



Welcome to our May Edition

Another busy month over here at Southside Travellers Resource Centre, what with graduation ceremonies, new funding to work with Older Travellers in the county secured, the Childcare Research launched, making movies and clear rounds, it never stops. Over the course of three days, various staff and participants (including our young people) met

Ministers Hanafin, Andrews and Harney at various events to mark the completion of some really critical pieces of work. We also completed our 2009 annual report, now available for download on our website and continue to work with both Traveller organisations and Southside Partnership to engage with the new Local and Community Development Programme.

We are delighted to announce our inclusion in Age and Opportunity's *Get Vocal Programme* which will provide us with the resources to really move on our work with Older Travellers.

At a policy level, the work continues on our campaign to secure our Education Programme – although we have received no update following Carol's meeting with the Minister in April. The organisation has also taken a leadership role in the development of the new Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Inter-Agency Plan for Improving Services to Travellers (due for completion in June) where the steering group agreed to take a lead from our Strategic Plan.

We can't include everything in the e-zine, so make sure to keep checking into www.southsidetravellers.ie – last month, we had over 400 unique hits amounting to a total of over 2,000 since we launched in March. Enjoy – and don't hesitate to contact us if you would like more information.

Given the time of year, we would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our community doing Junior and Leaving Certificate exams the best of luck. No doubt, the sun will shine for the duration.

Catherine Morley
(Director)

Inside this Month

Gloke at our Gailles on the Path to Pre-School - Early Education Project Pilot Parent and Toddler Group

IADT Graduation Exhibition: "Happiness" Unveiled - Creating a piece of public art to acknowledge Traveller Culture in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown

Pilot Parents' Programme – Mainstreaming from September

Equine Education Programme - Boswell city slickers master 10 clear rounds in Equestrian event arena!

It's that time again...Summer Projects 2010!

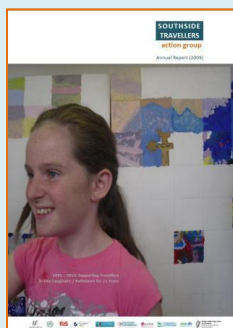
Southside Travellers Annual Report 2009 – A Challenging Year

Older People's Advocacy Project – Southside Travellers Successful in Achieving Funding to Focus on Older Travellers in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown

Making Movies – Southside Travellers to Launch Two DVD's in June

Childcare Research Launch – A Positive Response to a Challenging Issue

Celebrating 25 Years



Southside Travellers Annual Report 2009 – A Challenging Year

Opening our Annual Report, Frances O'Rourke (our chair) asserts *"Dogged determination to keep going in the face of many challenges has served Southside Travellers well for 25 years. And the year under review, 2009, proved to be one of the most challenging."*

Charting 2009, the report highlights the achievements of programme participants, board, volunteers and staff in moving through what has to have been one of the most unsettling years that the community and voluntary sector has experienced for a long time. Download the report from our website.

Gloke at our Gailles on the Path to Pre-School - Early Education Project Pilot

Pilot

Report available as a download from our site on June 11th.

For more years than everyone in Southside Travellers cares to remember, Southside Travellers Action Group has named services and supports for young children and their parents as a key priority. In November 2009, we completed our strategic plan *Building for the Future* and yet again, the same priority emerged. Following one of those “interesting conversations” with Angela Stenson, we decided to see what would happen if we just went ahead and created a space in the Centre for



parents and their young children to participate in a programme which would facilitate Traveller children to access the free pre-school year in September 2010.

Just one month later, our Board room was transformed into a children’s play space and everyone in the Centre was enchanted by the sound of small children and their parents (and grand-parents) singing, Angela playing guitar and a litany of small voices shouting “Don’t let the pigeon drive the bus”.

It sounds easy, but a huge amount of sheer determination and hard work made this happen. It would not have been possible without the leadership, support, good heartedness, guidance (and musical abilities) of Angela Stenson from Southside Partnership and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Childcare Committee. We must acknowledge the huge energy and enthusiasm Carol Connors (who has carried the torch for this work for many years), Alison Corr, Margaret (Mooley) Doyle, Kitty Connors and Margaret McDonagh brought to this very special project. Dun Laoghaire VEC’s *Family Learning Project*, the human resources provided by FAS and the recognition of the importance of ensuring that children’s emotional and social health remains a priority shown by our Community Health and Well-Being Programme and donations from our community funded the pilot project, and we are very thankful to them for this.



On May 25th, Southside Travellers hosted our first annual **Toddler Graduation** ceremony and in September 2010, the current group will be entering pre-schools throughout the county and we will be embedding the pilot into our mainstream resource centre programme - with the continued support of Southside Partnership and programme funding from Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Childcare Committee.

As well as being a path to pre-school for the parents and children involved, we see this very special project as being our first steps to developing services and supports for young children and their parents. Our journey is just beginning, we are delighted to be on it at last.

IADT Graduate Show: “Happiness” Unveiled - Creating a piece of public art to acknowledge Traveller Culture in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown



On Friday 28th May the painting completed by Southside Travellers young people in partnership with IADT Dun Laoghaire and with Natascha Fischell as tutor was exhibited at the Graduate Show in IADT. It drew great interest from all people at the opening and with a special visit from Minister Mary Hanafin. The young people didn't hold back when she asked them about the piece, and gave complex explanations of the process – from visiting the National Art Gallery for inspiration, to their collaborative work on creating the piece section by section.

Speaking at the launch, Minister Hanafin underlined the importance of ensuring that “art is something for us all” and

congratulated the young people and Natascha. The programme is part of a two year plan to encourage access to third level developed in collaboration with IADT Access Office. The piece will form the centre piece of our input into Dun Laoghaire Festival of World Cultures in July and our **25th Anniversary** Celebrations in October. We have a plan for the piece – but that's a surprise!

It's that time again...Summer Programme 2010!



This year's summer programme will be bigger and better than ever before – running four days a week for five weeks.

Activities will include go karting, paint balling, roller disco, a visit to the Leprechaun Museum (?), horse riding and trekking and

swimming. We will also be introducing the centre to the joys of barbequing and will round it all off with a big party. Parents and centre staff have agreed to act as volunteers and are already working with programme staff to finalise arrangements, set procedures and ensure that the programme continues to be as successful as it has always proved to be.

The programme will start on June 28th and registrations will take place at the centre on:

Wednesday 9th June @ 10am and Thursday 10th June @ 6pm

Boswell city slickers master 10 clear rounds in Equestrian event arena!



Gerry O' Brien, Louise Mc Donagh, Myles Connors, Elizabeth Connors and Jim Doran completed two clear rounds each with their steeds clearing 18 jumps. They all received rosettes and medals and had a great day. We hope to return and compete again in Boswell.

Pilot Parents' Programme – Mainstreaming from September



During March, April and May, as part of our ongoing special projects pilot programme, we established a four week programme designed to provide a safe space for Traveller parents to meet, share information and work with our parent support workers and programme facilitator to explore their own issues around parenting. Again, the process here was to open up the space and work with participants on developing the core elements of a programme which, if appropriate, would be rolled out in the Resource Centre programme from September.

Feedback from the first three weeks of the pilot suggests that there is definitely a need, and taster sessions around stress management and relationship building have proved very successful. This programme was supported by Dun Laoghaire VEC's Deis Programme, which resourced us with the fabulous Miriam – a well known centre tutor – who has provided leadership and guidance during this initial phase.

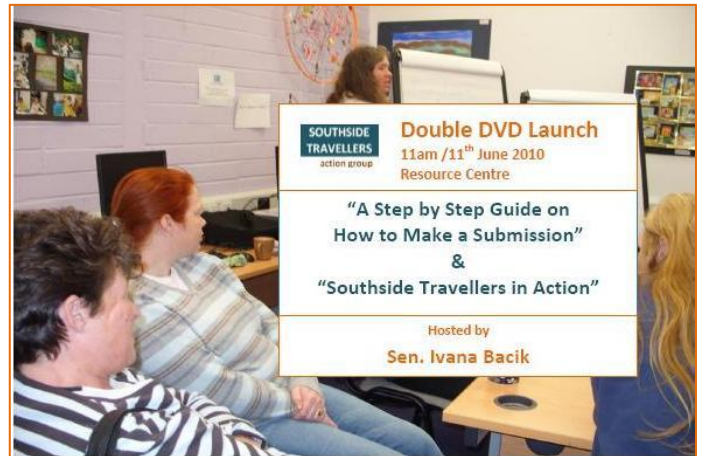
Southside Travellers: Celebrating 25 Years



Plans are now in place to acknowledge and celebrate Southside Travellers' 25th Anniversary. Taking the form of a Traveller Fair, our celebration will be one of the opening events of Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown Social Inclusion Week 2010. More details as we move through the summer, but the hope is that the programme will really reflect Traveller culture and provide an opportunity to look forward as well as look back. We will also be showcasing all of our programmes, the talents and skills of our community and our new strategic plan. The event will take place in the Assembly Rooms of Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Hall on Saturday, October 16th. More information in the June edition, when we hope to have a finalised programme.

Following this public celebration, past and present board members, volunteers and staff will gather for a gala dinner and dance .

Making Movies – Southside Travellers to Launch Two DVD's in June



“A Step by Step Guide on How to Make a Submission”

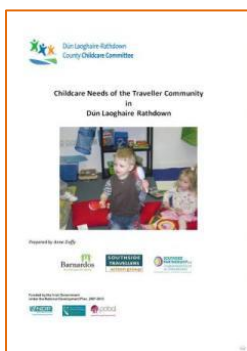
Directed and produced by our Education Programme participants, this DVD charts the key steps community and voluntary groups should take when making a submission to inform policy makers. The DVD emerged from our work on the production of a booklet of the same name (as part of the *Better Services for Travellers* initiative) earlier in the year.

“Southside Travellers in Action”

How many times has your organisation been asked “what do you do?”. Building on participants’ work throughout the Centre, this DVD provides an insight into the work of Southside Travellers Action Group – as described by staff and participants in our programmes.

Marking our end of term, the event will be hosted by Senator Ivana Bacik. Following the launch, both movies will be available for download from our website.

Childcare Research Launch – A Positive Response to a Challenging Issue



On Monday, May 31st, Minister Barry Andrews launched **Childcare Needs of Travellers in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown** – a research report commissioned by Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown County Childcare Committee and supported by Southside Travellers. Speaking at the launch, the Minister welcomed the report as a significant addition to *“the development of initiatives which are at the cutting edge of Irish social policy”*.

The research charts the experiences and needs of Travellers in attempting to access mainstream childcare provision and the challenges faced by all partners (including Southside Travellers) in

trying to develop early childhood education and care services and supports, and makes recommendations around:

1. Improving overall access
2. An anti-bias approach
3. Early care and afterschool care
4. Supporting childcare at Southside Travellers
5. Collaborating for success

Speaking at the launch, Catherine Morley said *“...there are potentially lots of different ways that a community organisation like ours can respond to being challenged in this way. Southside Travellers has chosen to see the report as – if you like – a watershed moment. Given that the document charts the history of all of our efforts, as well as the needs of the community, we have chosen to move forward and take action”*

The launch was followed by workshops where a series of actions to move forward on the outcomes of the research were identified. We look forward to working with our partners to deliver on these actions, given the positivity and commitment shown by all participating organisations.

Southside Travellers Secures Funding to Develop Supports for Older Travellers in Dun Laoghaire Rathdown



Following activation work with Older Travellers across the county, Southside Travellers have been informed

that our submission for inclusion in the Age and Opportunity *Get Vocal* Programme has been successful. Our new special project, linked with our Accommodation / Advocacy and Community Health and Well-Being Programme has three key elements:

- The completion of a *rigorous* baseline study of the situation, experiences and service and support needs of Older Travellers in Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown
- The establishment of an Older Travellers' network for Dun Laoghaire Rathdown The development of a strategy to ensure that the voice of Older Travellers informs and impacts on the delivery of our own strategy and those of partner organisations throughout the Dun Laoghaire / Rathdown area

Key issues emerging for Older Travellers in our activation process included accommodation, the development and maintenance of social support networks and access to primary health care services. Our hope is that this project – initially for one year. We shall be recruiting an Older Person's Advocacy Facilitator in the coming weeks in partner organisations, on Activelink and on our own vacancies page.

Our Vision

Southside Travellers Action Group envisions an Ireland where the human and civil rights, hopes and distinct cultural identity of Travellers are acknowledged and respected

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