



NIRWN NEWS

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NIRWN LEAD WORLD RURAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

NIRWN with funding support from the Womens' Centres' Regional Partnership (WCRP) and Armagh City & District Council, brought World Rural Women's Day celebrations to Armagh this year. Over 120 women travelled from all over the Province to attend the event which was held in the Armagh City Hotel. Siobhan Doherty, Director of NIRWN said, "World Rural Womens Day is a day when we boldly celebrate being rural women and where recognition is given to the contribution they make to their communities..."

Mary Doyle, Deputy Mayor of Armagh City & District Council, welcomed everyone to the event expressing her delight at it taking place in Armagh this year. William Taylor from 'Fairness for Farmers in Europe' gave an overview of the campaign for fair farm-gate prices to those present, highlighting the difficulties farmers face when selling to the large conglomerates.

This year the theme of the event was the development of projects and business ideas which will bring benefit to rural communities, utilising potential funds from the NI Rural Development Programme. Thelma Thompson of the Social Economy Network highlighted the role they can play in the development of ideas into business and offered their support to all rural women who wish to pursue this as an option for their business idea.

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l-r Joan McCool, Chairperson of NIRWN; Mary Doyle, Deputy Mayor of Armagh City & District Council; William Taylor Fairness for Farmers in Europe; Siobhan Doherty, Director of NIRWN; Elaine Cullen, SOAR Programme Manager; Maureen Morgan, Ndi Moyo and Thelma Thompson, Social Economy Network

Elaine Cullen, Rural Programme Manager of the SOAR Local Action Group, who are responsible for the administration of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme within the rural areas of Craigavon, Armagh and Newry, spoke about projects they have already funded that are being run and managed by women.

Maureen Morgan, a Trustee of the Charity Ndi Moyo, spoke of her work in the Salima district of Malawi. Maureen explained "Ndi Moyo is a charity set up to help the people in this rural area by building a palliative care centre. It has educated many young people and has provided

medication and help that is not readily accessible." Maureen brought into sharp focus the inequalities people in poverty face and pointed out that wherever you are in the world, you can very often need help that is just beyond your reach.

The Armagh Rhymers provided a fitting end to the day taking participants on a journey from Halloween to the Spring of the year with their individual and visually stimulating performance of song, music and storytelling.

DROMBOUGHIL WINS PRESTIGIOUS CALOR AWARD

Dromboughil in Co Derry, has been named as the 'Older People' category winner in the 2010 Calor Village of the Year® Awards, beating off stiff competition from 13 other villages across Northern Ireland to win the coveted title and a cash prize of £1,000. The competition, which is run in conjunction with the Rural Development Council celebrates vibrant, enterprising and caring rural communities and the vital role they play in local life.

Congratulating the category winner, Michael Kossack, Chief Executive of Calor Gas, said: "Dromboughil is a small community but an exceedingly caring one, marking it as the outstanding village of the year in the Older People category. The judges were impressed with Dromboughil's investment in its senior citizens, offering them a wide range of facilities and activities that has allowed them to play an active role in community life.

"The judges were also impressed with the support services available to older residents, which included prescription collection services, shopping and a meals-on-wheels service, as well as the availability of practical advice on finance and utilities." Martin Mc Donald, Chief Executive, Rural Development Council said this year's competition had been a tremendous success. "There could be only one overall winner, but we congratulate everyone for their hard work and dedication which, once again, demonstrates how vibrant a role our many villages play in Northern Ireland community life."



Dromboughil representatives Kathleen Canning, Valerie Buchanan, Siobhan Campbell and Moira O'Kane are pictured receiving the '2010 Calor Village of the Year® 'Older People' Award from Martin Mc Donald, Chief Executive of the Rural Development Council (left); Michael Kossack, Chief Executive of Calor (centre); and BBC Northern Ireland's Donna Traynor (right)

For more information visit www.calorvillageoftheyear.org/northern-ireland



Get On Board >>

Would you like to make a difference in public life and be involved in decision making at local and regional level? 'Get on Board' is an

innovative course which prepares people to serve on public bodies and is being offered in the New Year to rural women with the support of NIRWN.

Women and in particular rural women are currently under-represented in public life. NIRWN's aim is to 'amplify and articulate the voices of rural women at a local, regional and strategic level' and one way in which we are currently working towards this is by supporting women to avail of the 'Get on Board' training course which will be held in the South West College, Cookstown.

Where: South West College, Cookstown Campus

When: Thursday mornings beginning 27th January 2011 and running for 8 weeks

No prior experience or qualifications are necessary. Costs will be supported by NIRWN

To book a place or find out more:

Contact: Louise on **028 86769191** or email louise@nirwn.org.uk

LAUNCH OF THE WOMEN'S CENTRES CHILDCARE MAPPING AND RESEARCH REPORT



The WCRP 'Childcare Mapping & Research Report 2010' was launched by Ms Anna Lo (MLA) on 15 October 2010 at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. The report communicates the beneficial impact of locally based childcare services for children, parents and local communities. This is particularly relevant given the threat to these vital services from the recent round of government cuts.

Key findings from the report include:

- Last year the women's centres provided over 9,800 hours of childcare and nearly 5,000 childcare places per week. They provide services to around 1,500 individual children.
- All the centres have children on waiting lists; at the time of our research 162 children were waiting for a childcare place.



l-r Maeve Walls, Director, DSD Voluntary & Community Unit; Anna Lo MLA, and Siobhan Doherty, WCRP Chair at the launch event in Stormont

Speaking at the event Joy Poots, South Belfast Sure Start, and a key advocate on childcare policy, stressed the crucial importance of childcare: "One of the key barriers for community development in disadvantaged areas is accessible, affordable, local childcare." One woman spoke of her personal experience of locally based childcare and her personal struggles from a young age: "At that time I was in an abusive relationship and was struggling to cope. My son was diagnosed as hyper active and I was told he would have to attend a special need's school. The childcare worker at the centre helped me to realise my son was a very capable child and they worked with me on my parenting skills. I gradually built my confidence and decided to put my son in mainstream education. Without the support of the women's centre staff my son and I wouldn't be where we are today. I've worked hard; have gained a Masters degree and today I'm employed as a manager. My son is now a teenager doing 4 A-Levels and planning to go to University. The childcare and support from the local women's centre was invaluable. I'm an advocate for local childcare services in women's centres so that others can receive a lifeline like me."

The report found that an estimated £1.3 million is required on a yearly basis to cover the costs of supported childcare in thirteen women's centres, with the majority of funding for women's centres childcare services ending in early 2011. The WCRP ask that Women's Centres use the report to lobby MLAs and Governance Departments. Clearly Northern Ireland needs a Childcare Strategy co-ordinated by one lead Government Department, with Government Departments working more closely together, and adequate planning and resourcing to support the implementation of a Childcare Strategy in future budgets. In the meantime, WCRP is advocating that the Women's Centre Childcare Fund is continued.

TRAINING UPDATE

Groups who recently completed Personal Development training through NIRWN include:

- Castledawson Ladies Group
- Granaghan Women's Group and
- Toome 'Time for Me' Group



LAUNCH OF THE RURAL ENABLER PROGRAMME

Rural Community Network invites you to the launch of the Rural Enabler Programme in County Derry/Londonderry.

The Rural Enabler Programme will provide support and assistance to enable community groups and residents to challenge conflict related issues in their area.



Date: 23 November 2010 at 10:30am

Location: Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre, Main Street, Limavady, BT49 0EP (old Town Hall)

Keynote speaker: Laura Giacani - Foyle Multicultural Forum - 'Hands of my Friend' campaign

Inishowen Women's Information Network and Mid Ulster Women's Network Cross Border Project

This event will give you an opportunity to meet with the local Rural Enabler and find out more about the possibilities this programme can bring to your area through their support and development grants.

Lunch will be available from 12.30pm

To confirm your place, please contact Anita Kelly on 077 3844 9693 or email anita@ruralcommunitynetwork.org

PLACEMENT STUDENT

Ashley McCuskey has recently joined the NIRWN team from the GAP (Graduate Acceleration Programme). Ashley is a law graduate and will be with us for 6 months working on various projects within NIRWN's key areas of activity. Hopefully Ashley will get to meet some of our groups at upcoming events.



Countryside

Agri-Rural
Partnership

SKILLS TRAINING

Farm Family Options is a programme of support designed to encourage farmers and farm family members to identify and consider opportunities for both their own future and that of the farm business.

The Skills Training element of the programme will support the development of both on farm and off farm work-related skills, through the provision of financial assistance and guidance on training and development opportunities.

They can help you train for new skills and qualifications by providing:

- funding of up to £1000 per farm family member for training
- a training allowance of up to £250

For further information please contact the Farm Family Options Team on 0845 026 7534, email options@countrysiderural.co.uk or visit www.countrysiderural.co.uk

Applications will be accepted and assessed on an ongoing basis up to 5pm, Friday 14th January 2011. Courses must be completed by 30th June 2011.

NORTHERN IRELAND RURAL WOMEN'S NETWORK

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