.

Finbarr Colfer and Imelda Walsh (Acquired Brain Injury Ireland) facilitated further meetings of the group on a monthly basis and

organisation of these meetings

Ned Rispin Development office with BRÍ gave information on BRÍ services initially in October 2008. Ned welcomed the opportunity for BRÍ to be affiliated with the Mayo group and noted that BRÍ would be willing to support the running of the group.

From March 2009 the group has been facilitated by BRI with the ongoing support of Imelda Walsh Resource Worker from Acquired Brain Injury Ireland to date.

Feedback from the group has been very positive and continues to meet the **3rd Monday** of the **Month** in the **Family Life Centre**, Castlebar, Mayo (opposite church)

Art & Crafts Group

An art group now meets in the unit each Monday afternoon. Our tutor is Heidi Wickham, an accomplished local artist.

To date we have worked on chalk and pastel drawings, made some felt from dyed sheep's wool and painted some self-portraits with some very interesting and varied results.

The art group is not just creative but a very sociable occasion culminating often in sing alongs and even a dancing session on one occasion!



Louise Farrelly, Mary Jordan, Heidi Wickham.



Heidi displaying art-work whilst Anneta finishes hers.



Caroline Healy



Anneta Lapaskowska



Dr Jimmy Devins, TD for Sligo North Leitrim, recently visited the Community Brain Injury Transitional Living Unit at Tonaphubble, Sligo and met with the Community Brain Injury Rehabilitation Team.

Pictured L-R Steve Orme, Regional Manager ABI Ireland, Phil Mc Goldrick Case Co Ordinator, HSE, Teresa O Boyle, Local Services Manager, ABI Ireland, Dr Jimmy Devins, TD, Dr Caroline Mc Grath, Clinical NeuroPsychologist, ABI Ireland, Rosemary Dillon, Occupational Therapist, HSE, and Emma Daly, Assistant Psychologist, ABI Ireland.

The Brain Injury Team is a partnership between Acquired Brain Injury Ireland and the HSE and provides residential and Community based Services to people with an Acquired Brain Injury in Sligo, Leitrim and West Cavan.

Christmas Party 2009

This year we had our Christmas party in The Sligo Park. Over 30 people attended and a fun and festive night was experienced by all.

Louise Farrelly started the evening's events rolling by playing some festive pieces of music on the keyboard. All guests enjoyed a 4-course dinner and partook in some light fun and games.

We are very grateful to Niall Canning (alias a schoolteacher!!), Gavin Maguire and John Henry for entertaining us so well on the evening. A CD of this event is available from the transitional living unit for anyone who would like to have a copy.



Welcome



Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your enthusiasm in providing the articles and photographs included in this issue of the regional newsletter. It is great to read the articles in this edition, and see the commitment of all staff in the region to promoting the needs of people with an acquired brain injury, and the work of ABI Ireland.

I have been asked to give a short overview of my role, as well as a brief description of the services here in the North West and Western region. In relation to myself, I as you know am relatively new to the organisation having in November relocated from London after nearly 20 years in social care in the United Kingdom. During my time in the UK, I have worked with a range of client groups including brain injury, physical disability, learning disabilities, mental health and children, and undertaken a wide variety of management positions in both statutory and voluntary organisations.

Sligo



Sligo / Leitrim & West Cavan
Transitional Living Unit
2 Race Court Manor,
Tonaphubie, Sligo.



ABI Ireland's services in Sligo are split into the pioneering Transitional Living Unit which provides people with an ABI an opportunity to receive residential rehabilitation, and learn living skills which they can put into practice at their home. People access the service for up to 6 months, and are supported by a multi-disciplinary team comprising of both ABI Ireland and HSE staff. The service provides

both rehabilitative support through its team of rehabilitation assistants, and clinical support through ABI Ireland Psychologist/Assistant Psychologist, and the HSE's Occupational Therapist. Referrals to the service are received through our regional office in Galway, and the HSE's ABI Case Manager. The service strives to give people accessing it both realistic, stimulating and rehabilitative activities. Of note recently has been the motorcycle project where a vintage BSA motor bike was restored to its former glory, and the organic garden at the unit.

In addition to the Transitional Living Unit, the service also provides a home rehabilitation service, where the unit's rehabilitation assistants support people with an ABI in their own home. We are currently looking into ways of making this a separate specialist service, as currently it is dependent on the availability of rehabilitation assistants in the transitional living unit.

Donegal

Donegal Residential Service.
2 Rough Park, Woodlands, Letterkenny, Co Donegal.



ABI Ireland's services in Donegal are split into an Assisted Living Service in Letterkenny, and a Community Rehabilitation Services in Letterkenny and the surrounding area. The Assisted Living service is home to four men with an ABI. Due to the needs of the men at the service, the house is adapted for the needs of wheelchair users. The service fully utilises the skills of the multi-disciplinary team in the HSE due to the diverse support needs of the group. The service works with the men to increase their levels of independence, and ensures they have an active role in their local community.

The service is currently about to start a gardening project, as well as being in the early stages of designing a new home which will be funded through CAS.

The service also provides a community based rehabilitation service, both in Letterkenny and the surrounding area, where trained rehabilitation assistant support people in their home to develop and maintain the skills of everyday living.

Thirdly the Donegal service works in partnership with the local HSE in the staffing of the HSE's Independent Living Skills House.

Galway

The regional office is based in Galway and is home to Anne Hesnan (National Standards Assistant), and Imelda Walsh (Family Resource Worker). Anne is the lynch pin of the CARF and Quality Assurance process in ABI Ireland, supporting myself in maintaining the high standard of service provision across the whole organisation. Imelda along with me ensures that even though we don't have any services like Sligo and Letterkenny, in the West we as an organisation are actively promoting the rights of people with an ABI. also through her role identifies to the local HSE regions where ABI Ireland's skills and knowledge could be developed in to services to support the needs of people from Galway, Mayo and Roscommon.

Well, I hope I have given you a brief, but informative overview of the services in the region, and I hope you enjoy reading the articles included in this issue of the newsletter.

Happy Reading

Official Opening Sligo ABI Unit



Section of crowd attending the official opening on 24th May

On Monday 24th May, Minister John Moloney (Minister for Disability and Mental Health) officially opened the Sligo unit of ABI. The Transitional Living Unit serves people, with an acquired brain injury, from Sligo, Leitrim, West Cavan and South Donegal.

The Sligo house operates in partnership with the HSE as a rehabilitation unit, aiming to assist clients gain optimal independence and relearn everyday living skills, often lost to them as a result of their injury.

The unit has three transitional residential beds, one respite bed and a community outreach service is also in operation.



Jim Gilligan, Denise Togher and Louise Farrelly present Minister John Moloney with a bird box (made by woodwork group) and some publications (compiled by clients.)



Person Served Stanley Devaney pictured with some of the Sligo services staff. Stanley has just recently been facilitated to return to independent living.



Sligo Staff Team pictured at Official opening

Front Row (Left to right) Teresa O'Boyle (LSM), Steve Orme (Regional Manager), Phil McGoldrick Case Co-ordinator (HSE), Mary Henry, Physical and Sensory Disability Manger (HSE), Rosemary Dillon, Occupational Therapist (HSE)
Back Row (Left to Right) Martha McGill (RA), Dr Caroline McGrath, (clinical psychologist), Sandra Greene (Team leader), Frances Rogers (RA), Jean Kirsten (RA), Emma Daly (Assistant Psychologist), Alberto Conz (RA), Avril Patterson (RA), Marion Gibbons (Administration Assistant)

Donegal Gardening Project-

As you may have seen from our last newsletter we have started up a gardening project here in Donegal Service, we are delighted to show some pictures of our new raised beds which are ideal for our wheelchair users and two flower beds for planting, we currently are growing Lettuce in the raised beds and Onions and Turnip in the lower beds.

VEC have also supplied funding for a tutor for our gardening project, we have currently received 75% and will have the tutor after the 18th June. The remaining 25% will then be drawn down after full attendance and certain criteria are met.



No Smoking

We are only speaking on the behalf of some people when we say we are delighted that we now have a new smoking hut or as our Regional Manager Steve likes to call it "our mini extension". All clients now smoke outside in our new shelter.



We're all going on a summer holiday

We are delighted to say that we are going on our annual holiday this July and we are going down to Carrigart for four days. Clients and staff are all looking forward to this trip away.



Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

