

Welcome to our new E-Zine



Welcome to our new E-Zine – which will be distributed on the first Friday of every month to keep you up to date with all the happenings here at the Resource Centre.

Quite Simply, an e-zine is a cheap newsletter – we don't have to pay for printing. Every month we will bring you news from the programmes, updates on our special projects and any other news that comes to mind. April was a busy month here at the Resource Centre, with new community activities programmes in the evenings, our parent and toddler group going strong, the new website (www.southsidetravellers.ie) and our campaign to maintain our education programme.

We also completed our plan for inclusion in the new Local and Community Development Programme. So, even though we try to log all the happenings on the **programme news** page of our website, we thought this might be a handy little document to keep you up to date. Hope you enjoy – and contact us if you would like anything included or have a comment, just mail me at catherine@southsidetravellers.ie or call in to the centre.

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Southside Travellers calls on government to reassess the impact of changes to eligibility for Traveller women participating in FAS funded local training initiatives throughout the country.

Southside Travellers - in partnership with its partner Traveller organisations throughout Ireland and community and voluntary organisations throughout Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown - is calling on government to reassess the particular impact of changes to eligibility criteria for women participating in the local training initiative. Speaking at the April Board meeting, Catherine Morley (Director of Southside Travellers) said: *"For us, these changes mean that Traveller women who have been participating in the programme for two years will not be able to complete their third year and thus gain the level of qualification required for progression or employment. Our organisation is a very good example of what these types of programmes can achieve - we have a management team of seven here at Southside Travellers, and four of them are women graduates of this programme. Our Health and Well-Being Programme is another example. The experience is similar for all Traveller Organisations."*

Following a meeting with the Education Working Group in the Irish Traveller Movement, Carol (herself a graduate of the programme and now Education Manager with Southside Travellers) was invited to meet Minister Eamonn O'Cuiv in Leinster House to discuss the impact of the changes. Accompanied by Sally Connors - our Community Health and Well-Being Programme Manager who is also a graduate of the Programme – Carol joined Irish Traveller Movement in an hour long discussion with the Minister which resulted in him assuring those present that he would discuss the issues with FAS.

New Brand – Bye Bye STAG – Hello Southside Travellers

It's official – following the finalisation of our new Strategic Plan (which will be launched as part of our 25th anniversary celebrations later this year) the organisation formally known as STAG has now rebranded and returned to its original name **Southside Travellers Action Group**.

Our new logo (pictured right) features the green, white and orange, to reflect the fact that Travellers are an indigenous Irish Ethnic Minority and highlights the focus of our work – which is to take action to ensure that our vision of an **Ireland where the human and civil rights, dignity, hopes and distinct cultural identity of Travellers are acknowledged and respected** becomes a reality.

From May 1st, we are asking our colleagues, partner organisations and funders to respect our choice to make our focus more visible and refer to our organisation by its full title (or Southside Travellers) in all descriptions, correspondence and discussions. In the words of Frances O'Rourke (Chairperson) *"This is about visibility, now people will instantly see what we are all about"*

SOUTHSIDE TRAVELLERS

action group

More Magic from Sally and the Crew: Resource Centre Becomes a Chill-Out Zone



Tuesday Night Chill-Out Sessions a "Must Do" for Traveller Women in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown

Tuesday nights in April have seen the centre transformed into a chill out / pampering zone. Starting the week before Easter, with eyebrow trimming (from the lovely Clare Cranny) facials and fancy nail polishing (everyone did this, but Sally and Alice proved particularly popular) and head massages from our Resource Centre Manager. The sessions, provide an opportunity for our Community Health and Well-Being team to link women with the Programme in a more relaxed environment. Also included in the sessions were massages (and a sing-song), and they became a "must do" for Traveller women from all over the county. Who knew our team were so talented – Sally an interior designer, Michelle a hairdresser? What next we ask ourselves? Who needs a day spa when you can have all this.

Speaking at the last session, Sally Connors said *"this is the first time we have tried this, and it really works. Every week we met about twenty women and they all want this to continue."* Sally, Trish and Catherine are now exploring potential funding opportunities to make the "chill out zone" a regular part of the programme, any ideas?

Southside Travellers Supports Stand Up!

Following our participation in training with Belongto youth services, Southside Travellers is proud to support the campaign aimed at creating a positive understanding of the issues facing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender young people and to combat homophobic bullying. Action is about solidarity, we look forward to delivering our Traveller Culture Awareness Programme to Belongto staff and young people in September.



Belongto youth services, Southside Travellers is proud to support the campaign aimed at creating a positive understanding of the

First Ever "Easter Project" a Great Success – Or The Invasion of Lilliput

Well what a busy time we have had over the last few weeks! Easter Mid-term activities went very well with over 40 young people taking part in go-karting, swimming at the Aquatic Centre, film and art days and not forgetting the STAG Chicks residential in



Lilliput! Weekly programmes have resumed and our new younger boys group (The Inbetweeners ... nearly consensus on the name!!) are busy coming up with ideas for their group for the next few weeks. At last the sun has come out for the Horse Riding Group who are doing really well with the class and lessons. The IADT Art Group are half way through completing their fabulous artwork which will be unveiled in the near future ! The Girls Group have nearly completed their swimming lessons and new programmes to be introduced are a Dance Group and Youth Café. Staff are being kept on their toes too with lots of training both on and off site.

Southside Travellers Young People join NPAS (National Performing Arts School)

On Thursdays, a group of girls from the Children and Young People's Programme board a bus to take them on what could be the journey of a lifetime. Having showed their talent for singing and dancing, the Youth Team decided it was time to take the girls out of the centre and enrol them in a taster programme at the National Performing Arts School (www.npas.ie) in their purpose built dance studios in Dublin's Docklands. In preparation, the girls (and Catriona, Catherine and Mary) watched dance movies, practiced with YouTube videos of Justin Bieber (?) and generally sang and danced their way around the centre. Speaking of the preparations and the excitement, Alison Corr (Children and Young People's Programme Manager) said *"This is the first time we have tried this with the group and these four weeks will set the scene for a much longer and more intense programme from September. This is really important to them and we are dying to see the moves they bring back"*. Photos in the next issue – or maybe we won't need them, maybe they'll be on *Ireland's Got Talent!!!!*

Response Received to Discrimination Complaint



Earlier this year, a number of members of our community – including programme participants, board members, staff and our Director – were refused service in a local bar. When asked why this was the case, the

barman replied *"because we have been told not to serve Travellers"*. Incensed by this, the Director and a number of community members took action and contacted the Equality Authority to lodge a formal complaint. Having followed up on the complaint, the Director received confirmation just this week that the owner of the bar in question *"apologised for any convenience caused"* and would *"meet with"* our Director if she so wished. Our Director has since contacted the Equality Authority welcoming the apology and asked that they request a written assurance that this type of discrimination will not happen again.

Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Traveller Drugs Working Group Established



As a result of the outreach work carried out by our Community Health and Well-Being

Programme, and with the support of the HSE and Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Drugs Task Force, we have established the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Traveller Drugs Working Group. The focus of the work of this group will be to support members of the Traveller community to access specific, locally based services and supports to deal with their concerns around drug use. The need for this work has been clearly evident to our health link workers for some time and the completion in February of a community based needs analysis confirmed that supporting families increasing awareness of – and access to – locally based addiction prevention and support services were core priorities. As well as ensuring that these priorities were identified in our Strategic Plan, the Community Health and Well-Being Programme has prioritised this work in its 2010 workplan.

New Parents' Group Starting in May



Another of our new Special Projects is due to start in May. From Friday, May 14th, Kitty Connors and Margaret McDonagh – working with Miriam McGovern from Dun Laoghaire VEC - will facilitate

our new Parents' Group. Focusing on supporting Traveller parents to deal with the challenges of raising their families in a society where discrimination (explicit and implicit) is, unfortunately, still the norm, the group will seek to support parents to access the various services and supports available at Southside and mainstream service and support provision around the county. It is envisaged that the group will meet weekly on Friday mornings at the Resource Centre. We would like to acknowledge Dun Laoghaire VEC for the provision of specific tutor hours to respond to the education needs emerging for parents in the group.

Building for the Future: Strategic Plan Update

Following a really positive response to our presentations of our draft strategic plan and requests for inputs from partners at a local, regional and national level, the Board have signed off on the final draft plan and are planning to combine our 25 year celebration, launching our new website, annual report and strategic plan in one event in mid-September. In the meantime, staff are busy implementing the organisational restructuring required to facilitate the plan's implementation – including participating in change management training (with support from Southside Community Training Network). See next month's e-zine for more concrete event details.

The Traveller Life

To travel the long and winding road
To hear the children laugh and play
To listen to stories of long ago
To hear the songs and music flow

The wind in the trees
The ghosts in the breeze
The flame of the campfire burning bright
And the star in the sky with its guiding light

To be back on the road with a heavy load
The feeling of love and a heart of gold

Ellen Connors and Mary McDonagh (2010)

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