



Traveller youths visit the magnificent city of Krakow



Education Away Programme participants and Youth Team Workers in snowy Krakow. Front left-to-right, Stephen Maughan, Tom McDonagh, Martin McDonagh, William McDonagh, Paul Power, John Maloney, Johnathon Berry, Jim Jim Maughan, Larry Connors, Tom Berry, Michael McDonagh, Jimmy Maughan, John Paul Collins, Patrick Stokes

On the 16th of February the Youth Team and ten boys boarded a plane to Krakow Poland. The aim of this trip was to raise awareness of discrimination and racism

victims especially the Roma of the Holocaust faced and the similarities of racism and discrimination that Travellers in Ireland face today. The Youth Service had chosen ten boys, the majority of these from a disadvantaged background and are at risk of anti-social behaviour. We as youth workers believe these boys would greatly benefit from the interaction with the group and the trip itself.

On our first day we explored Krakow and visited historical sights such as the Church of St.

Mary, the best known landmark in the city. We visited the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, the oldest church in Krakow and the Grunwald monument.

Tuesday began with a tour of Wawel Hill, Castle and Cathedral. Wawel Castle was originally the seat of political power in Poland. The Cathedral was built to house relics of St. Stanislaw, who is highly honoured by the Polish people. After we visited the old Jewish town to get a feel for the history of the Jewish people before our visit to Auschwitz the following day.

The next morning we arrived at

Auschwitz. Firstly we visited Auschwitz One which originally was a Polish Army Barracks. It was taken over during World War II and originally housed the administration for the Prisoners brought to Auschwitz. The very first prisoners were Polish political prisoners and intellectuals. The next prisoners brought were Soviet prisoners of war and then went on to hold Jewish and Roma Prisoners. In Auschwitz One we saw evidence of cruelty all around us from standing cells, a hanging gallows, the only gas chamber still standing and the



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Above: *The 10 boys on the trip to Krakow: Stephen Maughan, Jim Jim Maughan, Paul Power, Tom Perry, John Maloney, Johnathon Berry, Larry Connors, Tom McDonagh, Martin McDonagh, Michael McDonagh.*
 Below left: *Statue of St. Faustina; Below right: At the 'Wall of Death'*



people faced. In the museum we saw original photographs, documents and belongings of the Holocaust victims such as 70 tonnes of real human hair, thousands upon thousands of shaving brushes, combs, shoes of men, women and children, children's dolls, suitcases and prosthetic limbs taken from prisoners to be given to wounded SS men and Nazi soldiers.

Wall of Death, appropriately named as thousands of captives were lined up against it and shot dead. The old buildings have been transformed into a museum to remember each person that walked through those big steel gates and electrical fences dreaming of promises of a better life made to them under the name the "re-housing programme" and found their worst nightmare.

Still standing and quite present in the camp were Watchtowers where the SS men observed the prisoners and picked out their next victims. Entering Auschwitz One we immediately noticed the tall electrical and barbed wire fencing surrounding the camp and the black steel entry gates above which read "Arbeit Macht Frei"... "Work Brings Freedom".

It was a highly emotional trip and an eerie place. The silence and feeling of death that surrounds you from the minute you enter the buildings and the displays we saw really hit home about the severe and needless cruelty and inhumanity these

We went onto Auschwitz Two and Birkenau. Here we saw the living conditions of the prisoners, beds made of straw, showers with no running water and dirt all around. Then into the sanitary buildings, with a 100 holes in the ground to cater for 6,000 prisoners twice a day for

Front cover: *Michael McDonagh, Stephen Maughan, Tom McDonagh*





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“The aim of this trip was to raise awareness of discrimination and racism the victims especially the Roma of the Holocaust faced”

evidence of the extermination these people faced.

On Thursday we took the tram to visit St. Faustina’s Basilica and the Church of the Divine Heart of Mercy. We visited the relic of St. Faustina, behind which the body of St. Faustina is buried.

Friday was a busy last day as we walked around Krakow visiting the local markets, shopping centres, the last few presents being bought and historic sights being visited.

Overall the trip was a huge success. The young people said it was a fantastic place; Auschwitz was very sad and they learned a great deal about racism and discrimination from their visit to the old Jewish town, Auschwitz, and Birkenau; and the strong presence still seen today of the homeless Gypsies in Krakow.

William McDonagh, Youth Department Team Leader & Sarah Byrne, Youth Worker



just 10 seconds. We saw many ruins of gas chambers and crematoriums destroyed just days before the liberation of the camp.

This was a highly emotional trip. The visit to Auschwitz was the main objective of the Educational Away Programme to Poland. After the Youth Team and young people discussed the visit, all were very stunned and very emotional after seeing the persecution, discrimination and

Below: At the main gates to Auschwitz; “Arbeit Macht Frei”...“Work Brings Freedom”



A few words from our Director

It’s been an exciting few months in Exchange House. The highlight being the opening of a new FÁS training programme which was launched on 2nd February to coincide with the AONTAS Adult Learners Festival. It is great to see the new participants enjoying this interesting and challenging programme. They certainly add a great buzz to the place.

The Youth Department have been very busy preparing for the trip to Poland which is part of their Education Away Programme. The trip finally took place in February after months of team building programmes including a project on Roma Gypsies in Poland. The participants explored how discrimination, when state sanctioned, can lead to mass murder. They also explored the impact of current racism towards the Roma Gypsies and comparisons with discrimination towards Travellers in Ireland.

Exchange House has a very good working relationship with the Dochas Centre/ Mountjoy Prison. The Parent Plus Programme being run by the Family Support team has been very successful and meaningful to the participants dealing with the loneliness of motherhood away from their children. The team had to modify the Parent Plus Programme to suit the prison environment. The team have also been busy with their ‘Out of Homelessness’ programme covering issues such as literacy, health and addiction. The main focus of the work is support given to families and individuals seeking support from Exchange House, therefore, I am particularly proud of the article written on our outreach work as it is the bedrock of the success of the Family Support team.

Overall it has been a very successful few months since the last publication of our newsletter and I look forward to meeting the challenges till the next publication



Heydi Foster
Director

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Certification Night



Jimmy Maughan and John Paul Collins receive their FETAC certificates from the Lord Mayor of the City of Dublin, Eibhlin Byrne; pictured with Mary McDermott from the CDVEC and Cathleen McDonagh, the Education Department Team Leader

Exchange House was delighted to be invited to the Certification Night in the Holy Family Parish Centre, Prussia Street, on February 12th, 2009 where Jimmy Maughan, Patrick Stokes and John Paul Collins received their FETAC Computer Certificates. Their proud tutor Lorna Grimes was there to help them to celebrate their success.



Jimmy Maughan and John Paul Collins with their proud tutor Lorna Grimes

The evening was a great celebration of achievement for all those receiving certificates from City of Dublin Lord Mayor Eibhlin Byrne, and we would like to congratulate them all.

The Holy Family Parish Centre hosted a great event with entertainment from the Forever Young Chorus, setting the celebratory tone of the night. Congratulations again to Jimmy, Patrick and John Paul.

Education Department

New FÁS Local Training Initiative Programme



Caoimhe Kerins
LTI Co-ordinator

A New FÁS Training Programme was launched in Exchange House on 2nd February, to coincide with the AONTAS Adult Learner's Festival. The Training Programme (a Local Training Initiative) currently caters for fifteen adult Travellers. It is open to both men and women and is a part time course that is run in the mornings from Monday to Friday.

The Training Programme provides Adult Basic Education and training to the people participating on it. We are currently providing training in all levels of literacy, numeracy, computer skills, cookery, clothes making and fashion, art, and health courses. The majority of these courses are certified, so that when participants are finished on the Training Programme, they will have certificates to

show for their time spent. The Exchange House Training Programme gives Travellers a chance to re enter education and training and to update their skills.

I started working as the new LTI Co-ordinator in Exchange House in January and am very happy with how things are going so far. The group of people on the Training Programme are great and I'm really enjoying it.

Eileen Hanley, one of the participants feels that it is "good, very good. It's very interesting. I'm learning a lot of new things on it. I think they are a great thing for Traveller women, especially Traveller women who haven't had a lot of education. They can help their grandchildren with their homework, well I will anyway."



The FÁS Local Training Initiative group: [from left to right] Geraldine Collins, Mary Maloney (tutor), Ann Connors, Helen Kiely, Eileen Hanley, Nan Grogan, Lisa Collins, Deborah McDonagh, Martin Green, James McDonagh, William Somers and Caoimhe Kerins (LTI Co-ordinator)





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Some participants in Exchange House's FÁS Community Employment and FÁS Local Training Initiative programmes

1. William Somers; 2. Nan Grogan & Geraldine Collins; 3. Tony Collins; 4. Eileen Hanley; 5. Elizabeth McDonagh; 6. Winnie McDonagh; 7. Nellie Collins; 8. Bernadette Collins; 9. Christina Maguire, Margaret Maughan, Nan Grogan, Ann Connors, & Emily Berry; 10. Martin Green; 11. Nan Grogan & Ann Connors; 12. Maggie Collins; 13. Deborah McDonagh, Mary Maloney (tutor) & Lisa Collins; 14. Eileen Hanley

Art & Textiles Project



Paula Cullen
CE Scheme Supervisor

An Art and Textiles Project is underway in Exchange House on Friday mornings. Learners from the FÁS Local Training Initiative programme and the FÁS Community Employment group are working together, under the expert guidance of their Tutor, Mary Maloney, to make garments or soft furnishings of their choice. In addition to the creative and relaxing benefits of the Project, the learners are working towards a FETAC

certificate in Art & Design.

The learners begin at the research and design stage and work all the way through to the finished product, using Information Technology (IT), literacy, measuring, planning, cutting and sewing skills. Each learner has their own idea of what they would like to produce at the end of the Project and it's a very mixed group! The finished items will include cushions,

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Family Support

Outreach: A Knock at the Door

The term outreach doesn't mean much to me. But when I turn it around and say reaching out it means much more to me. It means helping, giving a hand, sharing ideas, feeling emotions, having a laugh, getting hurt and surrounding it all like a wrapping paper: support. Support that is dressed in all sorts of colours and washed in white.

It is sometimes difficult to leave the comfort zone; the square bright office and go out to visit someone, knock at the door and wait to be invited in. There's an anticipation of mood and the settling down of my inner being.

I have always been welcome, and I give thanks for that.

I never know what is about to happen. Everyday is a new day and every contact is a different contact. I like to take a few seconds before I talk but sometimes I rush into it as if opening my way through the bushes.

People's lives are so private that sometimes reaching out can feel like an intrusion. 'Knock Knock' here comes a helping intruder from Exchange House. Visiting a home is completely different



Patricia Sagasta
Family Support Worker

to seeing somebody in the office. A home is so intimate that I wonder how clients feel when having professionals in. As a family support worker I can't thank enough the families who have welcomed me into their homes. Who have given me the chance to know them and have put up with me, my mistakes, lack of knowledge and intrusion.

On the other hand I hope I have been able to support them somewhere somehow. Have a laugh, a listening ear, share a tear, a telephone call and many, many telephone calls and applications.

Reaching out is very rewarding. It builds relationships, it makes my work real. It doesn't happen in a screen. It starts with a knock at the door (one of my clients knows when I am coming by the sound and rhythm of my knock). It develops in the home, council, hospital, school, clinic, refuge, welfare office, emergency accommodation, car, post office, court, 'spar', coffee...and it ends in the heart. And I have to say...it is full of passion.

I like doing outreach and I love reaching out. I like going to homes and I love visiting people. I like families and I love Traveller families. I like listening to stories and I love being part of them.



Out of Homelessness



Caroline O'Reilly
Addiction Worker

The family support team at Exchange House have formulated a group

programme for Travellers who have addiction related problems and are homeless. The group is run as part of a project called *Out of Homelessness*. It is an open group that is run on a weekly basis and while addiction is the central theme of the group the sessions will cover the following topics: literacy & numeracy, health, relaxation, holistic therapies, arts & crafts, budgeting, cooking, household management and at the end of each month we plan to have a fun outing for the group.

Another important aspect of the group is that our clients will have a space to go each week to take their minds off every day life while learning new skills and creating a new social network. We also aim for it to be a fun experience where the clients will have an input into how the group is run and the content of the group. Members of the group have been assessed for levels of literacy and tutors will be available to provide assistance on an individual basis with members of the group.





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Parents Plus Early Years Programme

The Parents Plus Early Years Programme is currently facilitated at Mountjoy women's prison by Penelope More and Aoife O'Brien, both Social Workers at Exchange House. It is targeted for parents of children aged one to six and is suitable both for children within the normal range of development as well as children with special needs and other development problems.

This is a skills based programme focused on practical and positive video based parenting. It aims to build on parents' strengths and help them not only to solve childhood problems but also to have more enjoyable and satisfying relationships with their



Penelope Moore
Social Worker

children.

Although the prison environment is often destructive to family relationships, it can also provide a window of opportunity for change. National and international research indicates parents in prison are often motivated to use this period to reflect on their relationships with their child and to improve their capacity to parent. (Healy et al, 2000)

The benefits of the programme are that it helps the parents and children accentuate the positive. It offers the opportunity to learn from other people's experiences. Group work offers group support and illustrates that they are not alone in how they are feeling being separated from their

children. The programme will benefit the children by encouraging a meaningful relationship with their parents during the period of imprisonment.

The target group is Traveller women as we will only be able to offer them additional support if necessary. Separation from children is a huge issue for all the women on the programme.

An additional module will be incorporated in relation to this as well as how to make the most of access visits, making it a positive experience for them and their children. This will assist parents to respond positively to their children and also to prepare them to cope with parenting on release.

A New Staff Member



Caoimhe Kerins [centre] with Paula Cullen and Cathleen McDonagh of the Education Department

Caoimhe Kerins is the new Co-ordinator of the FÁS Local Training Initiative which started in Exchange House in February 2009. Caoimhe organises, and along with CDVEC tutors, delivers training in many of the modules, in this Adult Basic Education programme, in such curriculum topics as computers, cookery and health.

Caoimhe worked previously with St. Margaret's Travellers Community Association doing the same role.

Caoimhe, joins the staff of Exchange House after recently returning from Sri Lanka, where she was engaged in development educational work, for over a year, with the local community there.

Caoimhe has experience in working with marginalised ethnic groups, having worked as a voluntary advocate and activist with asylum seekers and refugees in Ireland.

News Travels

A day in the life of a ... Youth Worker

09:40

I arrive at work. Just enough time for a cuppa before the Youth Service Meeting at 10. Youth Service Meeting, questions fly back and forth. How are the programmes going? How is behaviour? Are your evaluation forms done? Can I have a cheque? when's the next School's Initiative Meeting?

10:30

Time to update the evaluation forms. I ring the schools to check on the young people's behaviours and attendance.

11:00

Heydi, our director, pops in "Hi guys, What's up? We can hear you laughing down the corridor..." Heydi pops in to follow up on the progress of the planned trip to Poland. It's always 'all go'.

11:15

Quick check in with Simon, the administrator, "Any Post?" "Any A4 pads?"

11:30

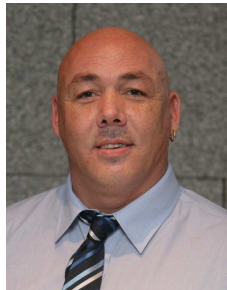
Ah, a chance for a quick cuppa. I pop into the Education Department for a quick chat with Cathleen and Paula and to give the Youth Service nominees for The Educational Achievement Award.

11:45

Right. I need to get everything in order for this evening's activities. This evening Jimmy and I will do an art project with Francoise from The World Famine Organisation to be displayed on the quays for World Famine Day to raise awareness of Poverty around the world. The girls are due to do life-size silhouettes of a person and fill them with messages, hopes and wishes to beat poverty around the world. Jimmy and I run around grabbing sheets and fabric, down to Simon to borrow markers.



Sarah Byrne,
Youth worker;
Jimmy Maughan,
Youth Worker



13:30

"Right Jimmy, I'll be over at 3.30." "Catch ya then Sarah"

15:30

I meet Jimmy at the community hall in St. Margaret's Park in Ballymun. The girls swarm around us. "Sarah what time will Francoise be here?" "Jimmy, Jimmy what's in the bag?" The materials are laid out just before Francoise arrives.

16:00

The double size sheets are spread out on the floor as the girls draw around each other to make their silhouettes. Francoise explains that the silhouettes will be brought around the world along with their messages to other young people. The girls begin to rummage through the fabric to design clothes for the silhouettes. Jimmy, Francoise and I take a group each to help. "Francoise are you from another country?" the girls ask. "Why yes I am" Francoise tells the story of growing up in France and moving to Ireland. The pieces really start to come together as the girls constantly come up with ideas. "Sarah, can I use glitter for eye shadow?" "Look Jimmy mine has blonde hair" there is a great air of excitement in the hall.

17:10

Time to stop for a drink and a toilet break. One or two parents drift in just to have a nose at the girl's project.

17:30

Straight back to it. The girls are giggling and consulting each other. "Will we give her runners or high heels?" "My sister Melissa has these lovely silver shoes" "Yeah cool Donna draw them"

18:30

Eventually they are finished. Wow, they look great. One has blonde hair, one has a blue skirt, one has a hairband. I see the girls faces bursting with pride as

Francoise, Jimmy and I congratulate them on their work.

18:40

Francoise gives out hearts so the girls can write their messages, wishes and hopes in them which will be replied to from young people all over the world. "I hope everybody has enough to eat" "I wish that everybody has friends and that nobody is lonely" "I wish everybody has a home"

19:00

Francoise takes the silhouettes and explains to the girls they will be displayed at World Famine Day next Friday before being brought around the world.

19:10

The girls wave goodbye to Francoise and thank her for her help. Jimmy and I listen as the girls gasp with excitement. "That was deadly." "Can't wait until next week" "Sarah, can we do more art?"

19:35

On the way home, tired, hungry but completely satisfied. That was a great day, the kids had a ball and it couldn't have worked out any better. Can't wait until tomorrow to tell William.

"Jimmy and I listen as the girls gasp with excitement. "That was deadly. Can't wait until next week"





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Traveller Youth Service



Young people working on posters for 'World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty' / 'International Day for the Eradication of Poverty', at St. Margaret's Park, Ballymun:
[clockwise from top] Donna Maughan & Mary Ellen Stokes; Mary Teresa Stokes & Teresa Lawrence; Elizabeth Maughan & Mellissa Maughan; Donna Maughan & Mary Ellen Stokes; Elizabeth Maughan & Mellissa Maughan



Exchange House National Education Achievement Award

The annual Exchange House National Educational Achievement Award is due to take place in November this year. As before, the award will be open to nominees from the 32 counties of Ireland, who are members of the Traveller community and have completed formal exams in 2009. The exam achievements recognised include Junior and Leaving Certificates, O-Levels and A-Levels. We hope to improve on the great success of last year's event and look forward to celebrating the educational achievements of the Traveller community in 2009.

If you require any further information about eligibility criteria please contact:
Paula or Cathleen
tel: 01 872 1094
fax: 01 872 1118
email: info@exchangehouse.ie

Happy
Easter!

News Travels

KIDS KORNER

with Emma Parsons

[new]

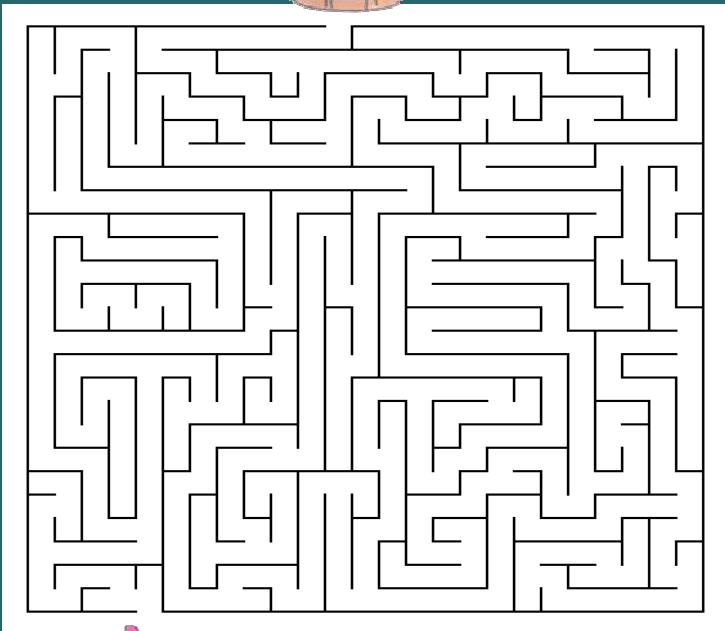
Jokes...

Why did the hen cross the road??
To prove she wasn't a chicken

Why do mice need oiling??
Because they squeak

What's the Easter Bunny's favourite sport??
Basket-Ball of course

What does a footballer and a magician have in common??
They both do hat - tricks



Can you help
the chicken find
her basket??



Random Facts you never knew

It's impossible to sneeze with
your eyes open

The average Human eats 8
spiders in their lifetime when
they are asleep

The first non-human to win an
Oscar was Mickey Mouse.

It's impossible to lick your own
elbow



April 2009

Exchange House Strategic Development

The beginning of December ushered in a buzz so infectious one could not help but catch it. Exchange House staff was preparing to go to Carlow to a staff conference. Preparations about who was going to facilitate the various presentations and how it was going to be done and putting the final touches to the various team building exercises was all part of the positive energy in the building.



Penelope More
Social Worker

We arrived in Carlow at 10am. After settling in, our meeting kicked off. Exchange House's Strategic Plan was reviewed followed by presentations from all departments. After lunch we continued with presentations and we finished with team building activities facilitated by each department. This was a fun, exciting and relaxing way of ending the day's session. The next morning's meeting focused on the long term planning

and the future of the organisation. The two days we spent together as an organisation served as a great team building exercise and staff from all departments got to know each other well. By the end of the two days there was a higher level of optimism in facing and dealing with the challenges that lie ahead. Staff had renewed commitment to work together to ensure quality service provision and a determination to move Exchange House to a higher level.



Staff at the Strategic Development Day: 1. Ronnie O'Donnell, Patricia Sagasta, Heydi Foster, Simon Finnegan & Jules McDonagh; 2. Jimmy Maughan, Penelope More, Julie McDonagh, John Paul Collins & Joanne Ryan; 3. Caroline O'Reilly, Aoife O'Brien, William McDonagh, Jimmy Maughan & Claire Feeney; 4. Paula Cullen, Cathleen McDonagh, Emma Parsons & Annemarie Stokes



News Travels

Exchange House Conference Facilities for Community & Voluntary organisations

Exchange House is happy to announce that we can now offer good quality, good value meeting and training facilities to community and voluntary organisations. Exchange House is situated in the heart of Dublin City, on the Red Luas line, and close to other transport hubs, making it ideal for organisations, nationwide, to avail of our facilities.

There are two meeting rooms, the *Boardroom* & the *Youth Hall*, and the *Computer Room* for IT training. The *Boardroom* can seat up to 30 people, the *Youth Hall* up to 80 and the *Computer Room* up to 12. The *Boardroom* and *Computer Room* also boasts full multi-media and internet.

Our rates are specifically designed for community and voluntary organisations

For more information or reservations call or email:

Simon Finnegan on 01 872 1094 or sfinnegan@exchangehouse.ie



Feedback As this our third edition of *News Travels*, we would love to know what our readers think. If you could take the time to fill out this form and send it to us at Exchange House, 61 Great Strand Street, Dublin 1, or fax to 01 872 1118, we would really appreciate it. Alternatively, you could e-mail us your opinions at info@exchangehouse.ie.

News Travels Feedback Form

Does *News Travels* interest you? (please tick)

Yes

No

Please explain your reasons for your answer:

Is there anything you would like to see in *News Travels* that is not already included?

Does *News Travels* give you a clear idea of the services provided by Exchange House?

Yes

No

Your name:

Your organisation's name:

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