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**WEST LIMERICK INDEPENDENT LIVING**  
**06/12/2021**  
**EDITION 4**

# IN TOUCH

## A WORD FROM THE MANAGER

Welcome to the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of In Touch newsletter, winter is finally here and the year is coming to a close, a year that has been extraordinarily challenging for us all.

COVID-19 continues to be widespread in our communities and in parallel demand for our services has continued and our staff has worked tirelessly to delivery front line services all through the year. A word of thanks to our clients, their understanding when their services were impacted and in some cases temporarily ceased due to staff shortages as a result of COVID-19.

Particular thanks to our staff and all front line workers who are working over the festive period - as you do every day of the year - to keep delivering critical support to people in our communities. With COVID-19 still widespread in our communities we urge everyone to continue to follow the HSE advice.

We are delighted to announce the latest employee of the season, congratulations to Emer McMahon who was selected as the Autumn 2021 winner. Emer is an excellent, valued staff member and is a worthy winner. I remind all clients and staff members to get their nominations for the employee of the season in on time for Winter 2021.

To all our readers, clients and staff, we wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year. Please remember that your opinion is welcome and we would love to hear from you, it's easy via email [info@limerickcil.com](mailto:info@limerickcil.com) or phone 069 77320.

Kind regards,

Gerard O'Connor

Manager



## IS TRANSPORT A PROBLEM FOR YOU?



1 Market Place, Newcastle West, Co. Limerick

069-22311 or 065-6719101 | [limerickclare@locallink.ie](mailto:limerickclare@locallink.ie)





*Jason Slattery RIP*

*Koffigan R Abouga Personal Assistant*

I started being a Personal Assistant to Jason Slattery in 2009 when I was in my 3rd year social care study in Limerick Institute of Technology. Jason was a service user who was born with a serious illness; Jason suffered from a severe form of Muscular Dystrophy MD that had left him unable to walk unaided.

I used to assist Jason every morning and our routines usually consisted of showering, change of clothes and prepare breakfast for Jason. Every Thursday I used to assist Jason with social activities which usually involved a trip into the city and often Jason stop at a Café, however because of Covid-19 that activity had been suspended because it would've put him at risk of catching Covid-19 virus.

Despite Jason's disability he always wanted to do something related to sports. He always took part in training sections for the Munster wheelchair hurling team with his fellow team mates. Jason had also played with Limerick team Treaty Warriors. He loved English soccer, as we both supported the same team (Manchester United)

Jason's was normally in good health, however this changed suddenly on Saturday 11th September 2021 when Jason became unwell. The following day Jason's mother called me and outlined that Jason was seriously ill and they brought him to the University Hospital Limerick and they were going to let me know more about the situation later.

At 3pm I received another call from Jason's mother saying that he passed away. I was devastated and shocked to hear his passing. I went straight to Jason's family home to give my condolences and to share their sorrow of the loss of their son. It was a pleasure having Jason as my client and may his soul rest in peace.

### **Shortages of Personal Assistants, who support disabled people**

It shouldn't come as a surprise or shock to many people reading this; there is a shortage of personal assistants and carers, locally and nationally. Naturally this is causing major problems for many people with disabilities and their service providers.

West Limerick Independent Living is working on an ongoing basis to provide personal assistant services, however recruitment is an absolute nightmare, not knowing if we are not going to be able to ensure that our clients get the service that they deserve, and have enough staff to do it.

Unfortunately unlike what some people believe, it is not as simple as the necessary staff to be employed to deliver this critical home care service. Despite regular recruitment drive to help boost the workforce, acute problems in recruiting and retaining staff remain.

Please be assured that we are doing everything possible to maintain our services however recruitment and retention of staff is a huge national issue at present.



Photo: Margaret O'Connor and Emer McMahon

Congratulations to Emer McMahon who was selected as the employee of the season Autumn 2021, Emer has been with West Limerick Independent Living since 2013 and has worked with many clients over that time and is well liked and respected by her colleagues. Emer is an excellent, valued staff member and is a worthy winner.

#### **So who can be nominated for employee of the season?**

Any of the staff of West Limerick Independent Living can be nominated for employee of the season, just contact the office by phone on 069 77320 or by email [info@limerickcil.com](mailto:info@limerickcil.com)

#### **It is easy to complete nomination form, just consider -**

Great employees bring many attributes to their work; usually we think of reliability, hard work, and to be nice to everyone. Also a great employee can be someone who anticipates problems that might emerge on the job. Great employees address conflict rather than avoiding it while maintaining respect for everyone in the mix. Great employees notice what is going on around them at work, and they integrate their constant learning into the way they do their jobs. Great employees form great relationships with people inside and outside the company, they know more than just the procedures their job requires. They know the reason their job exists, and that knowledge lets them work more effectively.

# **Employee of the Season**

*For further information on the requirements of the employee of the season or an application form contact one of our Service Coordinators on Tel: 069 77320 or Email: [info@limerickcil.com](mailto:info@limerickcil.com)*

**€400 in  
PRIZES**

**Nomination Closing Date 31.01.2022**

# Disability Services



Hello,

My name is Louise Carey, Adult Case Manager for Disabilities, Limerick. The role of the Case Manager is the planning, co-ordination and development of services using individually tailored care plans, having a person-centred approach and a multi-disciplinary focus. Case Manager covers both (1) Physical & Sensory Disability and (2) Intellectual Disability for all adults presenting with a disability from 18 years to 65 years of age. There are 3 Case Managers in CHO 3: (1) Co Clare; (2) Co. Limerick and (3) North Tipperary & East Limerick

In the HSE we contact our home support hours to agencies such as West Limerick Independent Living who provide supports to people in their homes so they can remain at home in their community safely. I cannot stress how valuable this service is for our most vulnerable people in our society and the importance of providing a service that is individualised to meet the various needs and also empathetic towards those that need us most.

Our agencies and our carers do not get enough credit for their amazing work and in particular during COVID as much as possible all services remained in place prioritising those with the highest needs. I believe our carers are our unsung hero and should be applauded for their trogon work in keeping it all together in the community during this pandemic.

I wish to thank West Limerick Independent Living for their dedication, professionalism and commitment to providing a life changing service and in doing this through such an empathetic manner.

Merry Christmas to you all, stay safe!

Louise Carey

Adult Case Manager Disabilities

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading 'Louise Carey'.

## Ina Garten's Mulled Wine

### Ingredients:

- ✓ 3 litres pure apple juice or fresh apple cider
- ✓ Four 2-inch cinnamon sticks
- ✓ 2 oranges, peels and juice
- ✓ 8 whole cloves
- ✓ 6 star anise



Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan and simmer over low heat for 5 to 10 minutes. Pour into mugs and serve. Nollaig Shona le Gach Duine.





reward **€200**

***West Limerick Independent Living is excited to launch our  
new “Refer a Friend Scheme”  
also known as an Employee Referral Scheme***

This internal recruitment focuses on sourcing new employees from the friends, family, college friends of current staff. The goal of a referral programme, is an opportunity for you to reach out to friends, family, and colleagues in our business and tell them about our company. This applies to a current staff member who refers/recommends a friend for potential PA role. Successful hire then employee receives a €200 gift voucher reward. The referred candidate must successfully complete their probation period (typically 6 months, unless extended by management) before voucher is issued.

The voucher will only be given if both employees are still employed with W.L.I.L after the successful probation period of the referred candidate. The referred candidate must be new to the company and not have been previously employed by us and must have granted the referrer permission to submit their details. The referred candidate must hold a valid visa to work in Ireland and if either party hold a visa that has expired, the scheme will be temporarily paused until a valid visa is produced. All referrals to go through and be approved by management.

W.L.I.L reserves the right to terminate this scheme at any time and W.L.I.L are not responsible for any vouchers that are lost, stolen or used without consent.

Contact [info@limerickcil.com](mailto:info@limerickcil.com)  
Phone 069 77320





# HOME IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

by Alison Oldfield

Driving home for Christmas one misty night,  
The chill and loneliness haunt my journey.  
I travel alone on these deserted roads,  
Only timeless festive tunes to keep me company.  
As my childhood home is in sight,  
The chill and loneliness fade away.  
The brightly coloured lights welcome me and  
A large decorated tree illuminates the window.  
I step outside to the bitter winter cold,  
I open the door and instantly feel the warmth,  
Greeted by family for the first time in months.  
The air is filled with Christmas spices,  
The open fire sparkles and warms my soul,  
The joyful smiling faces lift my heart,  
The hot mugs of tea bring me comfort,  
The lively banter and music say welcome  
home and  
The warm mince pies say it's Christmas time.



## SELF-CARE & NEUTRAL AFFIRMATIONS BY SABRINA DORAN

These days, life is busier and more hectic than ever. Restoring balance in our life is particularly important for our general health and mental well-being. Self-care improves our happiness, boosts our immunity, and encourages us to think positively. It can help to reduce stress, anxiety, and despair while also reducing burnout. We may all feel stronger and more hopeful by taking care of our spirits, dealing better with challenging times, and seeking professional help if necessary.

It is especially important for you to look after yourself while you are supporting and aiding someone who may be in difficulty. Self-care does not imply that you prioritize yourself over your loved ones. It simply means that you are paying attention to your own needs so that you can better support the people you care about. You are better able to address the needs of others when you take care of yourself and are not stressed. Self-care can take many different forms. Self-care does not have to be complicated; it can be as easy as taking a deep breath when you see yourself becoming anxious. You will be better able to handle the difficulties that come with helping someone you care about if you keep your physical and emotional health in check ([www.nami.org/Your-Journey](http://www.nami.org/Your-Journey)).

Taking time for oneself is essential; we cannot give to others unless we first give to ourselves, and the same can be said about kindness and self-compassion. So, the next time you are hard on yourself over something, give yourself a break and repeat to yourself a neutral affirmation "I am doing the best that I can right now."



Look After  
Yourself!



According to (Karen Loethen) Neutral affirmations and self-talk are the kinds of thoughts that remind you to lay off self-criticism or judgement of yourself and to instead use rational and true statements to challenge the negativity. Affirmations that are neutral have a lot of power. The benefits of higher self-esteem and self-confidence can be obtained by using neutral but true statements.

### Some neutral Affirmations

- Some days are harder than others, I am doing my best today. Today I am ok.
- I'm smart and capable
- Feelings are not facts
- I can handle this
- I know who is on my side. First, I am.
- Tomorrow is another day
- I am doing active work to improve my life

### Some simple steps for self-care

- Take a walk-in nature
- Read a book
- Guided Meditation or deep breathing (Insight Timer app, headspace, Calm app)
- Going for a cup of coffee with a friend
- Getting enough sleep
- Eating Healthy



## CHRISTMAS IN IRELAND By Margaret O' Connor

Traditionally begins on 8 December, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, with many putting up their decorations and Christmas trees on that day, and runs through until 6 January. The greeting for "Happy Christmas" in Irish is Nollaig Shona Duit. Ireland is a predominantly Christian country and Christmas plays an important role in religious aspects of Irish life. There have been traditionally large attendances at religious services for Christmas Day and Christmas Eve, with Midnight Mass a popular choice for Roman Catholics.



**Decorations:** In the period of the mid-19th to mid-20th century, it was common for Irish households to clean and prepare the house for the Christmas period. This would include a cleaning and whitewashing the home, with decorating taking place after this. The use of evergreen foliage such as holly was seen to represent Christ and his everlasting life. In rural homes, the byre or cow-shed, stables and other buildings for animals would be decorated to honour the role of animals in the nativity story. Mistletoe was not part of traditional Irish Christmas decoration as it is not commonly found in Ireland, but has become a feature in modern times. Along with Great Britain, Ireland saw the introduction of Christmas Trees during the reign of Queen Victoria, Christmas trees officially go up on 8 December because according to Christian tradition the Immaculate Conception was on this date. Trees in towns and cities are erected in central locations every year along with lights.

In many homes in Ireland the traditional crib, along with the Christmas tree are part of a family's decorations. Traditionally the figure of the baby Jesus would not be added to the crib until Christmas morning and the three wise men would be placed in the nativity scene on Little Christmas. Family and friends also give each other gifts at Christmas. Some people light candles to signify symbolic hospitality for Mary and Joseph. The candle was a way of saying there was room for Jesus's parents in these homes, even if there was none in Bethlehem. Leaving decorations up after 6 January was considered bad luck, and all the holly that had been used as decorations would be burnt.

**Santa Claus:** Santa Claus, Daidí na Nollag in Irish, is known in Ireland and Northern Ireland as Santy or Santa. He brings presents to children in Ireland, which are opened on Christmas morning. It is traditional to leave a mince pie and a bottle or a glass of Guinness along with a carrot for Rudolph. Most big shopping centres have a Santa's grotto setup from late November so that shoppers and visitors with kids can visit Santa and tell him what they want for Christmas.

**Christmas Candle.** The placing of a lighted candle in the window of a house on Christmas Eve is still practised. This is also called Coinneal Mór na Nollag is placed at the window to welcome people in need of shelter. Its primary purpose is to welcome Mary and Joseph.

**Christmas dinner:** The traditional Christmas dinner consisted of spiced or roast beef, a roast goose and ham with a selection of vegetables and roast potatoes. The cooking of a turkey is a more modern imported tradition. Dessert often consisted of an array of dishes, with Christmas pudding a traditional choice, which is sometimes served with brandy being poured over it and then set alight. It was considered unlucky to cut the pudding before Christmas Day, and if the pudding broke during cooking the baker would be dead before next Christmas. Other desserts include Christmas cake, sherry trifle, yule log and mince pies with sauces such as brandy butter.

**After Christmas Day:** St Stephen's Day would be marked by the visiting of wren boys to homes to collect money for the "wren party". Christmas celebrations in Ireland finish on 6 January, variously known as Women's Christmas (Nollaig na mBan), Little Christmas or Epiphany, with people taking down their Christmas decorations. The period between Christmas day and Little Christmas was known as "between the two Christmases" and was a popular time for matchmaking as it was traditionally a period of leisure. It was commonly believed that only snow that fell during this period would stay on the ground.

## **Are you passionate about Independent Living & Personal Assistance Services?**

The ILMI PAS NOW campaign is progressing to the next phase and they need you to be part of it. They are looking for people to record and share their thoughts of what PAS as a right really means. If you have an interest in being part of this campaign then please email [info@ilmi.ie](mailto:info@ilmi.ie) or contact any of the ILMI team for further information. #PASNOW



**#PASNOW**

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**Interested?**

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## WHAT IS JAM CARD AND WHO IS IT FOR?

Transport for Ireland along with Bus Éireann, Dublin Bus, Go-Ahead Ireland, Iarnród Éireann, TFI Local Link and Luas are continuing our journey to become JAM Card friendly. The Jam Card will assist customers using the public transport system and make their experience as stress-free as possible.

JAM Card allows people with a communication barrier tell others they need 'Just A Minute' discreetly and easily.

The JAM Card© was created by NOW Group, a social enterprise that supports people with learning difficulties and autism into jobs with a future and their service users told them that they would like a way to relay to people that they need a little extra time or patience.

Find out more about NOW Group at [www.nowgroup.org](http://www.nowgroup.org) and JAM Card© at [www.jamcard.org](http://www.jamcard.org)

### There are 3 message options to choose from:

1. Please be patient, I have autism
2. Please be patient, I have a learning disability/difficulty
3. Please be patient, I have a condition

For those with a learning difficulty, autism or any condition where there can be a communication barrier, the JAM Card allows users to relay to others that they may need a little extra time in a simple, effective non-verbal manner. The JAM Card is useful when on public transport, in a retail or any other customer facing environment.

### Where can I get one?

There are several different methods to get a JAM Card. JAM Cards are available for collection from the following transport hubs:

#### Irish Rail Stations:

1. Connolly Station, Dublin
2. Pearse Station, Dublin
3. Heuston Station, Dublin
4. Kent Station, Cork
5. Ceannt Station, Galway
6. Colbert Station, Limerick
7. Plunkett Station, Waterford
8. MacDiarmada Station, Sligo

#### Dublin Bus:

Dublin Bus Head Office, O'Connell St

#### Local Link Offices

You can also request one directly from NOW Group by visiting the JAM Card website and filling out the request form. <https://jamcard.org/jam-card>

Or if you would prefer there is a JAM Card App available for Android and iOS. The App allows you to choose your message option and find other JAM friendly businesses.



**ON THE JOURNEY  
TO BECOME  
JAM CARD®  
FRIENDLY**



Leap  
Top-up



Journey  
Plan



Real  
Time



Driver  
Check



Cycle  
Planner



Ireland  
eGov<sup>er</sup>nment  
Awards 2016  
Winners

## Supporting Our Community



[www.csdcu.ie](http://www.csdcu.ie)

[info@csdcu.ie](mailto:info@csdcu.ie)

### OUR OFFICES:

Church Street,  
Askeaton, Co. Limerick  
T: 061-392237

North Quay,  
Newcastle West, Co. Limerick  
T: 069-62700

Main Street, Glin,  
Co. Limerick  
T: 068-34512

**Sub Offices:** Foynes, Kildimo, Pallaskenry, Shanagolden, Tarbert.

All loans subject to approval. T&Cs apply. **WARNING:** If you do not meet the repayments on your loan, your account will go into arrears. This may affect your credit rating which may limit your ability to access credit in the future. Credit Unions in the Republic of Ireland are regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.