

The Informed

The newsletter for the residents of
Irish Centre Housing

Issue 8

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ICH: an Investor in People



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We are delighted to announce that in May 2005 ICH was accredited with the Investor in People (IIP) award. This is an achievement which we are very proud of and is a measure of good practice in supporting and developing our employees.

Have you seen the logo before? Being an Investor in People is something to be proud of. Companies who have achieved this normally use every opportunity to publicise the fact. You might see it on the side of commercial vans, on the walls outside of offices and on company headed paper. ICH is no exception and our stationery has been changed to incorporate the logo, and certificates and plaques will be in place at all schemes as they become available.

What is Investors in People?

IIP is a business improvement tool designed to advance an organisation's performance through its people. IIP provides a flexible framework, which any organisation can adapt for its own requirements. It mirrors the business planning cycle (plan, do, review) making it clear for organisations to follow and implement in their own planning cycle.

- Plan – developing strategies to improve the performance of the organisation
- Do – taking action to improve the performance of the organisation
- Review – evaluating the impact on the performance of the organisation

IIP provides a framework and standard against which organisations are measured on how its business planning supports the developmental needs of its employees.

Celebrating

At ICH we couldn't let this occasion pass without a celebration! All of our staff were invited to a night out at The Comedy Club. A great time was had by all. To add a truly Irish dimension to the evening, there was even a surprise guest appearance from Ardal O'Hanlon testing out his gags in readiness for this year's Edinburgh Festival; an all round winning combination!



Kim Jeffs, Townsend House Manager
(centre) and residents at their
Sports Day.

YOGA – Good for the Mind and Body

There are many different forms of yoga, however the key objectives that all forms take is to improve your flexibility, increase your core body strength and to aid relaxation ... all leading to a generally improved sense of well being. The benefits of maintaining regular yoga practice are generally acknowledged and accepted: a strong, open and agile body and a clear, calm and focussed mind. The focus of yoga is on yourself and not on others ... when practicing yoga you should leave your ego in a different place and yoga should never be competitive.

Classes essentially involve relaxation and breathing exercises followed by a series of usually fairly slow “postures” that involve extending your body to improve flexibility and then holding the postures to increase your core strength. To ensure your body is balanced, postures will complement each other, ensuring that front & back, and left & right sides are exercised at the same level. A class will usually finish with a completely still relaxation exercise that can often leave you feeling very calm, peaceful but energised.

Many of us might be apprehensive about trying yoga, as the sometimes stereotypical image of the experienced yoga practitioner in some weirdly impossible posture can be quite intimidating, as we think to ourselves, “I can’t do that!” However, most people starting yoga are very stiff and inflexible and very slowly but steadily at your own pace it is possible to encourage your body (but NEVER force it) to move towards greater flexibility.

Classes have been running at both St Louise and Bethany House. A resident, Tsehay, from St Louise says, “It’s good for relaxing your mind and body.” Another, Shandell, adds, “I’m trying to stop smoking and yoga is really helping me to do that. It makes you understand your body more. We spend time just focusing on our breathing, for example feeling the breath against the rib cage. It’s good to become more aware.”

Yoga classes are temporarily on hold for the summer, but will continue at St Louise and Bethany House in a few weeks. Look out for posters advertising when they are happening and join in!



Yoga at St Louise

Conway House resident “makes history”

Conway House resident Ruairi Kells has won a court battle after Camden Town Hall and the police tried to ban him from Camden Town, accusing him of harassing people for cash. A request to Highbury Magistrates Court to impose an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) on him was thrown out on 1st August – the first time this has happened since the law was made in 1999.

They wanted to ban him from entering the boroughs of Westminster, Camden and Islington.

Clare Hazelwood, Ruairi’s Substance Misuse Worker told the court of his efforts, “Ruairi has not spent a night away from the hostel since he joined.”

Clare said Ruairi also suffered from a thyroid condition that could be confused with a drug addiction. She added, “He often has bulging

eyes, or starts swearing or shaking and can be very unsteady on his feet. The condition affects his mood and he can seem tired and apathetic.”

The defence counsel said instances cited by the police of rough sleeping, drug-taking and anti-social behaviour since Ruairi took up residence at Conway House resorted to the “lowest form of hearsay.”

District Judge Henderson said, ”It is clear to me that up until Mr Kells moved into Parker Street (before he became resident at Conway House) there was ample evidence of anti-social behaviour. But now I do not consider it just to make the order.”

Outside court, Ruairi was jubilant. He said, “I am so pleased I can keep getting on with my life. I am a history maker.”

Ruairi is currently part of working group at ICH to revise the organisation’s drugs policy.

(Edited from an article in Camden New Journal 4 Aug 2005)

Bringing Culture to Conway House

Having realised the closeness of Kilburn's Tricycle Theatre to Conway House and the standard of plays put on there, I thought it was only proper that I try and get the Conway House residents *cultured up!* The first two plays we have seen were pretty culturally sensitive to Irish people being 'Bloody Sunday: Scenes from the Saville Inquiry' and 'The Quare Fellow' a play by Brendan Behan and produced by Kathy Burke no less!

Not only Irish people are enjoying the Tricycle’s delights, as Mosab El-Haj who is Sudanese and Salim Naji who is Iraqi have also both said that they enjoyed it very much ... however they found some of the different dialect hard to understand. This I can totally relate to as being from just outside Belfast even I found some of the dialect hard to understand ... and some would say the same about my dialect too. Irishmen James O'Hagan and Brendan 'Big Bopper' Weymes each thought both plays were great and can't wait till the next trip up there. I will be continuing to take Conway House and An Caislean residents up to the Tricycle as and



when productions are being put on that the residents want to see. So until the next time ...

Derek McIlvenna
(Project Worker, Conway House)

Unleash Your Potential

Do you wish to see a bright future for yourself, or climb the ladder of success?

We might be able to help. ICH in partnership with Faith Regen UK offers:

- Capacity Building for Setting up New Business / Social Enterprise
- Confidence Building for Business or a New Career
- IT Training
- Employability Skills
- Basic Skills
- English Language ESOL
- Advice and Guidance
- Personal Development
- Planned Fun Events
- Gift Vouchers for Regular Students

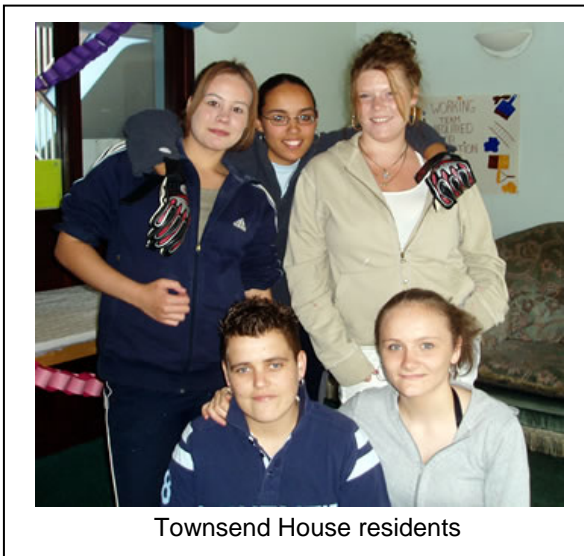
Come for an **Open Day** from 10am to 2pm at:
Bethany House on 19th August
Conway House on 26th August
St Louise on 1st September

Refreshments provided!

Townsend House Football Fun Day

Townsend House in Borehamwood had a Football Fun Day on Saturday 30th July. Staff and residents from Conway House, Head Office and close neighbours participated.

The event was organised by residents at Townsend House in only 3 weeks and was a huge success. The day centred on a Resident v Staff football match followed by a Residents v Staff pool competition.



Townsend House residents

The football started at midday and the staff quickly took the lead. Although very competitive, the match was played in a friendly manner. The staff team piled on the pressure and scored a few goals and at the half way mark the staff were in the lead by 11 goals to 5. The residents responded and fought back well but the staff team were just too much for them, and the final score was 21 goals to 11. The residents were gracious in defeat but vowed to beat the staff in the pool competition!

We all had a well deserved break for lunch, and a beautiful buffet and BBQ was served up to the starving footballers and supporters. The day brightened up and even though we had been promised rain ... the sun couldn't help but shine on us all.

The pool table was moved to the back garden and we played the best of 6 matches. This time things were a lot closer and the last match would decide the outcome of the pool tournament. After a titanic struggle the staff won the pool tournament by 4 games to 2. Although the residents will have to wait till next year for their

revenge, it should be noted that reports coming from the staff were that they could barely move for the next 3 days. Residents can take some cold comfort that they are in fact fitter and faster.

The day was a fantastic success but the best thing (apart from beating the residents) to come out of it was the friendships that were made between everyone. Conway House residents have been invited to Townsend House again very soon and they have promised to cook this time.

Our thanks go to all the people taking part in the



Conway House staff and residents

day (supporters and players) and a special mention to Brookside Boys club for the use of the pitch ... and to the resident reps for their organisation.

The Teams that took part were:

Residents: Katie, Miriam, Roxanne, Natasha, Charmaine, Nicole, Alan and Brendan.

Staff: Kim, Des, Ahmed, Antonia, Derek, Susan, Chloe and Mark (Resident playing for staff team!)

Kim Jeffs (Manager, Townsend House)

Resident Conference and ICH AGM

15th September there is a Resident Conference and the ICH Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Times and locations are still to be confirmed, however, all residents are invited to attend the Resident Conference during the day.

By prior arrangement, resident representatives are also invited to attend the AGM.

If you want to be more involved in the management of your scheme, talk to your Keyworker or Housing Manager.