

# Tutors scoop top award

The Irish Institute of Training and Development recognised our Getting Started tutors with a top award **Page 3**



Engineering students take on challenging brief for outdoor seating **Pages 6-7**

Join our Mini Marathon team **Page 5**

**AgeAction**  
For all older people

*This booklet is a publication of Age Action. It is published 10 times a year.*

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■ Cover photo:

The Irish Institute of Training and Development trophy was awarded to Age Action for the Getting Started programme. Pictured (from left): learner Irene Hodgins, tutor Liz Ryder, learner Kevin Flood, Getting Started manager Pauline Power and tutor Frank Brady.  
*See report, page 3.*

## Benefiting from greater diversity

*"I grew up at the age of 80 when I learned to overcome my prejudices towards people from other races."*

**These** are the words of Christy Brady, a resident of Raheny Community Nursing Unit, one of the residents and volunteers talking about their personal experience of residential care at our seminar in North Dublin last November.

Christy, speaking from his wheelchair, inspired us all by his warm and caring relationship with the Filipino care staff and his concern for their worries about their families trying to recover from the devastation of Typhoon Haiyan.

There are so many lessons we could learn from Christy's example. But the most profound lesson must be that we can and should all go on learning throughout our lives; lifelong learning should not just be a slogan but a way of life. This requires a mixture of self-confidence and modesty, confidence in our own ability to go on learning and modesty about our need to learn from others.

This month we are starting a new programme on interculturalism and anti-racism in residential care in North Dublin. The widespread interest in this programme is most encouraging and suggests that many people are aware of the opportunities as well as the challenges of an increasingly multicultural Ireland. In 2011, there were 544,357 non-Irish nationals living in Ireland representing 199 different nations: the largest group were Polish followed by UK nationals. Since 2009, 180,600 Irish non-nationals came to Ireland and 157,500 left, while 97,000 Irish came back and 187,000 left.

In this programme, we will be exploring how increasing diversity has affected the lives of all the people living, volunteering and working in residential care and how we can develop greater awareness and understanding of other cultures and their attitudes towards ageing and older people. At the same time we want to work out ways of combating discrimination on grounds of race and age. In 2012 queries under our equality legislation in relation to employment or provision of services were running at up to 10% each of all such queries according to the Equality Authority.

This important development should influence all of us in Age Action. So if you are interested in our interculturalism programme, please contact Ann Moroney, our new development officer, at (01) 475-6989 or [intercultural@ageaction.ie](mailto:intercultural@ageaction.ie).

I hope all of us learn from Christy Brady and grow up by the age of 80 — or even sooner.

— Robin Webster



■ Pictured with the award at the Irish Institute of Training and Development at the prize giving banquet were volunteer Pat Power from Waterford and Getting Started programme manager Pauline Power.

## Training award for Getting Started

The quality of the training provided by Age Action's Getting Started programme was recognised nationally this month, when the team scooped one of Ireland's top training and development awards.

Getting Started saw off stiff competition to win the small enterprise category in this year's Irish Institute of Training and Development Awards. Receiving the prize on behalf of Age Action, Getting Started manager Pauline Power said it was a tribute to the work of her colleagues who trained our trainers and the success of those volunteer trainers in helping older people to use computers.

"This award is recognition of the hard work and enthusiasm of the Getting Started staff and the hundreds of volunteer tutors across Ireland who are making a significant difference to the lives of the older people," she said.

Ms Power said it was gratifying for staff, volunteer tutors, learners and programme funders that the quality of the training provided by the Getting Started programme had received national recognition.

Award entries were judged by several criteria: innovation in delivering training and development; evidence of the sustainability of learning initiatives; programme design and evaluation of outcomes; and the level of resources and investment relative to the size of the organisation.

Age Action was joined

on the night by other category winners, including State Street, KPMG, Dulux, Grafton, Teagasc and Lake Region Medical. The overall prize was won by the Dublin Airport Authority.

The awards were presented by the Minister of State for Training and Skills, Ciaran Cannon. "Quality, innovation and excellence in people development empower individuals and organisations, give opportunity and build a talented workforce that can compete globally," he said.

"When we ask those that choose to locate in Ireland why they come here, they consistently say it's because of our exceptional and talented people."

This is the 16th year of the awards, which are regarded as the premier award in Ireland for training and people development.



■ Although there has been a recent drop in the rate of burglaries gardai are urging householders not to become complacent.

## Protect your home from burglars

**Gardai are urging people to take basic security steps at home to avoid becoming “easy targets” for burglars, writes Ciara O’Brien**

“Burglars will tend to go for what they view as easy targets — houses with no lights on, no alarm or unsecured doors and windows. So it is critical to secure doors and windows, light homes even when out, and have an alarm that is turned on even when at home,” according to Sergeant Kelvin Courtney of the National Crime Prevention Unit.

According to garda statistics, windows to the rear of the house are the most common points of entry for burglars, occurring in 28% of cases, with doors to the front and the rear following closely behind. As the weather improves during

the year, burglaries increasingly take place as a result of unsecured windows and doors, they warn. Ensuring windows and doors are secured if you move from one part of the house to another eliminates the opportunity for burglars to enter the premises without breaking in.

Jewellery and cash are the most commonly taken items, and it is recommended that only small amounts of cash should be kept in the house. Householders should also make a list of valuables inside and outside the house. A common error is to leave car keys near the front door. There were over 100 cases where they were “fished” through the letter box between June and December 2013.

There was a drop of almost 9% in burglaries and related crimes between 2012 and 2013. While this is welcome news, gardai are

### Top five burglary prevention tips

1. **Secure all doors and windows.**
2. **Light up your home; use timer switches when out.**
3. **Store keys safely and away from windows and letter boxes.**
4. **Record details of valuables and don’t keep large cash amounts at home.**
5. **Use your alarm, even when at home.**

urging householders not to become complacent. The National Crime Prevention Unit has published information offering advice to reduce the chances of having your home broken into. They have provided a list of tips for householders to keep their possessions safe in their homes (*see panel*).



■ One lucky participant who runs or walks the Flora Women's Mini Marathon for Age Action will win a luxury break at the Johnstown House Hotel and Spa.

## Run for a fabulous hotel weekend

**Do you fancy winning a two day luxurious hotel and spa break while raising funds for Age Action?**

We are asking women of all ages to consider joining our team and taking part in this year's Women's Mini Marathon on Monday, June 2. Everyone who signs up for Age Action will be entered into the draw for the hotel break at the four-star Johnstown House Hotel and Spa in Enfield, Co. Meath.

Each year over 40,000 women's take part in the

event, raising thousands of euro for worthy charities around the country. Please consider Age Action as your charity of choice for 2014. Places are filling up fast, and the closing date to register is Friday, April 18.

We are grateful to the Johnstown House Hotel and Spa, in Enfield, Co. Meath for the prize. The house is set on 120 acres of parkland. With 126 bedrooms (40 recently refurbished as two-bedroom executive suites), the four star hotel was developed from a magnificent 1750s rural Georgian house. Located just off the M4 motorway, it is just 40 min-

utes from Dublin Airport and 45 minutes from Dublin city centre.

The hotel provides a choice of dining, with the Pavilion Restaurant, Atrium Brasserie and Coach House Bar. It also features a full business centre, free wi-fi access throughout the hotel and well equipped meeting rooms catering for up to 900 people.

The 30,000 sq ft Elemis Spa is among the best in the world. It features 17 treatment rooms and a wide menu of treatments. Guests can also enjoy a state of the art gym, 25-metre swimming pool, Jacuzzi and outdoor hot tub.



■ James Hubbard from the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the NDA (CC) (left) with Glór member Phyllis Talbot and Billy Brazil, a PhD demonstrator for the undergraduate Give Me Shelter design project.

## TOP Group helps TCD engineers to design structures for older people

This spring the policy team in Age Action got involved in an exciting and novel project with Professor Mark Dyer of Trinity College Dublin's School of Engineering.

Age Action volunteers were invited to Trinity to collaborate with second year engineering students to design an outdoor structure suit-

able for older people who needed a rest in towns and cities across Ireland. This was part of the students' course work and their professional development.

The idea for the project arose from work that Age Action has done with people the city who said it is often difficult to get around Dublin because they need safe public seating.

Linking in with The Opinion Project (TOP) coor-

dinated by Sarah Nevin in Age Action, the project created a way for the older volunteers to share what they needed with the students so that they could come up with solutions and designs.

In early February Professor Dyer treated the volunteers to a scrumptious meal in the Science Gallery in Trinity College, and from there they went to Goldsmith Hall to meet the students.

After splitting into groups, each older person spoke with students, shared their story and offered advice on the ideas the students had been developing.

It was a great afternoon of sharing experiences and meeting new people. By the end of it, young and old chatted, mingled and laughed.

The second meeting between students and volunteers was on February 21 when the students presented their designs using poster displays.

Here the volunteers had a chance to quiz the students on their preliminary designs and score their posters with the help of some of the Engineering Department's PhD students.

It was a great day filled with the buzz of creative minds, and the older volunteers spoke of their satisfaction at seeing their ideas made into something they could see, touch and feel.

In the final step volunteers will meet their groups of students, who will unveil half-size models of their designs. The students are limited in the materials they're allowed use to create such a shelter: one of the materials, for example, is bamboo.

The Age Action research volunteers are waiting to see if the students' projects can pass Professor Dyer's test of being robust enough to sustain weight.



■ Age Action senior policy officer Naomi Feely (left) with Dublin Glor group members Ellen Reddin and Sean Oliver and some of the TCD student posters for their shelter designs.

By the time the project ends, both Age Action and the volunteers will have learned a lot. We know a lot more about the design process and considerations behind age-friendly design, and we have developed a valued link between Age Action and Trinity and look forward to collaborating on more projects in the future.

— Lorna Roe and Sarah Nevin



■ Age Action members and students discuss the design issues and needs of older people surrounding the proposed public rest structures.



■ Age Action's senior policy officer Naomi Feely (right) visits the Kamppi Service Centre of Helsinki, which provides physical activities, language courses and crafts (including weaving, seen here) for older people.

## Helsinki visit put focus on moves to prevent elder abuse

**As part of our ongoing work to raise awareness about elder abuse, Age Action is collaborating with partner organisations in Finland, Italy and Romania.**

The project, which has received funding under the Grundtvig element of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme, will focus on the development of innovative training material and methods to raise awareness about this issue amongst volunteers, informal carers, older people and their families.

The project held its inaugural meeting in January in the Finnish capital, Helsinki. With warnings from our hosts at Suvanto (the Finnish Association for a Safe Old Age) of average temperatures of  $-6^{\circ}\text{C}$ , combined with a wind chill factor, our packing had a theme of layers, layers, layers! But the cold weather could not take away from the beauty of Helsinki covered in a blanket of snow.

As this was our first project meeting, we began on the Monday evening with an informal supper at the offices of Suvanto to get to know each other. The staff and board each prepared a traditional Finnish dish for

us, with reindeer featuring on the menu, of course.

Our main work began first thing on Tuesday morning with a focus on national and EU approaches to addressing elder abuse. Each partner organisation provided information on the situation in their country regarding elder abuse prevention work, a profile of older people and cultural issues on ageing in their country.

It was apparent from these presentations that there is a great deal of variance in how elder abuse is tackled in each partner country. For instance, in Finland, elder abuse is addressed within a domes-

tic violence remit, while in Romania it remains very much a taboo subject. In Italy, elder abuse cases are seen as a crime against the individual, so the focus is very much at this level as opposed to a government-led response.

We also began to look at how we would develop the training and awareness-raising package of materials, with Age Action highlighting the HSE's awareness raising DVD *Open Your Eyes to Elder Abuse in Your Community*.

The second day of the meeting included a seminar focused on the Finnish situation on ageing and elder abuse prevention. The seminar provided an insight into the range of work being carried out in Finland, including a cultural programme with older African women who live in Finland and the implications of their failure to integrate (as they may never learn the language).

We spent Wednesday afternoon on two site visits. The first of these was a day care centre called Toimintakeskus, which is run by the Helsinki Alzheimer Association. It provides day activities for people with dementia at a minimal cost. The second, Kamppi Service Centre of the City of Helsinki, is a centre for older people living in Helsinki. The activities of the centre, which include



■ ABOVE: Representatives from older people's organisations discussing the various approaches to elder abuse in the programme's participating countries — Ireland, Romania and Italy.

■ RIGHT: Snowscape in Helsinki.

physical activities, language courses and crafts, are primarily run by volunteers with a small number of paid staff overseeing the overall administration. The facility receives funding from the government and is one of the largest in the city.

Finally, that evening we met for dinner with our partners in a traditional Finnish restaurant that was designed like a barn — right in the middle of Helsinki! The menu for dinner again strongly featured reindeer and other traditional Finnish food.

Our final morning in Helsinki focused on planning our work for the coming months, including how we plan to mark World Elder Abuse Awareness



Day (WEAD) on June 15, and our next partner meeting, which Age Action will host in Dublin at the end of June. With some final farewells to our colleagues it was time to return home to more tropical climes.

**More details on this partnership are available on the project website at <http://www.combat-ingelderabuse.eu/> or by contacting senior policy officer Naomi Feely on (01) 475-6989. You can also send an email to [socialinclusion@ageaction.ie](mailto:socialinclusion@ageaction.ie).**

— Naomi Feely



■ Bridget Sleap, of HelpAge International, and Age Action's Robin Webster at the workshop on a Convention on the Rights of Older People.

## Workshop highlights steps towards new convention on rights of older people

The human rights of older people have been somewhat neglected at the United Nations, as well as on the ground here in Ireland.

Regular readers of *Ageing Matters* may remember that we attended the Open Ended Working Group on Ageing (OEWGA) at the UN last August, where they are discussing the possibility of drafting a new Convention on the Rights of Older People.

We organised a work-

shop entitled Towards a Convention on the Rights of Older People on February 27 to raise awareness about what is going on at UN level and to open a discussion on whether older people and the organisations that work with and for them think a convention is a good idea. If so, how do we go about feeding into the process and ensuring we get a strong convention that will lead to the full realisation of the rights of older people.

Bridget Sleap, a senior rights policy adviser at HelpAge International,

spoke about the OEWGA process at the UN and why a convention is required. Nine international human rights treaties (six of which Ireland has signed) already exist, but the rights of older people are rarely mentioned in the treaties or the recommendations issued by the expert committees set up under each treaty.

A new convention would bring specificity to the particular issues older people face under each existing right. For example, elder abuse could fall under the right to be free from violence. A convention could

close the clear gap in the current international human rights infrastructure as it applies to older people.

Bridget also explored what a convention might look like and the key issues that need to be included. Here the emphasis was on getting as comprehensive a convention as possible, so that it will be applicable to older people now and into the future. Ensuring there is a strong implementation, monitoring and accountability system under the convention at the national and international level was also seen as very important.

Eilionóir Flynn, the deputy director of the Centre for Disability, Law and Policy at NUI Galway, and disability

activist Donal Toolin spoke about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Both gave interesting perspectives on the campaign to get the CRPD drafted at the UN and outlined what lessons the ageing sector could learn from their campaign.

One thing that stood out was the importance of including the lived experience of older people in any campaign or lobbying efforts to get a convention. These experiences would also help define what to include in the actual convention.

There were interesting and wide-ranging discussions by participants. Issues ranged from looking

at the convention as a lever for social change in the way older people are viewed and the often negative discourse that surrounds older people, to enabling data on older people to be collected at the national level under any new convention.

This information would need to be submitted to the UN by the Government in their reports on how they would meet obligations under the convention.

Finally, it was agreed there would be a need to raise general awareness about the convention among older people and to focus on their issues locally, nationally and internationally at the UN to influence the final outcome.



■ Workshop on human rights discusses possible new convention on older people.



■ Age Action regional manager John O'Mahony and Care and Repair van driver and handyman Martin Cummins with the new Care and Repair van in Cork.

## Southern region work gathers pace

**Age Action's work in the southern region has been gathering pace since the New Year.**

The Cork Glór Group held its first meeting in February and has set out a plan of action for 2014. The group will meet monthly and hold meetings with councillors and MEPs in advance of the local and European elections in the coming months. They will travel to Dublin for the June AGM and then focus on the pre-Budget campaign over the summer

and autumn months.

The Care and Repair programme in Cork has received a major boost with the addition of a dedicated van in which volunteers and our new driver/handyman Martin Cummins will do odd jobs and DIY work for older people free of charge. This will allow us to help more people than ever and to take on a wider variety of jobs than we have done in the past.

We are also offering a new model of service to older people in Cork where- by our DIY volunteers will

make scheduled monthly calls to clients' homes and do whatever small jobs are required at the time. The client therefore won't have to phone us each time they have small jobs to be done because they'll know their local volunteers will be calling soon.

There are 10 Care and Repair Community Partners in the region, and they continue to do fantastic work for older people in their communities. Age Action Regional Manager John O'Mahony is currently working with several

other groups to set up the programme in more areas, and we hope to see several new programmes launched in the coming months. A regional meeting of community partners has been scheduled for April 3 in Cork at which we will discuss how Care and Repair can be developed and improved.

The Getting Started programme is going from strength to strength in the South. Large numbers of older people in Waterford and Ferrybank were trained in basic computer skills last year, and these classes continue to be very popular.

Last year saw us pilot-

ing several Transition Year tutored programmes with great success and these have continued this year in Lismore, Bandon and Waterford, with plans for Glanmire, Mayfield and Cork.

We also work with businesses in the region and were very pleased when Dell Software in Cork once again offered their keen volunteers and their premises to host classes. Thanks go to Penny Elliott (human resources) and her assistants Alvern and Anna for championing this programme in their company.

Our work in the region could not happen without

the continued support of our dedicated team of volunteers and our Glór Group members. St Luke's home continue to support our work, and Holden Plant Rentals deserve a special mention for supplying the new Care and Repair van in Cork.

**If you, or anyone you know, wish to avail of our services or enquire about our work, please call our Cork office on (021) 453-6554. To register for computer classes or to offer your venue for classes, please call (021) 453-6556 or email [gettingstartedcork@ageaction.ie](mailto:gettingstartedcork@ageaction.ie).**



■ The Dell software class in full swing.

# Ambitious expansion plan for Care & Repair

**Ambitious plans are in place to expand and develop the Care and Repair programme this year, and we are well on the way to achieving our targets.**

The programme is currently run from Age Action's three offices in Dublin, Cork and Galway, and by our 30 community partners in cities, towns and rural areas throughout the country.

We plan to increase the number of community partners to 40 by the end of the year and are working with groups around the country with a view to setting up the programme in more locations. Watch this space for news of several new launches over the coming months.

There was very positive feedback from community partners who attended the Care and Repair Exhibition in Croke Park last year. For the first time, therefore, we are holding regional community partner meetings at which our partners will have the opportunity to meet and learn what works well for other groups and give feedback about their own experiences of running the Care and Repair programme. The meetings will take place on April 3 in

Cork, April 10 in Dublin and April 30 in Galway.

Our volunteers are still the core of our service in Cork, and they continue to do fantastic work for older people. One lady who called us to replace a washer on her tap was particularly delighted when the volunteers called and repaired the tap, fixed a lamp and blocked a hole in the back door. This is just a small example of how volunteers up and down the country go out of their way to help older people in their communities with the little things that make it so much easier to get by.

Unfortunately, the recent storms have caused damage to the homes of older people throughout the country. The Care and Repair Trades Referral Service has been extremely busy providing details of reliable, professional trades people who offer quotations to replace roof tiles, repair damaged garden fences, gutters, gates, walls and other items that have been damaged by strong winds and rain.

We strongly recommend that older people should not employ trades people they do not know personally or who have not been recommended by a trusted source.

At Age Action we regular-



■ Our Trades Referral Service helps to ensure good work at reasonable prices.

ly hear of older people who have been ripped off by rogue trades people who have taken large sums of money and do substandard work or no work at all. Our Trades Referral Service is designed to solve this problem by providing details of trades people who will do good work at reasonable prices.

**To access the Care & Repair programme please call Dublin (01) 475-6989, Cork (021) 453-6554, Galway (091) 527-831, others (1890) 369-369.**

## Free concert in aid of Age Action

The public are invited to attend a free lunchtime concert by the Southampton University Concert Band in Dublin on Tuesday, April 1.

The young musicians will perform hits by John Williams, Adele, Stevie Wonder and J.S. Bach. The concert starts at 1.30pm at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, Dublin 2. A collection will be taken up afterwards in aid of Age Action.



## U3A MEETINGS



### © Dublin City U3A

Meeting last Tuesday of each month at 11am in the Chester Beatty Library. Contact John Roche: (01) 201-7490

### © Blackrock U3A

Contact Eileen Larkin: (087) 4128607, (01) 455-7653

### © Ballyroan U3A

Meet every 2nd Monday at 11am in Ballyroan Library. Contact Al Connor: (01) 490-3212

### © Ballymun U3A

Meetings every 2nd Monday, 2pm in Ballymun Library. Contact: Vera Butler (01) 842-2256

### © Lucan U3A

Meetings 2nd Monday of the month, Ballyowen Castle. Contact Ann Hargaden (email: [annhargaden@eircom.net](mailto:annhargaden@eircom.net))

### © Blessington U3A

Meetings 3rd Tuesday of each month. Contact Anne Cowie: (045) 865-159

### © Sutton/Baldoyle-Dublin

North-East. Meets 10.45-12.45, Baldoyle Library. Second Wednesday every month (excl Jun-Aug). Contact: [u3asutbal@gmail.com](mailto:u3asutbal@gmail.com). Phone: 01-832 3697 Website: [u3asuttonbaldoyledublin](http://u3asuttonbaldoyledublin)

### © Active Virginians U3A

Meet every week. Contact Ann Brodie at (049) 854-8232

### © Maynooth U3A.

Community Space, beside Manor Mills Shopping centre Meet every Friday 11am. Contact Helena Kirkpatrick: (01) 628-5128

### © An Cosan U3A Tallaght.

Meet every 2nd Thursday.

Contact Imelda Hanratty: (01) 462-8488

### © Waterford U3A

Contact Margaret Wheeler: [mwheeler2010@live.ie](mailto:mwheeler2010@live.ie)

### © Monaghan U3A

Contact Mary Beagan: (047) 75942, (086) 331-4439

### © Tramore U3A

Meetings 3rd Thursday of the month, 11am, Coastguard Station, Love Lane, Tramore. Contact Mollie Hunt, [molliehunt@eircom.net](mailto:molliehunt@eircom.net)

### © Roscommon U3A

Meet every 2nd Tuesday. Contact Avril McTeigue: [amcteigue@rosdisabilities.ie](mailto:amcteigue@rosdisabilities.ie)

Email Age Action Education Officer Margaret Fitzpatrick at [u3a@ageaction.ie](mailto:u3a@ageaction.ie) or (01) 475-6989 for information.

## First lady supports shamrock campaign

Our Made With Love St Patrick's Day shamrock badge campaign got a tremendous boost this month when it was confirmed that Ms Sabina Higgins, wife of President Michael D. Higgins, was knitting shamrocks for us.

Ms Higgins also sent a photo of herself (right) wearing one of her shamrocks.

"It was wonderful to know that our army of knitters included Ireland's first lady, and it gave us a great lift," Age Action fundraiser Daragh Matthews said.

The campaign was a great success, with shamrocks being sold across the world.

There will be a full report on the campaign in the April edition of Ageing Matters.



## Annual membership application

I wish to join Age Action and enclose  
€..... membership fee, plus €.....  
voluntary donation payable to Age Action  
Ireland Ltd. If you are already an existing Age  
Action member and wish to renew your mem-  
bership please write your membership number  
here .....

Full name:.....  
(Block capitals please)

Address: .....

Tel: .....

Email: .....

(Block capitals please)

Website: .....

(Block capitals please)

Signature: .....

Date: .....

### FEES

€20 Individual – retired/unwaged

€40 Individual – employed

€60 Voluntary Body

€200 Statutory Agency

€500 Commercial

### STANDING ORDER

To the Manager  
(Name of Bank/Building Society) .....

Bank Address: .....

Please pay annually to Age Action Ireland,  
Permanent TSB, 70 Grafton Street, Dublin 2,  
BIC: IPBSIE2D

IBAN: IE82 IPBS 9906 2587 7790 21  
the following amount € .....

until further notice. Starting on: 1st Day of  
January 20 .....

Name: .....

(Block capitals please)

BIC: .....

IBAN: .....

Signature: .....

Please return to:

Membership Development

Age Action Ireland Ltd

30/31 Lower Camden Street, Dublin 2

Email: membership@ageaction.ie

Tel: (01) 475 6989

Fax: (01) 475 6011