

New e-cigarette
prevention toolkit for
youth workers

WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING

In Touch

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09/09/2024

edition 15

New
Accessible
Minibus

THE FUTURE OF AI
NAVIGATING A NEW DIGITAL LANDSCAPE

TRIBUTE TO
PASSED FRIENDS

THE ARTS & WELLNESS
HEALING THROUGH CREATIVITY

WINNERS OF
OUR SUMMER DRAW

WINNER OF
EMPLOYEE OF THE SEASON

ACTIVE
DISABILITY SERVICES AWARDS

CYCLING WITHOUT AGE
EVERYONE CAN ENJOY A CYCLE ALONG THE GREENWAY!

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Employee of the
Season deadline is
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Welcome to the 15th edition of our In-Touch magazine. As Autumn approaches, we're all settling back into our routines after a summer. We invite you to take a moment, sit down with a cup of tea, and enjoy our magazine.

Since our Summer edition, we have lost some dear friends and this edition includes heartfelt tributes to David Aherne, Susan Ryan, Paddy Scully, and Leigh Gath, all of whom have been part of West Limerick Independent Living community for many years. While their loss is deeply felt by us, it pales in comparison to the immense loss experienced by their family and friends.

Paddy Scully was someone very close to my heart, someone I grew up with. Rathfredagh Cheshire Ireland, located near my home, was a place where I spent many weekends. Even when I moved to England, my first visit upon returning home was always to see Paddy and everyone else. He would fill me in on all the gossip. Paddy never called me just "Margaret"—it was always "Margaret O'Brien." It was always a pleasure to see him; he always had a story to share.

We're still coming to terms with the shock of Leigh's sudden passing. There's little more I can add that hasn't already been said, but on a personal note, Leigh was always a support to me and a trusted sounding board, especially when I took on the role of Manager.

We also remember Susan and David with fondness and respect. Our deepest sympathies go out to all their families and friends. Thanks for those who give heartfelt tributes and we dedicate this newsletter to their memory. Ar Dheis de go raibh ainm dhilis

We're thrilled to welcome new PAs to our team and look forward to collaborating to make our team even stronger. With our new pay rates now in effect, we encourage all employees to take advantage of our Refer-a-Friend scheme. Check inside for more details.

We are delighted to introduce our new Employee of the Season. With three highly deserving candidates, the decision was challenging. After thorough consideration, we are excited to announce that our Autumn Employee of the Season is Ana Strassburger. Ana's dedication and diligence in client services set a remarkable standard of excellence, truly embodying the philosophy of independent living.

We are excited to share news of the recent upgrade to our accessible minibus and congratulations to our summer competition prizes, with Kindle winners John Killowry and Kenneth Rowan.

I'd like to encourage both clients and staff to submit their nominations for the Employee of the Season, deadline is 1st October 2024. We welcome feedback, suggestions and articles for inclusion in our magazine. We would love to hear from you; simply send an email to margaret@limerickcil.com or call 06977320.

Regards Margaret



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The Future of AI: Navigating a New Digital Landscape *by Gerard O'Connor*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming the way we live, work, and interact, with new developments emerging rapidly. From advancements in image and video generation to more sophisticated data analysis, AI's impact is reshaping industries and challenging societal norms at an unprecedented pace. While these innovations promise increased efficiency and new opportunities, they also raise significant concerns, particularly around the difficulty in distinguishing truth from fiction.

AI-powered tools, like deepfakes and generative models, can create highly realistic but entirely fabricated content. This blurring of reality poses a serious challenge, not only for individuals but also for institutions trying to maintain credibility and trust in a world where misinformation can spread like wildfire. The implications are profound—without the ability to discern what is real, public trust in media, governments, and even personal relationships could be eroded.

For individuals with disabilities, AI-powered assistive technologies—like speech recognition, adaptive interfaces, and personalized learning systems—are breaking down barriers and creating new opportunities for independence and participation.

In healthcare, AI is accelerating medical research and diagnostics, offering hope for conditions previously considered untreatable. From predictive algorithms that identify health risks to robotic surgeries that enhance precision, AI is making healthcare more accessible and effective. These advancements promise not only increased efficiency but also the potential for personalized treatments that cater to individual needs.

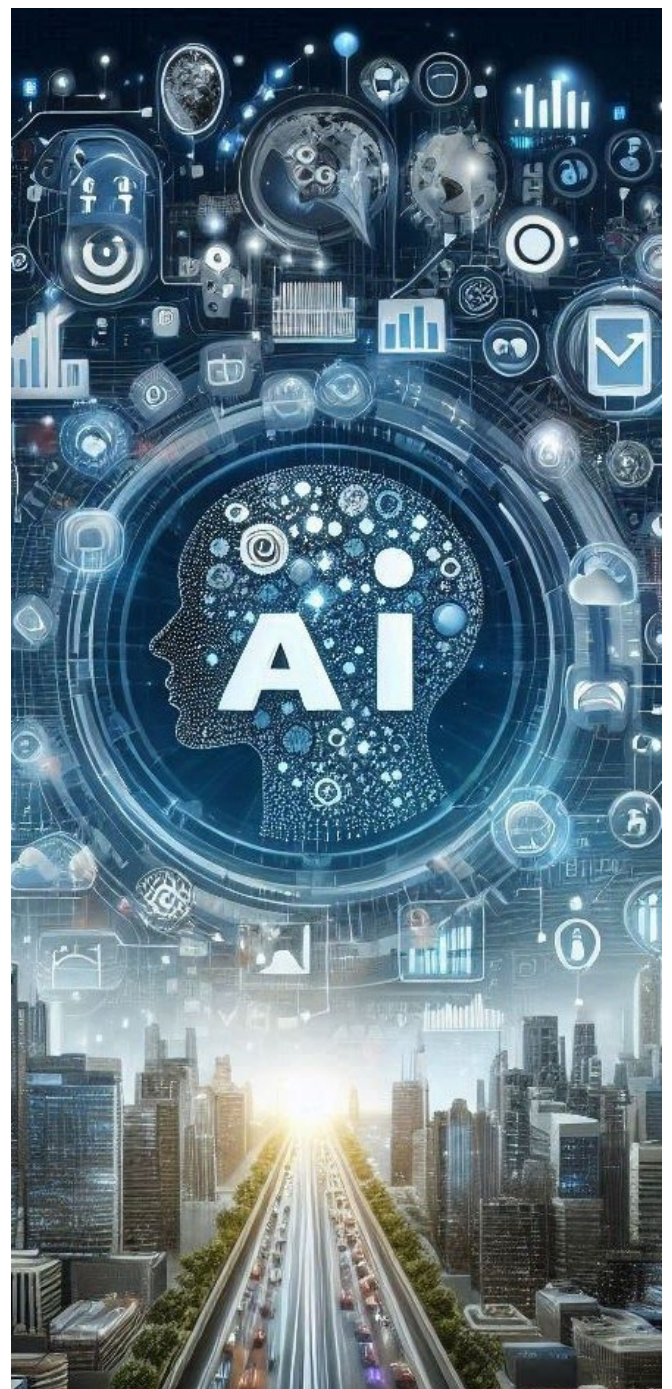
The rapid evolution of AI technology also presents regulatory challenges. Governments worldwide struggle to keep pace with AI advancements, and the lack of comprehensive regulations leaves gaps that can be exploited. As we look to the future, the responsibility to understand and navigate these technologies falls increasingly on individuals and organizations. Those who do not educate themselves risk being left behind, unable to leverage AI's benefits or protect against its potential harms.

To thrive in this AI-driven future, individuals must become proactive learners, seeking out information on how these tools work, their potential uses, and how to critically evaluate the content they encounter. This knowledge will be key to distinguishing between the truth and AI-generated deceptions. As AI continues to evolve, the need for digital literacy and critical thinking skills will become more critical than

ever. The future will be shaped not just by AI technology but by how we choose to engage with it.

Governments and organizations must also play their part, developing frameworks that can adapt to the fast-changing landscape of AI. While regulation alone cannot solve all the challenges, it can provide guidelines and protections that help mitigate some risks. In the end, a combined effort of education, regulation, and responsible innovation will be essential to navigating the complexities of our AI-powered future.

The choice is clear: Embrace the knowledge to understand and manage AI, or risk being overwhelmed by its ever-expanding influence. As AI continues to shape our world, staying informed is not just an option—it's a necessity.



Remembering Leigh Gath: A Champion for Disability Rights *by Gerard O'Connor*

In this edition of In Touch, we pay tribute to Leigh Gath, a fearless advocate for disability rights. Leigh, who passed away unexpectedly on July 27, 2024, at her home, leaves behind a legacy of hard work, dedication and activism for individuals with disabilities.

Leigh's life was marked by her commitment to advancing the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities. A survivor of the Thalidomide drug tragedy, which caused her to be born without arms or legs. Despite these challenges, she became a powerful voice, she consistently challenged barriers and fought for equal access to services and opportunities. From her early days as a protest leader to her pioneering role as the first Confidential Recipient for the Health Service Executive (HSE), Leigh was a steadfast voice for the voiceless.

Leigh authored an autobiography titled "Don't Tell Me I Can't", where she detailed her personal journey, including overcoming the challenges of her disability and her experiences during the Troubles in Northern Ireland. She was known for her fearless advocacy and her role as the first Confidential Recipient for the HSE in Ireland, a position created to address complaints related to HSE services for people with disabilities.

Her advocacy reached national attention in 2012, when she led a sleep-out protest at the Department of the Taoiseach, demanding the reversal of cuts to personal assistance services. These cuts, if they went ahead would have decimated PA services across Ireland. As the HSE's Confidential Recipient, Leigh ensured that individuals with disabilities had a platform to report concerns and receive support, influencing policies and fostering accountability within the system.

Leigh was born and raised in Newry, Co. Down, Northern Ireland and her life's journey led her to Texas, where she built a life with her cherished children, Karl and Aisling. While living in Texas, she pursued advocacy efforts and supported disability rights initiatives, proving her dedication transcended borders. Upon marrying Eugene, they embarked on a

new chapter, returning to Ireland and making their home in the serene landscapes of Pallaskenry, County Limerick.

Following her return to Ireland, Leigh joined the board of West Limerick Independent Living (WLIL). Her involvement brought valuable insights from her extensive experience as a disability rights advocate. With her deep understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and her background in shaping policies, Leigh's role on the board helped strengthen WLIL's mission of promoting independent living and improving personal assistance services. Her contributions to the board reflected her lifelong dedication to advancing the rights and dignity of people with disabilities.

Also, Leigh received personal assistance (PA) services from WLIL. She was a strong advocate for the PA model, as it enabled individuals with disabilities to live independently, maintaining autonomy over their own lives. Leigh's relationship with WLIL exemplified her belief in the importance of services like personal assistance, which allow people with disabilities to manage their own care and live with dignity.



Key Highlights:

- **Thalidomide Survivor:** Leigh used her personal experience to advocate for others affected by the Thalidomide drug tragedy.
- **Protest Leader:** In 2012, she led a national protest against cuts to disability services.
- **Confidential Recipient:** Leigh was the first to hold this role in the HSE, where she supported vulnerable individuals and influenced policy reform.
- **Legislative Reformer:** She successfully lobbied for changes benefiting disabled drivers in Ireland.

Leigh's tireless work resulted in meaningful reforms, including lobbying for legislation that enabled disabled drivers to import modified vehicles without onerous taxes. Her activism remains an enduring inspiration to all who continue to fight for equality and justice.

As we reflect on Leigh Gath's life, let us carry forward her mission of creating a more inclusive world. We invite readers to share their stories and experiences in disability advocacy, continuing the vital work that Leigh so passionately championed. Leigh is remembered fondly by her family, friends, and the many people she helped throughout her life.

Tribute to Paddy Scully 1957 – 2024 by PA Mary Angela Downes

Paddy Scully, formerly of Rathfredagh Cheshire Home, passed away in May 2024. West Limerick Independent living provided Paddy with PA services for many years of his life right up until he passed away. This article wishes to acknowledge the many PA's that cared for Paddy through his life and enabled him to have many wonderful experiences and make many happy memories. Mary Angela Downes has kindly offered the words of the eulogy that she delivered at Paddy's funeral both in Rathfredagh Cheshire Home and in Knock Church, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary on the day of his funeral to this publication in memory of Paddy.



Good afternoon, everyone and welcome.

It is a huge privilege to say these few short words on the great life that Paddy led here in Rathfredagh. Paddy was one of the longest residents of Rathfredagh Cheshire Home coming to live here in 1977 just 6 years after the home's official opening in 1971. Ireland was, as we know, much a different place in the 1970's to what it is today and so was the type of care and support offered in Rathfredagh at the time of his arrival. As life evolved, so did Paddy but even in those early days his trait of independence was to the fore as he loved being out in the bus, meeting people and being involved in the community locally in the goings on of the day. It was only fitting that when the opportunity arose it was Paddy who became the first resident to leave Rathfredagh and move to the community, into independent living, in Liosan court in NCW in the early 2010's.

This was a major transition, not just for Paddy but for all residents and the service provided as it gave greater autonomy for residents over their everyday lives. In this Paddy led the way, he was keen to get himself up and going in Liosan and thrived there continuing to attend daily services such as The Brothers of Charity and the Gortboy training centre among many more. The purchasing of his own bus allowed him much greater freedom and with the help of several outstanding Personal Assistants down through the years Paddy travelled the length and breadth of the country.

It is no secret of Paddy's great love for music and all things entertainment, and he was a regular visitor to such places as the INEC in Killarney, The Greenhills hotel in Limerick or more local to the LongCourt Hotel in NCW or to Knockaderry for a play or a night of music. Paddy had many, many friends and was always greeted with great enthusiasm and love wherever he went, he was a kind and generous man that always supported local fundraisers and events and travelled with a smile on his face when out and about.

Paddy loved making phone calls, he had many friends that he would regularly contact and chat to if he needed to pass some time. Paddy was very photogenetic and whatever the moment it was imperative that it was snapped for future reference. If you walk to his apartment here in Rathfredagh you can see the hundreds of photos hanging on his walls and as many if not more in photo albums celebrating happy times for Paddy with family, friends and even a few sports stars and celebrities.

Like that lovely song that Louise Morrissey sang, Tipperary was always on his mind. He never lost his connection to and his sense of place in county Tipperary. He was always proud to wear his Tipp jersey, but I will tell you a small secret, he would wear a Limerick one too from time to time! When Paddy would be asked where he was from, it was always quickly answered with 'Derryaguny, Knock, Roscrea, Co Tipperary'. Going home was always a great ritual for Paddy, there was the build-up, many calls to his sisters to ensure all was ready and then the excitement of going out, loading up and making the journey back to Knock. The Scully's are a very close, tight knit family and Paddy was always well tended to and had many visitors, nieces and nephews, family, neighbours and friends, while back home. And when he arrived back to Rathfredagh or Liosan he was quick to tell all who would listen about who he met and the goings on at home in Tipp.

We are sad to see you leave today, Paddy, you were a pillar here in Rathfredagh, a larger-than-life character that gave all who knew you here 47 years of memories.

If you needed it or wanted it you got it, if it was on and you wanted to go, you got there and if it had to be said, you said it. You saw it all and have done it all and we know that from the way you led your life that you have no regrets leaving this afternoon.

Remembering Paddy Scully by Gerard O'Connor

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news of the passing of our dear friend and long-time client, Paddy Scully. Paddy left us on Saturday, 25th May 2024, at his home in Rathfredagh, Cheshire Home, Newcastle West, County Limerick. Originally from Ballinrally, Camross, Co. Laois, Paddy was a cherished resident at Rathfredagh. Paddy was a vibrant and active man, always involved in the training centre in Newcastle West. He loved attending the dances and holidays organized by the West Limerick branch of the IWA, where his joyful spirit was always a highlight.

Paddy also loved to sing at parties, and his favorite song was "Living Next Door to Alice." He had a cheeky side and often sang the humorous version of the song, which not everyone appreciated, but Paddy didn't mind one bit! He passed away peacefully, surrounded by the caring staff of Rathfredagh and his loving family. His memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew him, may he rest in peace.

Tribute to Paddy Scully by Caroline Devine

I was Paddy's PA in Gortboy training centre for 6 six years, Paddy was a gentleman to work with. He was always in great form, he liked to take part in activities with the other trainees in the centre such as baking, art and more. He also loved word searches & spelling tests. I took him to the local library twice a month where he would pick up audio books and listen to them at home in Rathfredagh. Paddy loved music so much especially country music. He also loved going to concerts, the kind staff of Rathfredagh would take him to the Longcourt and Charleville Park Hotel to various bands.

I would ask Paddy did he have a drink at the concerts, and he would look at me with a smile in his face and say "sure I had a few small ones". Paddy loved coming to Gortboy, he got on so well with all the staff and trainees. Unfortunately, Paddy became ill earlier this year and sadly passed away in May, peacefully surrounded by his family and staff at Rathfredagh. Paddy is dearly missed and will never be forgotten by everyone at Gortboy. RIP Paddy, you were a joy to work with. Codladh go maith mo Chara.

Tribute to Leigh Gath by PA and friend Tina Noonan

Leigh was my first introduction to West Limerick Independent Living, and she encouraged me to train as a PA. I am still working for WLIL 16 years later and during all this time I worked with Leigh. Throughout Leigh's life, she helped people whenever she could, and an important fact Leigh never boasted about work she did and on behalf of people all over the county. Leigh was extremely knowledgeable about people's rights and worked tirelessly to ensure people got access to support whenever she could, she was extremely hard working. Leigh was lovely to work for and extremely kind, often organising my lunch for me. While I worked with Leigh, Leigh was a very good friend to me, and I will miss her very much. Rest in Peace Leigh.



Rest in Peace Leigh Gath by Tania Grimes PA

I became Leigh's PA back in 2023. I met Leigh to introduce myself with my Co-ordinator Sabrina. My first impression of Leigh was how very welcoming and very chatty which made me feel at ease straightaway. In the coming months of supporting Leigh, we built up a great relationship with trust honesty and compassion for one another. Leigh would tell me many stories of her accomplishments and achievements. I was very inspired. Leigh told me she wrote a book (Don't Tell Me I Can't) I went home that same day downloaded her book and I honestly read the book in one night. It truly inspired me of how much of a remarkable woman Leigh truly was.

Leigh taught me a lot while I was with her, I became more positive about myself and made me realise I have a voice too. Leigh was very good at encouraging you to be your best. Nothing was a trouble to Leigh she was considerably passionate about disability rights and was very knowledgeable about it. Leigh helped so many people throughout her life.

Her former PA Christina who Leigh was very fond of and spoke quite a lot about. Tina her PA alongside myself too had a great relationship with Leigh. Leigh was very kind she loved bringing back a souvenir from wherever she went I was very grateful. She loved to do this. I will truly miss Leigh. I will continue to support Leighs husband Eugene and her children Aisling and Karl.

Remembering David Aherne *by PA Bridget Kennedy*

It is hard to believe we have said goodbye to a wonderful character and with a heavy heart that we remember David Aherne Rest in Peace, who we said goodbye on 22nd June. He had a remarkable forward-thinking vision and played a key role in creating an interesting life.

A lover of making beautiful pieces from old unwanted wood, painting, photography, 3D printing. he was witty and cherished by many especially his mum Eileen and 2 beloved dogs, Shannon and Jack. His presence was always uplifting, never boring and he was someone we all looked forward to meeting every day.



Remembering Susan Ryan: *Margaret O' Connor*

Susan joined our service in August 2022. When I first met Susan, what immediately stood out was the dignity and grace she carried with her. Susan's main concern wasn't for herself, but for maintaining a sense of normalcy for her three boys—Harry, George, and Henry. Although Susan was initially hesitant to accept PA support, she soon developed an incredible relationship with Olga, her PA. This bond continued to grow even further when Donna joined the team.

During one visit to Susan's house, I was greeted at the door by her mother-in-law, who referred to the PAs as "their two angels." It was a touching moment, especially considering Susan's initial reluctance to receive support. Over time, she developed such a deep trust in her PAs, and this bond remained strong until her passing on the 13th of August 2024. Susan's PAs continued to support her and the family right up to her final days. Our thoughts and prayers remain with John, Susan's husband, her three sons—Harry, George, and Henry—and all her extended family and friends. RIP Susan

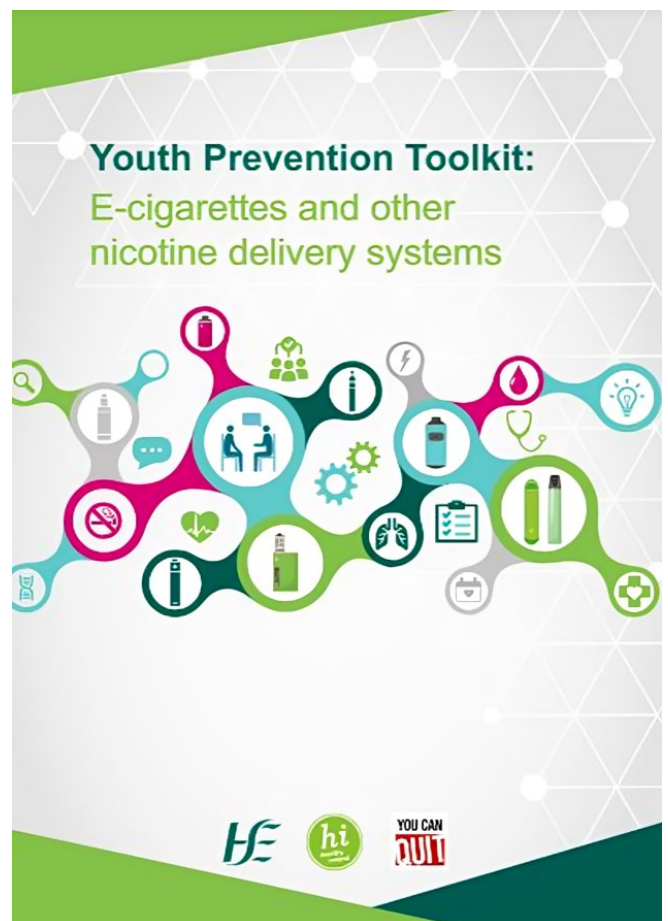
New e-cigarette prevention toolkit for youth workers

The Tobacco Free Ireland (TFI) Programme have launched a new resource for youth workers: The 'Youth Prevention Toolkit: E-cigarettes'. The purpose of the toolkit is to offer current and precise information about e-cigarettes and other nicotine delivery systems for individuals who interact with young people.

It includes explanations about these devices, their health effects, environmental impact, concerns about young people vaping, and strategies for discussing the issue with young people.

Additionally, the toolkit includes 10 lesson plans that youth workers can adapt to fit into existing health behavior programmes. These lessons can also be used by teachers in schools or anyone working with young people. Though developed as a prevention tool, the toolkit is also useful for engaging with young people who are currently vaping or using other nicotine delivery systems.

The resource is available to download from the www.hse.ie website and includes a print ready version and accompanying PowerPoint slides for some of the lessons.



The Arts and Wellness: Healing Through Creativity *by Alison Oldfield*

Introduction The arts have long been a source of entertainment, expression, and cultural enrichment for people. Since historical times, individuals have participated in the arts in various forms including visual art, music, dance, writing and theatre. This has ranged from various tribes and dancing, The Celts and music and the Vikings and art. However, the arts go far beyond entertainment. There has been increased research on its impact on health and wellness and the exploration of art forms such as art and music as tools for healing and wellbeing. This article explores this further.

Visual Arts Engaging in visual arts such as painting and drawing allows people to express themselves in various ways and convey emotions that may be repressed or difficult to articulate verbally. Art therapy is a relatively new field that blends psychotherapy and creative art, giving clients a means to express their creativity while undergoing treatment. It can be particularly beneficial for those dealing with mental disorders or trauma, as it offers a safe and non-judgmental outlet for feelings. Studies have shown that creating art can promote mindfulness, reduce cortisol levels linked with stress and increase overall mood.



Music Listening to music can evoke strong emotional responses, regulate mood and even reduce pain perception. Music therapy which involves employing music to achieve therapeutic goals, is used in various healthcare settings to address mental health issues such as depression and anxiety as well as cognitive decline. It is commonly used with dementia groups and the elderly as it has shown to improve memory and cognitive processing. Playing a musical instrument or singing can offer significant wellness benefits linked to cognitive function and emotional resilience. Additionally, music groups i.e. choirs, foster a sense of social belonging which can enhance mental wellbeing. Music in Mind is an initiative by Mental Health Ireland which offers music workshops to people with mental health concerns.

Dance and Movement Performing dance, whether through structured classes, groups or spontaneous movement has both physical and mental benefits as well as social benefits. It is a powerful art form as it links the mind and body through self-expression and creativity. The benefits are far ranging from improved cardiovascular health, weight loss and increased confidence and self-esteem. Dance therapy which utilizes dance and movement to support emotional, cognitive and social integration is an effective tool in treating mental health conditions for various groups.



Writing and Storytelling are impactful tools for recounting experiences and processing emotions. Writing therapy, which includes journaling, where individuals write about their thoughts and feelings connected to stressful or traumatic experiences, has been shown to improve mood and reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. There has been numerous research proving that Writing Exposure Therapy is an effective treatment tool for people with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Storytelling, whether through writing or spoken word, allows people to make sense of their own experiences and to connect with others. Sharing personal stories can foster empathy, belonging and community. Narrative 4 which is a Limerick based charity that uses personal storytelling in schools and the community to develop empathy and compassion contributing towards emotional and social wellbeing.

Theatre and Drama Theatre and dramatic arts offer unique opportunities for personal and collective transformation. Participating in or even just watching dramatic performances can enhance emotional and social wellbeing. Theatre brings people together, creating a shared experience that can stimulate connection and community. Drama therapy, which uses drama techniques for therapeutic purposes, has been particularly successful in helping people to build self-confidence and develop social skills. Organisations such as First Fortnight which is Dublin based focuses on drama and creative arts as a tool for mental health and wellbeing by offering free workshops and creative therapies.



The link between the arts and wellness is undeniable across the arts. This is especially apparent with the emergence of creative therapies i.e. art therapy, music therapy, writing therapy etc. There is powerful research and support validating that engaging in the arts and creative activities can significantly improve health and wellbeing-mental, emotional and physical health. Whether through visual arts, music, dance, writing, or theatre, taking part in creative activities provides a means of connection, expression and healing that can considerably boost overall health and well-being.



Autumn 2024 Employee of the Season

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE RECIPIENT OF THE AUTUMN 2024 "EMPLOYEE OF THE SEASON" AWARD. THE RECOGNITION CELEBRATES EXEMPLARY DEDICATION, EXCEPTIONAL PERFORMANCE, AND A STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE. FOLLOWING A THOROUGH EVALUATION PROCESS, ANA STRASSBURGER EMERGED AS A DESERVED RECIPIENT OF THIS SEASON'S HONOUR.

DESPITE HER RELATIVELY SHORT TIME WITH US, SHE EMBODIES THE ETHOS OF INDEPENDENT LIVING AND SERVES AS AN EXCELLENT ROLE MODEL TO ALL HER PEERS. HER OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE HAS MADE HER AN INVALUABLE MEMBER OF OUR TEAM, AND IT'S GREAT TO SEE BOTH NEW PAS AND THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WITH THE COMPANY FOR A WHILE RECEIVING RECOGNITION. CONGRATULATIONS TO ANA FOR BEING SELECTED.

ANY OF THE STAFF OF WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING CAN BE NOMINATED FOR EMPLOYEE OF THE SEASON, JUST CONTACT THE OFFICE FOR AN APPLICATION FORM BY PHONE ON 069 77320 OR BY EMAIL MARGARET@LIMERICKCIL.COM

West Limerick Independent Living Transport Services New Accessible Minibus

West Limerick Independent Living is proud to announce the recent upgrade of its accessible minibus. The organization has acquired a state-of-the-art Ford Transit from Cavanaghs of Charleville, replacing the previous Mercedes Sprinter. This new vehicle has been expertly customized by Paramount Conversions to ensure full accessibility for all passengers.

Accessible transport is vital for people with disabilities because it promotes independence, ensures equal opportunities, fosters social inclusion, provides safety and comfort. It helps create an inclusive society where everyone can participate fully and equally.

Our new accessible minibus will primarily serve the rural areas of Limerick, ensuring that passengers from even the most remote locations can benefit from our services. The vehicle usually has to travel large distances, meaning passengers may be on board for one to two hours. Therefore, it is crucial that the minibus provides maximum comfort and safety throughout the journey. This rejuvenation of our transport service highlights our commitment to offering inclusive and reliable transportation options for passengers, no matter how far they need to travel.

We are confident that our passengers will appreciate the enhanced comfort and safety of this new minibus as they travel through the scenic rural roads of West Limerick. Our commitment to providing reliable and accessible transportation remains unwavering, and we look forward to continuing to serve our passengers with this vehicle.



West Limerick INDEPENDENT LIVING

SUMMER COMPETITION WINNERS

CONGRATULATIONS TO JOHN KILLOWRY AND KENNETH ROWAN AND HAPPY READING. THEY HAVE EACH WON A KINDLE READER. THE CORRECT ANSWER TO THE QUIZ QUESTION WAS B: 1997, THE YEAR WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING WAS ESTABLISHED.

PHOTOS: SABRINA DORAN SERVICE COORDINATOR PRESENTATION A KINDLE TO JOHN KILLOWRY AND KENNETH ROWAN WITH HIS DOG



active healthy me

Active Disability Services Awards

Active Healthy Me is an exciting health, wellbeing and physical activity program that works with people with disabilities to increase their knowledge and understanding about the benefits of being physically active and living a healthy lifestyle. It is a partnership program between Active Disability Ireland and the HSE, aimed at people with disabilities attending day services across the health services. The program also offers the opportunity for day services to enter the Active Disability Services Awards, which have been developed to recognize and reward Disability Services and individuals with disabilities throughout Ireland who have shown leadership and commitment in supporting people with disabilities stay active and healthy. This year's Awards took place on 22nd March 2024 and was supported by the HSE Health & Wellbeing, HSE Disability Services and Sport Ireland. Eight category awards were presented on the day, highlighting areas of excellence through program initiatives including outstanding physical activity program, health promotion initiatives and community inclusion collaboration projects. The awards also highlighted 4 special recognition awards presented to individuals and services who champion the importance of physical activity and inspire their peers or colleagues who go above and beyond to include active healthy practices in everyday life.

For more information:

Active Disability Ireland Awards <https://activedisability.ie/active-disability-services-awards-2023/>

Active Healthy Me <https://activedisability.ie/active-healthy-me/>

The full list of Winners were

- **Cumas New Ross** from Co. Wexford, who were awarded the Best Physical Activity Initiative
- **Streetwise Brothers of Charity** from Ennis in Co. Clare took home the Best Outdoor Activity Initiative
- **Rehab Care** Blennerville were crowned the winners of the Best Healthy Lifestyle Initiative
- Best Community Engagement Initiative awards was **St. Michael's House** Dublin
- Active Champion Male was awarded to Martin McLoughlin from **HSE Ballytivnan Resource Centre** – Co. Sligo and Active Champion Female award Ruth Barron from **Stewarts Care** – Co. Dublin. They were chosen as this year's winners for their involvement in sporting activities and their passion for advocating for inclusive physical activity participation.
- Leitrim based support staff Rebecca Allen from **North West Parents and Friends Association** was triumphant in the Best Active Healthy Me Staff Lead category.
- **St. Michael's House** accepted their second award of the day for Best Disability Organization Senior Management.

Supported by HSE Health and Wellbeing staff in the community, the program is going from strength to strength and Active Disability Ireland are now working directly with over 440 disability services to support their development and growth in physical activity and to support their connection with their local community services. This is part of wider work to integrate health and wellbeing into disability services.

Welcoming New Personal Assistants to WLIL

We are excited to welcome Jane and Paula as the newest personal assistants to the West Limerick Independent Living team. With their enthusiasm and commitment to enhancing the lives of others, we anticipate they will bring significant benefits, including:

- Strengthening our team's ability to provide personalized and caring assistance.
- Enhancing the overall experience for those we support through their fresh perspectives and energy.
- Contributing to a positive and collaborative work environment.

We look forward to the positive impact they will have on our community. If you know someone who would be an excellent candidate for the role of a personal assistant, please encourage them to visit our website www.limerickcil.com for more information on joining our team.



Invitation:

NDA Annual Conference 2024: 'Promoting the participation of disabled people in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport in Ireland – UNCRPD Article 30'

Date: Thursday, 24th October 2024

Time: 9:30am – 4.15pm

Location: Aviva Stadium, Lansdowne Road and Online

Cost: Free of charge



The National Disability Authority would like to invite you to its Annual Conference 2024. This year's event will examine the implementation of Article 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) in Ireland, which focuses on the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport.

The conference will consider the extent to which Article 30 of the UNCRPD is being realised in Ireland; barriers faced by disabled people with regard to participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport; potential solutions to these challenges; and good practices in Ireland and other countries.

A conference programme and 'meet the speakers' document are available on the NDA website.

The conference will be of interest to:

- Policy makers
- Public sector officials
- Local authority officials
- Disabled Persons Organisations and other disability organisations
- Individuals with disabilities and their families

The Conference will be a hybrid event, in-person at the Havelock Suite, Aviva Stadium, Lansdowne Road or online via Zoom. This event will be free of charge. You can register <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6CR6YTL>

Irish Sign Language interpretation and real-time captioning will be provided (online and in-person). A Changing Places toilet and quiet room will also be available. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us by email at nda.annualconference@nda.ie or by phone (01 608 0400).



REFER A FRIEND AND EARN €200

We invite you, our valued employees at West Limerick Independent Living, to refer potential candidates for our open positions. Your understanding of our culture and workplace environment makes you the best judges of who might be a great fit for our team.

To show our appreciation, we are excited to extend our referral programme to you. Successfully referring a friend or family member can earn you up to €200.

We are pleased to announce that Bridget Kennedy recently received a €200 gift voucher for successfully referring a new employee through our "Refer a Friend" scheme.

To refer someone, please contact Margaret at 069 77320.

The Irish Roots of Halloween *by Laura Mulqueen*

Halloween, as celebrated today with costumes, trick-or-treating, and spooky decorations, has its roots deeply embedded in ancient Irish traditions. The modern holiday can trace its origins back to the Celtic festival of Samhain, a festival marking the end of the harvest season and the beginning of winter. This ancient celebration, held on the night of October 31st, was a time when the boundary between the living world and the spirit world was believed to be at its thinnest, allowing souls and other supernatural beings to roam the earth.



Samhain and the Spirit World

The Celts believed that during Samhain, the veil between the physical world and the spiritual realm was lifted, allowing spirits to pass through. To ward off malevolent spirits, the Celts would light bonfires and wear costumes, often made of animal heads and skins, to disguise themselves and avoid harm. This practice is a precursor to the modern Halloween tradition of dressing up in costumes.

Jack-o'-Lanterns: From Turnips to Pumpkins

One of the most iconic symbols of Halloween, the jack-o'-lantern, also has its origins in Ireland. According to Irish folklore, a man named Stingy Jack tricked the Devil and was doomed to wander the earth with only a burning coal inside a hollowed-out turnip to light his way. The Irish would carve turnips, potatoes, or beets and place a light inside to ward off Jack's wandering spirit. When Irish immigrants brought this tradition to America, they found that pumpkins, native to the New World, were easier to carve, thus giving rise to the pumpkin jack-o'-lantern.



Divination and Fortune-Telling

During Samhain, the Celts practiced various forms of divination, believing that the night provided a unique opportunity to glimpse the future. One popular method involved using apples, a fruit associated with love and fertility. In a game known as "apple bobbing," people would try to catch apples floating in water with their teeth. Another tradition involved peeling an apple in one continuous strip and tossing the peel over the shoulder. It was said that the shape the peel took upon landing would form the first letter of the future spouse's name.

Barmbrack: The Fortune-Telling Cake

A traditional Irish Halloween food is barmbrack, a type of fruitcake containing hidden objects, each with a symbolic meaning. Items like a ring, coin, or piece of cloth were baked into the cake. When the cake was sliced and served, the object found in a person's slice would predict their future: the ring foretold marriage, the coin signified wealth, and the cloth indicated poverty. This fun tradition still endures in many Irish households today.



Bonfires and Feasting

Bonfires have always been a central element of Samhain celebrations, believed to protect people from evil spirits. The community would gather around large fires to offer sacrifices, typically in the form of food or crops, to appease the spirits. After the communal rituals, feasting would commence, often including dishes like colcannon (a mix of mashed potatoes, cabbage, and onions) and barmbrack.

Mischief Night

In the spirit of Samhain, when the normal rules were suspended, pranks and mischief were common. This night of revelry and chaos gave rise to the playful mischief that is often associated with Halloween today. In some Irish communities, children would go door-to-door, singing songs or reciting verses in exchange for fruit or nuts, a precursor to the modern practice of trick-or-treating.

Office & Social Media Open Hours: Mon-Thurs 8:30am-5pm Fri 8:30am-4pm

Explore County Limerick with TFI Local Link Limerick Clare

Charleville,
Plaza



Foynes,
Flying Boat
Museum



Newcastle West,
Fuller's Folly



Kilmallock,
The Abbey



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I think you
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77320



Cycling Without Age

Everyone should have the opportunity to get out and about, to enjoy life in their community, to have fun, freedom, and the chance to become an active citizen again.



Clara Clark, CWA Ireland founder with passengers.

Cycling Without Age

Limerick Sports Partnership have recently purchased two Trishaws (One for Limerick city and the other for West Limerick on the Greenway). It is a method of being outdoors on a bicycle for those with reduced mobility. The Trishaw will be available to book through Barnagh Hub for free once pilots are trained.

The volunteer pilots give their free time, their energy, they create inter-generational links, and keep fit! We invite companies, organisations, Local Sports Partnerships, care homes and community units to join us in getting people out into their neighbourhoods, having fun and the freedom to enjoy the fresh air on these specially designed trishaw bicycles. WWW.CYCLINGWITHOUTAGE.IE

Pilot training will be happening, you can see more details here - [Trishaw Pilot Training | Limerick Sports Partnership](#), so please let us know if you would like to know more. It is a brilliant initiative for someone with a disability or reduced mobility to get outdoors and enjoy a cycle along the Greenway!

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to reach out,

Sally Wilson
Sports Inclusion Disability Officer
Limerick Sports Partnership
T: 061- 524 976
E: swilson@limericksports.ie
W: www.limericksportspartnership.ie



Clara Clark & Charles Mollan are volunteers who love cycling and brought this voluntary initiative to Ireland in 2017.



CONTACT US: Cycling Without Age Ireland founder: Clara Clark. Tel: 087-2515439 Email : clara@cyclingwithoutage.ie