

# The Informer

The newsletter for the residents of  
Irish Centre Housing

Issue 12

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## No Butts ... Quit Smoking!

We are almost at the start of another year and many of us take this time to reflect on how things have been during the year and make *New Year Resolutions* to improve our lives. One common resolution is to stop smoking. If you are a smoker and would like to stop then help is at hand.

Every week at Conway House, Camden Primary Care Trust runs a "Stop Smoking" workshop. These are currently attended by residents, and one member of staff, who receive free nicotine patches, gum and peer support to help them on their way to a smoke free future.

The program was instigated by John Gleeson, a Trainee Project Worker at Conway House, and is run by Becky Hirst of the Camden PCT.

Becky says, "I am very excited to be offering support to residents and staff at Conway House. Stopping smoking can be very hard to do, but by getting support from me, smokers chances of quitting are *four* times more likely than trying to quit on their own!"

The program usually runs in the games room for an hour or so and has recently moved to a new slot on a Wednesday afternoon, rather than the old time on Thursday morning (John hopes that making it a little later in the day might encourage greater participation.)

### Do YOU want to stop smoking?

With the smoking ban already in place in Ireland and being implemented in England in July, now is the perfect time to stop smoking.

**This life-changing opportunity is now available to other ICH residents not living at Conway House.**

If you would like to *quit the fags* in 2007, ask your keyworker, warden or housing manager to arrange this with John at Conway House.

Good luck to everyone who is stopping smoking.

P.S. You can see John and Becky on page 5 of the December 16 edition of The Irish Post.



Fay Douglas from St Louise received "Best Newcomer" in this year's Employee of the Year awards.

Full story on page 2.

# ICH Employee of the Year 2006

We are delighted to announce that the ICH Employee of the Year 2006 is Kim Jeffs. Kim is Manager of Townsend House and Hepburn Court and it is a testament to her good work that she is the first manager to receive an Employee of the Year Award.

One resident commented, "Kim has always been understanding, I can talk to her about anything and feel comfortable. She always does the best to help who she can."

The presentations were made at the staff Christmas party on 8<sup>th</sup> December, and also included 3 additional awards.

The categories and the awards went to the following staff:

Employee of the Year:

**Kim Jeffs (Townsend House)**

Newcomer of the Year:

**Fay Douglas (St Louise)**

Non-Housing or Support Award:

**Olive Were (St Louise)**

Housing & Support Award:

**Kate Higgins (Bethany House)**

## ICH Drug Policy

ICH's Drug Policy has been revised by staff and residents. The policy refers to all drugs: illegal, controlled drugs, prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs. It is recommended that any resident who either uses drugs or knows of a fellow resident that uses drugs, should understand the full policy. The 22 page document is available for all of our residents and you can request a copy from your keyworker, warden or housing manager, who will also review this with you if you have difficulties.

To be sure that you stay on the right side of our policy (and the law) *The Informed* has produced a summary of the policy.

### **Purpose and Scope of the Policy**

ICH recognises that a proportion of people will use drugs - controlled and other drugs. ICH neither condones nor approves of the possession, use or supply of illicit drugs.

ICH believes that it must provide support and accommodation services to those who use drugs and those who do not. ICH seeks to work with service users to promote their wellbeing and reduce harm.

ICH seeks to offer services that are accessible to drug users and will seek to avoid excluding drug-using individuals where possible.

While providing an accessible and inclusive service to people who use drugs ICH recognises that it has duties and obligations including:

- An obligation to work within the law
- A duty to provide a safe environment for all staff and volunteers
- A duty to provide a safe environment for all residents
- A duty to work with and to be sensitive to the needs of the local community

ICH recognises that the intention to work with drug users may create tensions. The policy is intended to minimise these tensions and ensure safe and legal provision for all parties concerned.

### **Key Points**

We do not condone the possession or use of illegal controlled drugs on the premises. Where we know or suspect such possession or use is taking place, we will always take some action. This may result in you being asked to leave, especially where we are concerned that other service users are at risk.

We will not tolerate the supply of controlled drugs on the premises. If we know or suspect that you are involved in supplying drugs, we must prevent this happening and we may have to involve the Police.

Our staff are committing an offence if they store methadone or other controlled drugs on behalf of clients and are therefore not permitted to look after them. Where rooms are shared, residents should have a secure lockable cabinet or safe in which they can safely store prescribed controlled drugs.

A small number of sharps bins will be available at each scheme on demand from staff. The unsafe disposal of items such as needles, syringes, and items used in the preparation or administration of illegally held controlled drugs will be treated as a serious breach of this policy.

***We do not want you to be barred from the premises or excluded from our services, so please make sure that you understand the drug policy and follow rules for your own safety and the safety of others.***

# New Home New Start

It is always satisfying to hear a story with a happy ending, and so *The Informed* was thrilled to receive two from former residents of Bethany House relating to their positive experiences and outcomes. Here are some highlights...

## Lucy

When she arrived at Bethany House in April 2004 she was unhappy and had relationship problems. She struggled to get along with the other residents and got drunk a lot. Her keyworker, Pauline, persuaded her to do something positive and she chose a drama course ... which much to her surprise she really enjoyed and her confidence grew.

She passed her course, she went on to overcome illness and passed a further college course in dance "with flying colours!" She had periods of hanging around with negative people and times she felt depressed. She went for counselling and also decided to go to church which worked well for her for a while and she got baptised at Easter but she has since stopped attending. "I stopped as I wanted to find my own answers, not those of people who lived 1000's of years ago. I am so happy that I did because now I have my own morals and beliefs that I can relate to and enjoy sticking to."

Now she has her *dream job* with the Cardboard Citizens professional theatre company and says that, "It just proves to me that you can have anything you want in life, just be positive and focus on yourself."

On resettlement, she imagined that she would one day have a place with clean white walls and wooden floors, "You would never guess what I got ... exactly what I wished for."

"I made a lot of mistakes and the process was slow, but now I can make the kind of life for myself that I never thought was possible."

## Conchitta

She had been in prison for shoplifting and had been on drugs for years. It was a situation she had been in many times before. During her last spell in prison she realised that it was time to address her drug dependency. A worker from the prison Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) found her a place at Bethany House in October 2005.

"The first person I met there was my keyworker, Carol, who made me feel really welcome and I felt at home immediately."

The 24 hour support available was very reassuring to her and she enjoyed the activities such as yoga, budgeting advice and using a PC ... and was able to make friends.

During her first two months she did not receive any benefit payments, and the £20 she had was soon spent. When she asked for help, Mary (the manager) offered her food and drink and made sure that during this difficult time she had what she needed. "That is something I will never forget. If it wasn't for Mary helping me I could have got arrested for shoplifting again. I had nobody else to help me."

Conchitta completed a programme of rehabilitation in the community and found the support she received invaluable as she knew that she wasn't alone. "I am at college now and Mary and Simone have worked really hard to find me a home to move on to. I am really looking forward to my next step in life. Six years ago I never thought I would have a little home of my own, and now it's like a dream come true. I hope that when I finish my studies I am able to put something good back into the community, just like I received when I was given the help and support that I needed."

## Christmas Quiz - 1

Q1. The 12 days of Christmas begin when? a. Dec.1st, b. Dec.13th, c. Dec.25<sup>th</sup>

Q2. True or False: Joseph was the one that told Mary she was going to have a baby.

Q3. In the Christmas song, who did I (the narrator) see kissing Santa Claus under the mistletoe last night?

Q4. In the song "The Twelve Days Of Christmas", what did my true love send me on the eleventh day?

Q5. How many gifts would you receive if you received all of the gifts in the song "The Twelve Days of Christmas?"

# Donations for Our Residents

**The Linbury Trust** has donated £2500 for the benefit of St Louise residents as a one-off grant for Christmas cheer! In consultation with the residents it was decided to spend the money on a video camera to record their activities, put additional funds into the budget for Christmas lunch and each resident will receive a gift. The Linbury Trust is a charitable trust; it was established in 1973 by Lord Sainsbury of Preston Candover KG (John Sainsbury), and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury, CBE, the former ballerina Anya Linden. The name 'Linbury' is thus derived from the names Linden and Sainsbury.

**The Hampstead Wells and Campden Trust** have donated 113 hampers for our residents at Conway House, An Caislean and Hackett House. The hampers containing Christmas treats such as chocolates, Christmas puddings and tinned goodies are provided by the charity that has been in existence in its current form since 1971. The earliest origins of the Hampstead Wells Charity dates back to 1698 and the Campden Charity dates back to the Civil War. The two were amalgamated in 1880.

Irish Centre Housing would like to thank all donors and friends for their kindness and assistance at Christmas and throughout the year.

# Christmas for Our Residents

Irish Centre Housing always tries to do something special for residents in supported accommodation, and this year is no exception.

Bethany House staff will cook Christmas lunch for residents on Christmas Day.

At Conway House the manager and his staff will personally provide waiter service directly to the tables in the canteen for their residents.

As many of the St Louise residents are not around for Christmas Day, there will be an early celebration on 15<sup>th</sup> December. It is being organised by Kensington Temple Church and the residents will help cook. There will also be carol singing.

St Eugene Court had their Christmas dinner on the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> December for residents and invited guests. Rosemary McCloskey the Warden cooked the food which was served by Antonia Watson (Chief Exec), Aidan O'Kane (Housing Services Manager), Mary Loughrey (An Caislean Project Worker) and Sister Margaret Finnegan. Carol singing is planned for the evening of 14<sup>th</sup> December.

Townsend House are planning a trip out to a local pantomime for residents.

Hepburn Court are having a Christmas Tea Party on 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

Hackett House will have Christmas dinner on the evening of 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> December, with the cooking shared between the residents and their Supported Housing Officer, Derek Heath.

Christmas parties are a great way to meet old friends and make new ones. Do please attend your scheme's Christmas celebrations.

## Christmas Quiz - 2

Q6. What carol contains the word "Fa-la-la-la-la-la-la-la"?

Q7. What song was originally titled "One Horse Open Sleigh"?

Q8. What is Frosty's nose made of?

Q9. Who wrote *A Christmas Carol*?

Q10. What was Scrooge's first name?

Q11. What carol contains the line "O tidings of comfort and joy"?

Q12. Name the three reindeer whose names begin with a "D"?

Q13. What was the first gift my true love sent on the sixth day of Christmas?

Q14. In *The Night Before Christmas*, where were the stockings hung?

Q15. Name the two reindeer whose name begins with a "C"?

Q16. What 1990 movie told of a boy's experience when two men break into his house during Christmas?

# Residents witness London Irish success

On Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December, five residents from Conway House had a great day out at the Madejski stadium in Reading. London Irish were playing Ulster in what was an action packed game of rugby.

Peter, Alan, Joe, Danny and Tommy were accompanied by Brendan McConville (Social Inclusion Worker), Erika Rabbi (Project Worker) and Tyrone Black (Substance Misuse Worker). Ty drove the minibus and the others ate snacks and played cards on the way. The traffic was busy and unfortunately they missed the first few minutes of the match, but they did not let that spoil the day.

London Irish beat Ulster 29 points to 13. It was a high spirited game with a few players having a spell in the sin-bin to cool off! "That was the first rugby match I've seen in 30 years," said Joe, which in itself made the day worthwhile.

A great *craic* was had by all.



Day out at Madejski Stadium

# Office Hours at Christmas

Conway House, St Louise, Bethany House and Townsend House hostels will be staffed as usual 24 hours a day throughout the Christmas and New Year period.

Head Office and Hepburn Court office will close on Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December and re-open on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December. They will also be closed on New Years Day, 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2007.

Residents from St Eugene Court, Caulfield Court, Highgate Rd or Dunne Mews who need to contact a member of staff while Head Office is closed, should call Conway House – 020 7372 6633. Hepburn Court residents should call Townsend House on 020 8207 1562. Should you have a need for an emergency plumber (or similar) the staff at Conway House will be able to arrange this for you. Please note that routine and non-emergency work will not be undertaken during this period.

Merry Christmas to all!

**Quiz Answers**

A1. c. Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>  
 A2. False: It was the angel Gabriel that told Mary the news  
 A3. Mommy (kissed Santa Claus)  
 A4. Eleven pipers piping  
 A5. 364 presents  
 A6. "Deck the Halls"  
 A7. "Jingle Bells"  
 A8. A button  
 A9. Charles Dickens  
 A10. Ebenezer  
 A11. "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen"  
 A12. Dasher, Donder and Dancer  
 A13. Six geese a-laying  
 A14. By the chimney  
 A15. Comet and Cupid  
 A16. Home Alone

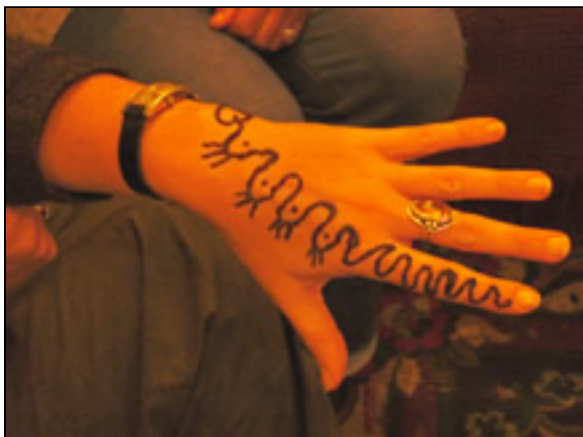
# EID celebrated

Eid ul-Fitr, often abbreviated as simply Eid, is a well-deserved celebration for Muslims, as it marks the end of Ramadan. Fitr means "to break" and therefore symbolizes the breaking of the fasting period and of all evil habits.

Eid was celebrated at Bethany House and St Louise. The residents helped prepare the events and it was a time for a real get-together with

Muslim and non-muslim residents celebrating together and truly integrating.

There is a second Eid festival called Eid ul-Adha which Muslims celebrate (this year at the end of December). This is a commemoration of the Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son (Ishmael) for God. This festival marks the end of the pilgrimage or Hajj for the millions who make the trip to Mecca each year.



Henna tattoo at Bethany House



Bethany House resident

*Management and Staff at ICH wish all of our residents a very merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.*

## Some useful telephone numbers

We appreciate that while Christmas and New Year is for many a time for celebrations, it can also be a difficult time for others. If you need some help, or someone to talk to, you might find these numbers useful.

- |                                |  |                            |               |
|--------------------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------|
| ◆ Narcotics Anonymous          | 020 7730 0009  | ◆ National Drugs Helpline  | 0800 776 600  |
| ◆ Alcoholics Anonymous         | 020 7833 0022 (10am to 10pm 365 days per year)                     |                            |               |
| ◆ Al Anon                      | 020 7403 0888 (for friends and family members of problem drinkers) |                            |               |
| ◆ Drink Line                   | 0800 917 8282  | ◆ Shelter Line             | 0808 800 4444 |
| ◆ NHS Direct                   | 0845 46 47   | ◆ SAMARITANS               | 020 7734 2800 |
| ◆ Spectrum Day Centre          | 020 7267 4937  |                            |               |
| ◆ Cricklewood Homeless Concern | 020 3273 0049  |                            |               |
| ◆ Alcohol Concern              | 020 7928 7377  | ◆ Alcohol Recovery Project | 020 7837 0100 |
| ◆ Overeaters Anonymous         | 07000 784985 / 07626 984974 (Support for all eating disorders)     |                            |               |