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**Le Chéile celebrates its' 5<sup>th</sup> birthday**

Le Chéile reached its 5 year milestone in March and in celebration I'm delighted to launch our new promotional and training DVD which gives interviews with Mentors and Mentees and with the staff and board of management of Le Chéile. My thanks to everyone who got involved in making this DVD such a huge success.

On another very positive note, I am pleased to announce that we have successfully completed the pilot phase of the Strengthening Families Initiative and have been granted funding to continue to provide this service on a long term basis, despite further funding cuts for Le Chéile.

Given this and the other many developments in service provision within Le Chéile, we decided to make a small but important change to our logo. Our logo now includes the image of a family on the right hand side to represent the work that we do with families through parent mentoring and strengthening families.

Also, I just wanted to say thanks to the Mentors and staff who took part in our two Outcomes Consultation Days in Portlaoise. I am pleased to say that we are nearing completion of this piece of work and your Mentor Co-ordinator will be talking to you soon about the new tools we have developed for measuring the impact of Mentoring on our Mentees. While we all know the significant impact Mentoring makes for young people and families, this is an important development because it gives us a measured way of assessing the impact for funders and for future evaluation of the service.

I wish you all a very pleasant and hopefully sunny Summer. Here's hoping the volcanic ash doesn't disrupt anyone's plans!

*Alison O'Reilly*

CEO Le Chéile



# Linda Kirwisa – Limerick Probation Officer



Le Chéilles arrival in Limerick was perfect timing for YPP because it coincided with the Smart (Parent) Support Group to provide support to families and address their isolation and re- integration into the wider community.

I have found those who benefit most from mentoring, although not exclusively, are mostly single parent families with very little involvement or interaction from relations or outside positive role models, and two parent families who have limited involvement and lack of interest in their children’s behaviour, especially from the father, in setting boundaries or enforcing the existing ones. Families living in remote areas with no social and community services also benefit from the intervention of Le Chéile.



Very often when a young person is referred to the Probation Service their parents have feelings of shame, stigma, role overload and emotions of anger and disappointment brought about by their child’s challenging behaviour and perceived failure within their communities. This invariably culminates in a strained relationship between the parent and child and therefore can inadvertently negatively impact on an intervention. Because helping the child involves helping the parent, mentoring becomes one of the crucial services that aims to address this and subsequently reduce the risk of re-offending as it addresses the needs of both the child and the child’s parent. Le Chéile’s informal, fun based and non threatening approach, respect and positive regard creates an environment that is conducive to growth and change.

There has been a high response and positive outcome since the arrival of Le Chéile in Limerick. This is demonstrated by the high attendance and low drop out rates of young offenders. During regular reviews there is evidence of a formed healthy relationship between the mentee and the mentor and the desired wish to continue to engage with the programme.

The careful selection by the Le Chéile co-ordinators of volunteers from a wide and different spectrum that range from professionals to housewives and students, as well as individuals from different trades, allows for the availability of mentors and positive matching of the different clientele that require mentoring services.

While mentors focus on supportive services to the mentees there is a latent support towards the Probation officer’s role and demands as well. The weekly meetings between the mentee and the mentor inadvertently extend the monitoring and supportive services that are required of the Probation officer thereby maximising service provision and inadvertently reducing the risk of re-offending.

Exposure of mentees to the different public and private amenities and settings within the local areas i.e. local hotels, bowling, leisure and other activity centres impact positively on both child and parent when they discover and realise that they too form part of the wider community and they too are entitled to the services therein. As such this reinforces the issue of responsibility and concern toward public resources. It is also worthwhile to take cognisance of the fact that mentoring has a proactive effect on the siblings of those who are already within the criminal justice system.

The relationship and expertise from Siobhan, the Le Chéile co-ordinator; her flexibility and capacity to work as part of a team is commendable and has allowed the smooth operation and implementation of the mentoring programme in Limerick and related catchments areas. *Linda*



## Mentoring

## A Students Experience with Le Chéile - by: Joanne & Aisling

As part of the Bachelor of Social Work course in UCC, second year students had the opportunity to experience first hand, how social workers interact in different agencies. Through our course we have learned not to see a person in isolation, as it is important to see how structures in society impact on a person's life. The main characteristics of social work are promoting social change and social justice. For our practical experience we expressed an interest in working with young people, and as a result we were fortunate to be placed in Le Chéile.

Initially, we were apprehensive about what the week would entail. However, Fidelma Connolly, the co-ordinator of Le-Chéile Cork ensured we were welcomed by introducing us to the staff in the Westview project. This included probation officers, youth and community workers and mentors, who gave us insight as to how everyone works together for the benefit of young people. The centre is designed especially to meet the needs of young people, as they can be supported and listened to in a relaxed setting.

Our experience at Le Chéile was invaluable, and although Fidelma was extremely busy she involved us in all aspects of her work. It was obvious that mentors are highly valued and respected and viewed as equal partners in the Le Chéile Mentoring Project. It was also evident that Fidelma and mentors alike believe that with extra support, young people can reach their full potential. This is achieved through listening, being non-judgemental and supporting young people while they are on probation.

Overall, our time at Le Chéile proved to be a very positive experience, we have gained practical knowledge that we hope to utilise in the future. This includes building a relationship based on mutual respect and involving young people in all decisions that effect their lives. The experience inspired us to become actively involved with Le Chéile, as we have just completed training and hope to become mentors in the future.

*Joanne & Aisling*

## Mentoring

### Lights, Camera, Action!

Le Chéile had a nerve-racking but exciting few days of filming for our new DVD recently. The camera crew travelled to Clonmel, Waterford and Dublin to interview Mentors, Mentees, Staff and to film Supervisions in action.

There were definitely a few stars in the making, I think I heard murmurs of people planning a possible career with Fair City!

This promotional and training DVD will be used to promote Le Cheile to judges, probation officers and other interested parties and to show the work of Mentoring to all new Mentors as part of the induction training.



An official launch of the DVD will be taking place in Waterford on the 3rd June from 3.30 – 4.30 June. All are welcome! Please see further details relating to this event later on in this newsletter. *Alison*

### Become the new face of Le Chéile

How do you fancy becoming the new face of Le Cheile? While our very own Seán Kinahan has been our lovely poster boy for the past few years, we think it's time to use, you, our Mentors to front our Become a Mentor advertising campaign. These posters and leaflets are used to promote the service and recruit new Mentors around the country.

Winners will be invited to a photo shoot in Dublin and will be put up in the lovely Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire, Dublin with dinner and drinks and their photo will be used in future posters and advertising.

If you think you might be interested send your name and contact details to [Alison@lecheile.ie](mailto:Alison@lecheile.ie) and 3 names will be chosen at random.



**Closing date for entry is the end of June 2010.**

## The Strengthening Families Programme

Le Chéile and the South East Regional Drug Task Force ran a joint Information Morning on the Strengthening Families Programme in Waterford in March.

47 professionals from various backgrounds such as Probation, HSE, Vol & Comm Sector & Drug Task Force funded projects attended the morning and received information.

Professionals travelled from Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford, Tipperary and Waterford to listen and to get a perspective on how best to plan, deliver and evaluate the SFP programme in their area.

Le Chéile is hoping to be involved in running programmes in these areas in the future in conjunction with YPP.

Following the presentations the attendees broke into their county groups to discuss forming a group of interested persons or a committee that would assess the need and plan for a programme in their area. A number of groups already put a date in their diary for March and April 2010 to meet.

Le Chéile are hopeful that a two day Group Leader Training will run in Waterford area in the summer of 2010 in order to train professionals in the programme.

Chris Purnell from the South East Regional Drug Task Force commented that *"in partnership with Le Chéile, we're delighted to facilitate the information event, and would very much hope that one or more of these evidence based, family skills programmes will be established in the South East. It was also gratifying to see the attendance of representatives from so many agencies and sectors involved in the care and support of young people and families, particularly those involved in substance misuse."*

Everyone in Le Chéile would like to send their heartfelt best wishes and continued good luck to Carol Maricle (Le Chéile SFP Co-Ordinator) who was recently married in a beautiful wedding in Cork.



## A focus on: Cork (SFP)

Le Chéile funded a Cork Southside programme in Togher that started in October 2010 and completed on the 9<sup>th</sup> February 2010 and was co-ordinated by Carol Maricle of Le Chéile. This programme was supported by the Cork SFP Steering Committee that meet a number of times a year to plan and promote best practice in SFP in the Cork area.

The Togher programme was facilitated by a wide group of professionals including staff from Health Promotion, Ogra Chorcaí, Le Chéile, Togher Link Up, Garda Síochána, Social Work, UCC students of Social Work.

Vourneen O'Mahony, centre manager of the Togher Family Centre (venue of the programme) congratulated the participants on completion and noted that she would be delighted to welcome the programme back again.

9 families completed the programme in total, with 27 individual family members involved.

The graduation night took place in February 2010 and participants were given a family framed certificate and received a family portrait picture that was taken a three weeks earlier. *Carol*

*A parent attending the SFP in Cork read the following poem on the graduation night.*

## A Family is this...

*by Makenzee Ryan*

To be a part of a family  
like mine is so divine  
where love is shown hurt  
is shared  
our love for each other is  
never impaired

we talk  
we laugh  
we cry

but we are a family  
and we do it all together  
for as a family  
we do it all as one

you hurt one  
you hurt all  
and as a family unit  
we will all stand tall

for we are family  
a family full of strength  
a family full of love  
a family no one can touch  
that's why I love my  
family so much.



## Cork (Mentoring)

The demand for Mentors continues to increase in the Cork Region and having recently recruited and trained a further 16 volunteers we are confident that we will continue to provide the YPP Team with volunteers who are committed to supporting and effecting change in the lives of Young People.

The new group of volunteers come from all walks of life and range in age from early 20's to mid 50's, they share a common belief in the concept of giving freely of their time to help others and chose Le Chéile as they would specifically like to work with young people involved in the Criminal Justice System.

As part of the on-going training of volunteers the Cork Office was delighted to welcome Garda Michael Collins J.L.O. to present a Training Event on the 18th March, 2010. Michael gave an excellent presentation on the genesis of the Juvenile Diversion Programme starting with a discussion of the 1908 Children Act and the subsequent Legislative Acts influencing the care and rights of children under Irish law. He outlined the changes in relation to how children are treated in the Court system following the Children Act 2001 and explained the process of how Gardai refer children to the Juvenile Diversion Programme. Michael acknowledged community based sanctions as the future of the Irish Youth Justice Service and quoted Michelle Shannon, National Direct of the Irish Youth Justice Service, as follows:

"To create a safer society by working in partnership to reduce youth offending through appropriate interventions and linkages to services"

In February, following a request from UCC, two 2nd year Social Work Students spent 4 days on placement with Cork Office. This follows a pilot project by UCC to place 2nd year BSW students in agencies for a week's practice exposure to help them identify key aspects of learning for themselves as future practitioners.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank the YPP Team and all in Westview Project for the time they gave to the students; particularly Rosemary Fox for explaining the work of the YPP Team and Mary Walsh for giving them the experience of shadowing her on Court Duty to Mallow District Court. *Fidelma*

## Dublin North

It has been all systems go in Dublin North since the last edition of the newsletter. The New year brought about great news for our Co-ordinator, Ingrid who gave birth to a beautiful and healthy baby girl. Everyone sends their congratulations and best wishes to Ingrid and her family and is looking forward to her return. Dublin North was also joined by Lyndsey McCabe, who is currently covering as Co-ordinator for Ingrid.

Dublin North has been busy with recruitment and training of new Mentors so there will be many new faces over the coming months.

On a personal note, I'd like to thank all Mentors for their continued hard work and commitment they have shown to the Dublin North project. The great success of the project is all down to you! I would also like to sincerely thank all the Mentors, Probation Officers and my colleagues in Le Chéile for making me feel so welcome since joining the project, your friendliness and support has made my transition to Le Chéile a very pleasant one!

*Lyndsey*

## Dublin South

Dublin South's mentors and mentees have been busy doing a variety of activities, including bowling, go-karting, and visiting some of Dublin's many museums and attractions in addition to helping study for exams and driving tests! The region has been full of activity with many new matches, and most mentors are now matched with a young person.

Dublin South and Dublin North have finished a recruitment drive and have been training intensely. As training finishes, the new Mentors will have had a taste of mentoring and be looking forward to be matched from this summer on!

The Dublin South Co-ordinator, Marie Vanasova, had a gorgeous baby boy in January and will return from maternity leave in August. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all the Mentors for all their hard work and commitment to the project and for making me feel so welcome! *Mary*

## Waterford

In the sunny South East we now have 3 strong pools of Mentors to serve Waterford City & County, Clonmel & surrounding area & now the New Ross area. With New Ross recruitment kick starting in January & the final training session in March we now have 37 Volunteer Mentors, I can hardly believe it. I really need to take the opportunity to thank some of the volunteers who co-facilitated modules with me, namely Kathy R, Lindsay, Matthew, Beverly & Cathy H. The new volunteers were a pleasure to train & I am delighted to have them on board with us.

The other major gossip was the shooting of the Le Chéile DVD. All very exciting, lights camera & action stuff. Starring was Sinead & Jessica, an ex mentee and the very first mentee we matched in Waterford back in 2007. They both told of their experiences of the Mentoring & it was great to see the Jessica back & doing so well. Also featuring were Hazel & Philly, a parent mentoring match, again both gave feedback on how the parent mentoring was working out. Matthew also had a co-starring role, talking about his experience volunteering with Le Chéile.

We have an interesting development in Waterford with a pilot running where we are taking a small number of referrals from the Juvenile Liaison Officers (JLO). We are aiming to offer the service to the younger age bracket, the 12-15 year olds. We are hoping this will be successful & assist these younger mentee's in steering away from the offending influences in their lives at an earlier stage.

We also have a few things to look forward to. We will hopefully be visiting the Aislinn treatment Centre in Ballyraggett, a few of our mentee's have accessed this service while being mentored & we feel it would be a great opportunity for the Mentors supporting them to have an insight into what goes on there.

On the lighter side of life, we have great plans for our summer outing, taking to the seas from New Ross and a taking in a nice dinner. Who knows where we will end up.....exotic destinations such Graiguenamanagh (I have triple checked the spelling) or Waterford beckon ☺

*Heather*

## Le Chéile Official DVD Launch



The Official Launch of the Le Chéile DVD will take place on:  
3rd June from 3.30 – 4.30



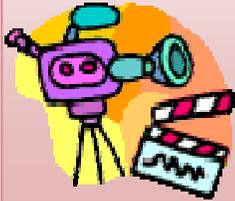
In:

**Waterford & South Tipperary Community Youth Service, Farronshoneen, Upper Grange, Waterford**

Please RSVP Heather Sinnott by email or phone

Email: [heather@lecheile.ie](mailto:heather@lecheile.ie)

Phone: 086 387 1214



## After some Lucky Charms?

Some Le Chéile staff recently made a journey to the new National Leprechaun Museum and found it a very interesting and enjoyable experience, and one that Mentors may like to consider as a destination whilst mentoring and for others simply as a fun place to visit.

Newly opened and located at the back door of the Jervis Centre (at the corner of Jervis St and Abbey St - where the old FAS office used to be) this is a museum of Folklore and Mythology with a focus on celebrating the rich heritage of stories and storytelling in Ireland. Visitors will walk through a very exciting experience of Leprechauns, Giants and Fairies and be told magical and mystical stories.

This really is for people of all ages and a great day out overall. The museum is open 7 days a week and all opening times and prices are on their website:

<http://www.leprechaunmuseum.ie/>

They can be contacted at 018733899 or email: [boxoffice@leprechaunmuseum.ie](mailto:boxoffice@leprechaunmuseum.ie).

**Have you discovered an interesting venue or activity whilst Mentoring in your region?**

**Why not write a review along with your mentee for our next newsletter?**

**For more details please speak to your co-ordinator.**



## Dublin City Volunteer Week - 1 - 7 June 2010

Dublin City Volunteer Week is quickly approaching!

Dublin City Volunteer Week is an annual week of events and festivities that celebrate, recognise and showcase the diverse and exciting ways in which people in Dublin engage with their communities through voluntary action. It will take place from 1 - 7 June 2010.

Visit the Dublin City Volunteer Week website to find out about the calendar of events and festivities for organisations and volunteers together with a list of Dublin businesses that are offering special treats and discounts to volunteers between the 1st and the 7th June 2010.

For the latest update on events and discounts, check the website:

[www.DublinVolunteerWeek.com](http://www.DublinVolunteerWeek.com)



## The Midlands

2010 has been a busy year in Le Chéile's Midland Region. In February, we moved into new offices in the Parish Centre Portlaoise. It's easy to find, has ample parking and offers a good central point for all regions to come together for National meetings/training etc.

February was also cause for celebrations, as it marked the one year anniversary of the first group of Mentors trained in the Midlands region. All of these mentors have been matched with mentees and their one year of service was honoured by presenting them with a Le Chéile Travel Mug and a Thank You certificate. We are very grateful for their ongoing hard work and commitment to our project. Group 2 trainees have also been busy. All but one are currently matched and working on active cases.

In April, Mentors attended a training session on Drugs. Mark Crossland gave us a frank and honest account of his own experience with drugs and of his time spent as a drugs worker. He also discussed the growing popularity of Head Shop drugs amongst young people and how dangerous these drugs can be.

We are currently putting together the training for the third recruitment in the region. These mentors should start mentoring from late July/early August.

Looking to the future in the Midlands, all mentors are limbering up for the top sporting event of 2010 – no, not the World Cup – but the Le Chéile Summer Soccer Blitz! I'm sure this soccer tournament will display the skill, tactics and determination of all our mentors – and maybe expose a few knobbly knees as well! *Helen*



*The Parish Centre in Portlaoise  
New Home of Le Chéile in the Midlands*



If you're going through a stressful time at work or at home and need some extra support, remember there is a **free, confidential** counselling service available to all Mentors.

One to one counselling sessions can be arranged following your first call

**PHONE CARECALL FREE**

**1800-409-673**

**24 hrs a day    7 days a week**