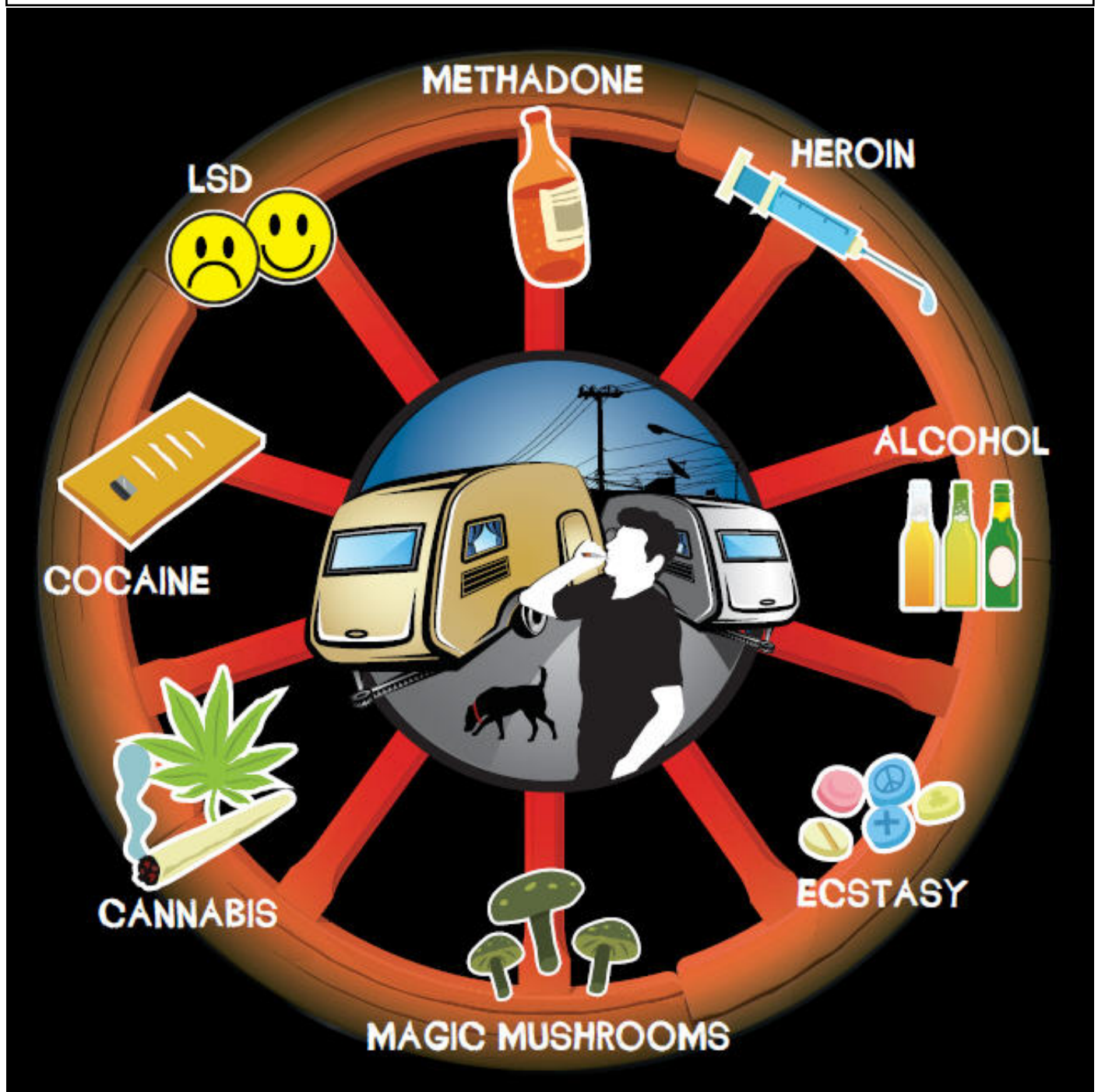


Newsletter

Summer Edition 2011



**Blanchardstown
Travellers
Development
Group**



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The New BTDG Manager



Adelita Monterio is the new worker in Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group. She is sharing the manager post with Catherine Joyce. Adelita has a degree in Psychology from Sao Paulo Estate University and has been involved in social and community work in Brazil and Ireland for the last 6 years. She has worked as a community Development Worker with rural families in the countryside of Brazil and as a Youth worker in Dublin's inner city. She completed an MSC in Equality Studies in 2009 and has been working with the travelling community since 2010. Adelita co-ordinated the LTI Project with the traveller women in south Tipperary and also the enterprise and Employment worker for Tipperary Rural Travellers Project, in Tipperary Town. She also tutored Equality Studies in the Advocacy course in Sligo IT and she tutors the Leadership Training for traveller women.

NEW COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SUPERVISOR

Hello! I am the new supervisor of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, my name is John Davis. I took up the position in December, just when the big snow hit the country. This was a very good time to start as there was a real buzz around the project and despite the icy weather conditions everyone was in good spirits. I was very aware when I started that there was a bit of a time gap involved in filling the vacant position and that there was a real need to settle into the job quickly so that the CE scheme would be fully operational and so I set about achieving this by organising lots of training and education for those on the scheme.

One of the first things that struck me when I started is that the Sponsor Group of the CE Scheme are very clear that their priority is for the participants to gain as much relevant work experience, education and skills training as possible throughout the life of the scheme. This is a very positive feature of the set up within Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group and it has been extremely helpful to me in the planning and supervision of the scheme as not all CE schemes are so favourably disposed towards the needs of the participants.

I am well settled in at this stage and I am very impressed with the interest and commitment demonstrated by all the CE participants. There is a great wealth of skills and experience amongst the 13 participants and they are very willing to put this to good use within the community. The CE participants are engaged in a wide range of work experience throughout various locations

around the Blanchardstown and Finglas area. The main purpose of the CE scheme is to engage participants, especially Travellers, in a programme of work, training and education to enable them to make the transition towards gainful employment and a secondary objective is to increase their participation and contribution to the positive profile of Travellers within the wider community.

To achieve these objectives the scheme needs the interest and involvement of more Travellers, particularly men, as well as those already employed on the scheme. There is a good deal of scope to make greater use of the scheme in ways which will be useful and relevant to Travellers. For Instance, a recent survey by Blanchardstown Area Partnership identified that 82% of male Travellers are unemployed. This is an issue that Travellers may wish to do something about by using the resources of the CE scheme to highlight and address this very important issue. So if you have an idea or an issue concerning unemployment ,I would love to hear from you. I can be contacted at 01-8207812 or just drop into the BTDG office and we can take it from there. I look forward to hearing from you.



The Allotment Scheme



John Ward C.E. Participant

The allotment scheme for Blanchardstown traveller's development group was started in 2007 at Rathbeggan allotments Co Meath. The project moved in 2010 to Powerstown in Mulhuddart closer to where the BTDG are situated .

Although the allotment wasn't fully staffed till July 2010, Tom Toner, the then project manager, along with a couple of volunteers managed to get the site cleared, beds constructed and even a shed built. In July that same year the plot had two full time staff looking after a very productive allotment with two varieties of potato, carrot, cabbage , broccoli, leeks, celery, radish and sprouts all within a few short

The shed which was completely built out of recycled timber has had guttering added to it's sloping roof and has a down pipe into a rain barrel. The compost area is a timber frame structure 2 metres x 1 metre and is starting to produce good compost which means there is never any waste as all organic material can be turned into compost. This season, the plot will be growing more or less the same as last year, we will just have a longer season as we missed the spring last year having had no full time staff., so the BTDG allotment will be even more productive this year.

We have already planted our first earliest (queens) and will be planting a small main crop of potatoes shortly, a blight resistant variety called sarpo mira .Other crops planted so far are parsnips, broad beans and onions. As for our cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli, we've sowed those in trays indoors because of the danger of late frosts and will plant them out a little later in the month along with our salad crops.

We will be having an official launch of the BTDG allotment in late June (actual date to be confirmed) and all are welcome to come on to the plot for a talk on the running and upkeep of an allotment. They may also avail of some of the dishes we will have prepared from the vegetables in season straight from the plot and if anyone fancies growing some vegetables themselves, we will be giving away free seedlings of vegetables or herbs for anyone to bring home and plant themselves.



Paul Cahill: Standing on what he is Planting

The Primary Health Care Programme

The Blanchardstown Primary Health Care Project (PHCP) has been running since 2006. Since then a lot of work has been done; Four women have been trained to become Community Health Workers and they were one of the first groups in Ireland to receive a major in Community Health Advocacy. These four workers are currently employed by Pavee Point and working on the ground in D15. At the end of June we will have another six women qualified as health workers. They have already completed their workplacements with local agencies like the Local Drugs Task Force and Fingal County Council. We hope that they can serve the local Traveller community in the Blanchardstown area.

Aswell as the training element of the project we have produced a number of resources like our "A helping Hand leaflet". This was launched as part of Fingal Social Inclusion week. The PHCP in partnership with Connolly Hospital developed this leaflet which provides some brief and practical information for those working with members of the Traveller community. The leaflet was developed as a result of an invitation by the Hospice Friendly Hospital initiative to the PHCP to give information to hospital

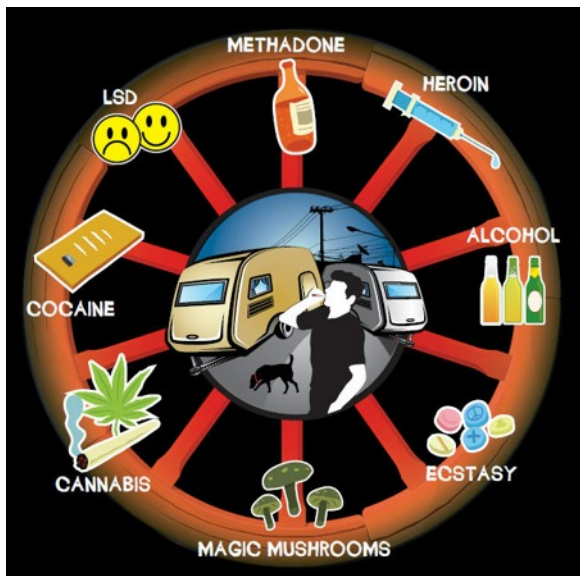
staff on Traveller culture and health beliefs .This leaflet is informative and provides practical information and supports for those working with Travellers. The leaflet was launch by the Director of Nursing, Connolly Hospital who welcomed the leaflet and the partnership of working together.

The project also produced a Traveller Drugs Awareness poster in partnership with the Local Drugs Task Force. Both agencies came together to develop a resource, to address the growing issues of drug use within the community. This resource was launched by T.D Joan Burton last year and since its launch has been very successful in referring Travellers to mainstream services and providing informational support. This poster is also being replicated in other areas of Dublin.



From left: Maggie McDonnell, Sylvia Hand, Bridge McDonagh, Christine McDonagh

DON'T RUIN OUR GEELS



From left: Maggie McDonnell, Bridget Dinnigan, Bernadette Joyce, Sylvia Hand

Programme Helps Traveller Women to Bridge Gap to Workforce

Ten women are graduating in Blanchardstown today from the first pilot programme of its kind in the country to improve job-hunting skills for members of the Traveller community. The twenty-week Bridge to work initiative is the brain-child of the Blanchardstown

Traveller Development Group which works to improve education skill-sets rights Awareness and healthcare within the local Traveller Community Funded by the Equality for women Measure through POBAL the Traveller women learned About C.V. preparation job interview skills using the internet for finding job opportunities and effective telephone skills. Uniquely the training programme also focussed on the Perceived barriers to employment by the traveller community and how these could be Overcome.

The First ten graduates of the programme are set to receive their certificate of completion from Catherine Joyce Manger of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group And Guy Thompson the Deputy president of the local D15 Chamber.

Speaking ahead of the ceremony Joyce praised the first ten graduates saying Finding A job in today's climate is very tough and there have been cases where members of the Traveller Community have faced discrimination by employers during the recruitments stage. However our Bridge to work participants are now equipped with the skills know-how and Confidence to go out into the market place and find the right job for them.

To complete the bridge to work part-time course the Traveller women had to undertake A simulated job interview at a local hotel before undertaking a written exam at the end of the programme.

Several of today graduates have already started applying for jobs. This is The first job-training programme of its kind in the country and we are hopeful that other Traveller support Groups around the country can roll-out a similar to encourage More members of the Traveller Community to search for jobs ADDED JOYCE

The programme which received funding under the equality for women Measure 2011-2013 also included a presentation by the Blanchardstown Area partnership to educate Participants around employer expectations.



From Left : Guy Thompson, Winnie Collins & Catherine

Key findings of OUR GEELS All Ireland Traveller Health Study

Picture Bridget Dinnigan and Maggie Mc Donnell who were involved in the collection of information for the census part of the study

- Traveller Population in Ireland is now estimated at 40,129.
- Life expectancy at birth for female Travellers is now 70.1, which is 11.5 years less than women in the general population.
- Traveller infant mortality is estimated at 14.1 per 1,000 live births.
- Travellers, in particular males, continue to have higher rates of mortality for all causes of death.
- There have been improvements in Traveller women's health in the uptake of cervical screening at rates higher than the general ROI population and uptake of breast screening at rates similar to the general ROI population.
- Access to health services is good, with Travellers stating that their access is at least as good as that of the rest of the population.
- Just under half of all Travellers feel discriminated against. This is experienced in all aspects of life.
- Suicide rates are nearly 7 times higher in Traveller men compared with the general male population.
- Education levels are very low with only about half of Traveller adults having completed at least primary school education. More than 90% of 14 year olds are now in school or training centres.

Community Development Programme

Big Changes are happening in the Community Development Programme to date this programme has allowed us in Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group to employ the project manager, administrator and the community Development worker. Over the years the funding has been providing BTDG with the resources and support needed to develop the community development aspect of the project work and support BTDG's staff who manages the training, employment and many other programmes.

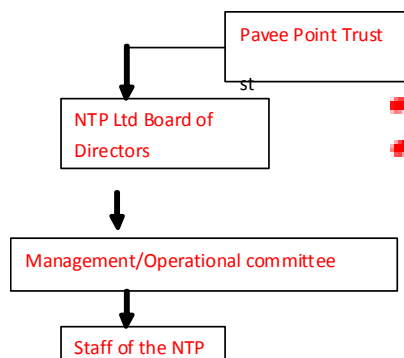
There are huge changes happening with the CDP programme and the two options available to BTDG are full transfer to the Local Area Partnership or transfer of the CDP programme to the National Traveller Partnership the following is the proposed structure for the new National Traveller Partnership to which we have agreed to be part of.

The NTP felt it was important to reiterate the context of our work as Traveller CDPs and the human rights principles we operate out of these should inform the work and operation of the NTP and they include:

- Equality
- Community development & collective action
- Traveller participation
- Anti-racism
- Partnership
- Recognition of Traveller ethnicity
- Self determination
- Local decision making etc etc

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND STAFFING

It was agreed that we would be operating from a 'Model A' Transfer of Undertaking .Although the exact organisational model has yet to be decided, the most likely structure would be;



The details, level of responsibility and decision-making powers of each level has yet to be agreed. It is envisaged that it will be agreed by the end of the summer and there is a number of actions proposed.

- There will be a meeting of representatives for all the local boards
- There will be a meeting of all CDP staff
- A collective work plan will be developed
- Due diligence will be completed by the end of the year
- It is envisaged that all staff will be transferred by the end of the year

We will keep you all posted on any developments in this process or for further clarifications you can contact BTDG office.

INTEGRATION FUND

Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group has received funding from Fingal County Council under their Integration Funding Scheme. This funding will enable Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, to bring together members of ethnic minority groups living in the Fingal area and members of the wider community, to participate in a series of workshop discussions focussed on the theme of integration. The workshops will be an exploration of the lived experience of ethnic minorities to be found within the Blanchardstown area. The emphasis will be on learning and understanding through open dialogue. The workshops will be designed to cover key topics associated with ethnic minorities and integration, such as education, community life, citizenship, family, work, etc, and as such all workshops will be run by experienced and qualified facilitators.

The programme of workshops will be designed and organised by a steering committee which will draw upon the skills and experience of the host organisation, the Fingal Ethnic Network and Failte Isteach, as well as other members of ethnic minority groups within the area. The programme of workshops will be run over a two week period in June and will culminate in a presentation of the key findings and recommendations relating to ethnic minorities and integration as identified by workshop participants. This will form the basis of a report which will act as an invaluable resource document to those who wish to advance the cause of ethnic minorities and integration in Irish society.

The aim of the project is to foster greater interaction, dialogue and understanding amongst the many and varied ethnic minorities, including Travellers, and the wider community. The project will place an emphasis on learning and understanding and to this end their will be a focus on listening and sharing. It is envisaged that such an approach will cultivate greater solidarity and hopefully will lead to identifying some common purpose amongst ethnic minority groups in relation to their integration into the wider community. The project will have a focus on the lived experience of ethnic minorities and as such it will mainly be experiential.

It is envisaged that in addition to the programme of workshops there will be ample opportunity for those present to network, share information and generally get to know each other in a relaxed and social setting. It is envisaged that the networking opportunities will play a significant role in contributing to breaking down some of the barriers that exist between and amongst ethnic minority groups and the wider community of Blanchardstown. The project has taken the very deliberate approach of trying to create occasions from which such dialogue will occur organically and informally, in the firm belief that this will contribute substantially towards creating an environment conducive to openness and understanding.

Let's talk about integration and how you can play your part

The project will largely take place at a number of key sites located around the Mulhuddart and Blanchardstown area such as the host organisations office in BASE Business Park and other community resources such as libraries and partnership offices as appropriate. As a new project our overriding concern is that it is identified as a valuable, relevant and thought provoking experience by those participating.

As outlined above the project will engage with members of ethnic communities and the local community through the process of designing, organising and participating in a programme of workshops aimed at 'fostering greater interaction, dialogue and understanding amongst ethnic minorities and the wider community'. A secondary objective is the building of solidarity amongst those engaged in supporting the integration of minority ethnic groups. If you are interested in taking part in this initiative or require further information contact John Davis at 01-8207812 or email johndavisbtdg@gmail.com



OUR TRIP TO WICKLOW

On Thursday the 2nd of June we the community employment group in BTDC set off on our hiking trip, to Enniskerry. The weather was fantastic the sun was shining and not a drop of rain in sight, there was ten of us in total nine C E workers and our new supervisor John Davis who lead the way.

It was a team building day which was great as we are a mixed group of travellers and settled people. It was a great idea to organise a team building day as C E workers we are on different schemes at the same time so we seldom get together as a full group. It was organised by Glen Sheridan a C E participant who did all the planning and chose a place called `` Djouce``, on the Wicklow way.

WE set off at 9:45 in the morning and made our way by cars, we arrived about 40 minutes later in Enniskerry, a gorgeous little post card picture town. We meet there and travelled on to Djouce to do our three hour hike but it ended up to five hours as our organisers did not bring a map, yes we got lost but it only made the day better.

The views were amazing; lovely blue clouds, fields of many different shades of green, huge tall trees, amazing waterfalls and all closed in by mountains. No loud noises no hustling and bustling, just peace and serenity. We hiked for two hours before we stopped by a lovely stream surrounded by mountains and rocks where we had our lunch and enjoyed each others company and got to know each other through having a bit of a laugh. We continued on from there for another couple of hours, just walking talking and having the crack. It was a great day out and we would recommend it to all groups to organise a team building day and really take the time to get to know your co workers

Come and taste the good life...

At the BTDC allotment/ healthy eating launch.

Powerstown allotments, Powerstown road. D15.

Boil the Billy can contest....

Allotment walk and talk...

Taste allotment veg taken straight

from the ground and prepared on site...

Free vegetable plants to take home and plant...

Event takes place on 22/6/11,

10.00am-1.00pm Powerstown allotments...



Brian Joyce boil the Billy can champion

MICHAEL COLLINS TRAVELLER ACTOR AND WRITER.

Michael Collins is member of the Irish Traveller community who has been an advocate of Traveller human rights for over 20 years. A writer and performer he has appeared at the Abbey and Olympia Theatres in Dublin and has spent the past three years performing his own plays at venues in Ireland and in the UK, receiving a five star review in the Irish Times in the 2005 Dublin Fringe festival. Michael established the *Traveller Wagon Wheel Theatre Company* to work with Travellers and other socially excluded and ethnic minority groups to



difficult to uncover by the fact that the Travellers themselves have no written records of their own story. What cannot be disputed, however, is their centuries-old struggle to preserve a distinct ethnic identity and the increasing hardships Travellers face in a newly prosperous Irish Republic determined to end their "travelling". By taking to the stage, actor and activist Michael Collins is forging a new tradition for his culture and using the power of theatre to challenge assumptions and prejudices about the Traveller community—both internally and externally. His work has received rave reviews at the Dublin Fringe Festival and the Leeds Irish Arts Festival.

It's a Cultural Thing, or is it? Offers a fast-paced sequence of stories that are a microcosm of the history of the Traveller Community over the past 40 years. It chronicles Michael's personal journey from living in a barrel-top wagon as a child on the road with his family, to their move to Dublin and the end of the traditional way of life. Along the way, he must convince his daughter to stay in school—an unconventional point of view for Travellers long resistant to assimilation

(*It's a Cultural Thing, or is it?*) is "Entertaining, enriching and provocative—you could hardly ask for more from a show. These engaging, true tales portray the discrimination and hardship routinely experienced by the Travelling community. Collins is an effective presence and tells his stories with humor, passion and a total absence of self-pity." ☆☆☆☆☆ Dublin Fringe Festival, Irish Times, 9/21/05

"Michael Collins once again demonstrates his substantial writing and acting abilities in this one-man performance. For pure power and an insight into conflict resolution in a unique culture, *Mobile* is a Must See!" Richard O'Neill, Writer and Broadcaster, Manchester, England.

Mobile is a courageous one-man play that explores the contentious issue of feuding between Traveller families from the inside out. Based on material generated from workshops, the play seeks to shed light on a subject that continues to be a source of puzzlement and dismay to settled people. *Mobile* skillfully examines the emotional and physical trauma of the conflicts faced by the main character, Peter, when he is required to fight his cousin and best friend, Paul, for the sake of family pride.

Same Difference When a young Traveller woman is forced to flee her home because of Domestic violence, she flees to England and a new love in the arms of an African man. Their union exposes the similarities and the difference in their strong cultural backgrounds. Can Miley and Tiga unite in the face of tragedy.

Written By Michael Collins **Tiga Played by** Tiny James **Miley Played by** Michael Collins **Directed by** Mick Rafferty



Michael Collins, with traditional artifacts from his Traveller Culture, in the play *It's a Cultural Thing, or is it?*

It's never too Late to Learn

What brought me into Community Work?

I have been living in Kildare 20 years and I've always been involved in the community in one way or another. It started out in neighbourhood watch and the residences association. My children are now aged between 7 and 16 years and for years I worked at home to educate them. I always dreamed about going to college.

What changed in my life?

There came a point in my life where I decided to go back to work. I attended FAS back to work training scheme and was surprised how well I took to re-education and training. One of my trainers advised me that I should consider furthering my education by going to college. I decided there and then to make a change, to take a chance and to go after my dream.

How I manage college?

The day I got the call that I had a place, at first I couldn't believe, my stomach was weak, I was excited and terrified. I am proud of getting through because I was a mother and now a student.

I knew I had to keep going with my voluntary community work so that I could get the experience. So I volunteered to

help out with formation of a local youth cafe, I am involved with scouting Ireland and continue to help in the community where possible.

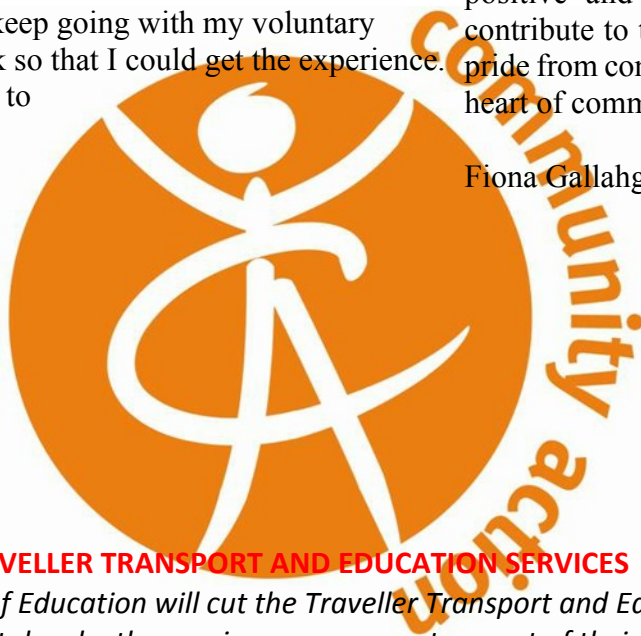
While the other students have youth on their side, I have experience and this stands to me in my interactions with people in the community.

My community placement work in Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group

This placement is no chore; it's something that I love. I have been through a lot in my life, which as a community placement worker, has enabled me to empathise with the struggles that people have now. As a community placement worker my philosophy is always to focus on the positive rather than the negative.

The people of the Travelling community have been much maligned, but I know they have the best heart and soul. I think that it is much more important to look at the skills that people have and build on the positive and allow them to use these skills to contribute to the community. People get a sense of pride from contributing to a community; this is at the heart of community work for me.

Fiona Gallagher



CUTS TO THE TRAVELLER TRANSPORT AND EDUCATION SERVICES

The Department of Education will cut the Traveller Transport and Education Services by the end of the year. This decision was taken by the previous government as part of their cost cutting programme. These cuts will have a serious impact on Travellers as these services have proved to be a vital support to Travellers. The withdrawal of the Traveller Visiting Teacher service along with the cut to the Traveller specific transport service will be a huge setback. Many Traveller families will now face a huge barrier to attending education and it is important that these experiences are identified as the Department of education has expressed the view that the service may be kept in place in exceptional circumstances, so it is important that this information is gathered to ensure that these circumstances are defined and that the impact of these cuts are reduced as much as possible.

Birthdays – Anniversaries -- Certificates

Congratulations to:

Ann Marie McDonnell on the birth of her baby girl Kelly born on Friday 29th April



Audrey Travers on the birth of her baby boy Sean.

- John Ward on successfully completing his courses in Forklift Truck Driving and Security Guarding.
- Pauline Collins on getting a great result in her Office Reception Course.
- Glen Sheridan on completing his course and receiving top marks in Security Guarding.
- Vera White on successfully completing her course in Practical Home Care Skills.
- Louis Gomes on successfully completing his Train the Trainer course and Renewable Energy Course FETAC level 5
- Lillian Caffrey for hanging in there and completing a Business Skills course
- Jemma Duffy for Completing her first year in Legal studies
- Christine Collins on the birth of her daughter Catherine and congratulations to
- Catherine Joyce on becoming a Grandmother.

Acknowledgements

The B.T.D.G want to acknowledge the work that Louis Gomes, Community Employment Participant put into compiling this edition of the B.T.D.G news letter and everyone who contributed the articles and photos.

