

Chairpersons Report

I have had the honour of being the Chair of Newstart Education Centre for the last two years and although the Board of Directors are small in number they have more than made up for it in commitment and work.

This is the 25th Anniversary of Newstart which began as a project for young people involved in car crime in 1989 but in response to the experiences and needs of young people and their families began providing education services in 1998. The service has developed to the school we run today and we work hard to give effect to Ignacio Estrada's words

"if children cannot learn the way we teach them, we must teach them the way they learn".

By working with and listening to young people and their families Newstart has developed a service which supports them to make real and lasting difference in their lives. With education rightly at the very core, youth work to support young people with personal and life skills and with support for families and community education, Newstart has the holistic model that rightly is the envy of many. Newstart's success is due to its ability to see each and every young person as individuals and ensure that the service is tailored to give them every chance of success.

The academic achievements of the young people have been phenomenal they have achieved nearly 120 qualifications during the year ranging from GCSEs, occupational studies, essential skills and personal development qualifications. This added to the huge strides they have made in their personal and social skills means they have begun the journey to achieving their ambitions.

During the year the Department of Education published the EOTAs guidelines, and as an organisation we look forward to their full implementation. Through our Director, Newstart is part of a bigger movement which campaigns for best practice to be ensured and for alternative schools to be treated as equals to mainstream schools and Education Board services. Working with allies across politics, government, education and communities, the AEP forum has ensured that the voice and experiences of young people and their families are heard in every corner of government and we very much look forward to continuing to working within the forum to ensure that the right of each child to education is fulfilled.

As mentioned the organisation is very much rooted within the community and has been working to support a range of adults in gaining vocational, educational and personal development qualifications.

Newstart has had its ups and downs and without the perseverance and support of funders, staff, volunteers or friends it would never have survived and become stronger, such a huge achievement

It has been an absolute joy to work with the Board and staff of Newstart and particularly with our Director Mary Nolan who is an exceptional leader.

Koulla Yiasouma

Head of Centre Report

Welcome to Newstart Education Centre's Annual Report in this its 25th year of serving the Community. Our annual awards and 25th anniversary celebration event held in Stormont was a great success as always and I was delighted to be part of it in acknowledging the achievements of our Young People and Adult Learners – as always we take great heart and encouragement from their accomplishments – Well done to all of our learners and a huge thanks to Junior Minister Jennifer McCann for sponsoring the event.

Newstart's work in developing as a Centre of Excellence incorporates AEP provision at its core – providing an 'alternative' to Young People who, for a wide variety of increasingly complex reasons, find themselves outside mainstream School / Youth provision. The intensive, holistic, multi-disciplinary and integrative approach we have collaboratively developed to best meet their needs continues to have successful outcomes and excellent results.

Newstart's advocacy role is an essential part of our work and continues to be a key part of our work and that of the wider AEP Forum. We also continue to develop our outreach programmes and support work with families. Newstart believes in supporting young people through supporting families and this year we continued to encourage all our parents/ guardians to participate in relevant courses and information sessions.

We would like to acknowledge and thank all those who have supported and participated in these programmes. This year Newstart continued to develop partnerships striving to meet the demands for the delivery of its outreach programmes.

A special thanks must also go to our staff, working tirelessly together to drive forward the ethos of the organisation. I would also like to acknowledge the commitment and support of our Board of Directors and all the other volunteers and workers from other agencies whose time and commitment help this organisation achieve its core aims and continue to be a model of good practice. A special thanks to our Chairperson Koulla Yiasouma for her commitment, dedication and hard work. She has carried out her duties as chair above and beyond, has been an amazing mentor to myself as Director and I am truly grateful for everything she has done.

Newstart couldn't provide what we do for the community if it wasn't for all of our funders support. I would like to thank all of our funders for their continued support in helping us achieve our targets in serving the community.

Mary Nolan



Overview of Newstart's Work

As an Alternative Education Centre, Newstart has developed a multi-disciplinary and innovative approach to the formal and informal education of young people who, for a wide variety of reasons found / find themselves outside the mainstream school system while providing access to support services for them and their families.

The team at Newstart promotes Young People's (Re)engagement in education and training to realize their potential and improve their life opportunities and choices. Many of our Young People face complex issues and find the safe, welcoming and professional environment where they are individually valued, respected and indeed challenged, one where they can achieve and turn their lives around. Similarly our Parents / Families and stakeholders engage much more effectively and find the team very inclusive, supportive and understanding. The multi-disciplinary team at Newstart works at enabling young people to re-engage with education, to become independent and to re-integrate into communities in which they live.

Newstart provides a range of courses, support and opportunities for adult learners, lone parents economically inactive and unemployed people. As part of the Alternative Education Providers Forum, Newstart is also involved in facilitating seminars, research, lobbying and campaigning.



Residential at White Park Bay, March 2014

Newstart's holistic approach to learning includes our Resilience Programmes and Youth Support work and a lot of results are achieved through the positive relationships staff builds with young people. One of the ways we do this is through intensive group work and quality time spent on residential. This builds positive, authentic relationships and allows for these to grow in a fun atmosphere letting our learners see staff in a different way outside of the classroom. This year we had our residential in the North Coast in White Park Bay again. Thanks to Dermot O'Lynn and the staff of Hostel International Northern Ireland. The Young people participated in activities including bowling, cinema, and late night karaoke sessions as well as some hot seat interrogations. We had a great time and it has led the way for strong foundations to be made.

Exam Results

Newstart believes in supporting young people through supporting families. Within our family support mechanism we encourage all our parents/guardians to participate in relevant courses and information services.

We support family members to help, guide and address issues with their young people, facilitate parent/guardian groups and meetings and also offer a wide range of specifically designed courses to both parents and other groups within the community. These include Self Awareness, Personal development, Emotional Health & Well being, Talking about Tough Issues, Domestic Violence, Self Harm & Suicide Awareness. Each course or information session is tailored to suit the needs of the group.

The community groups worked with this year are St Michaels Youth Club, Roden Street Youth Group, Frank Gillen Centre, St Agnes Youth Club and Women's Common Path Network. We have also co worked along side Women's Aid, LAMP, FASA, Community Development Health Network, Falls Community Council, Divis Community Centre and West Belfast Area Project.

Our Occupational studies cookery programme has been really successful with many wonderful meals being prepared and served for all the staff and young people. We were also given the opportunity to visit St Louise's kitchen and were provided with a lovely lunch. So a big thank you to Rosemary and well done to our budding chefs.

Exam Results

Last year was an outstanding year for Newstart with exam results. We topped our previous results with young people getting qualifications in Essential Skills ranging from entry level one right through to level 2. This prepared our GCSE pupils for GCSE exams and gave all pupils a real sense of achievement and motivation to progress into different forms of education. We are delighted with this years results which have allowed those young people involved to go onto BMC, training centres or return to mainstream education. All our learners should be very proud of the effort that they put into their studies.

JumpStart @ Newstart

This year we have been awarded a 3 year grant from BBC Children In Need to carry on the JumpStart resilience programme network. As of September this year we have 3 new resilience coaching staff delivering this innovative programme to all AEPs in the Belfast area. We continue to build upon this work and through this add value to our entire centre based work and all AEPs continue to avail of this free complimentary service as part of their own weekly programmes. We hope in the future to engage a year 3 research student who will assist us in collating evidence that our resilience programme gives added value and enhances relationships and coping skills affording our learners the ability to engage/reengage in their education.





Staff & Board Members 2014

Mary Nolan (Head of Centre)

Betty Murray (Finance / Administration Officer)

Geraldine Telford (Learning Support & Policy Officer)

John McComb (Youth Development Officer)

Sharon Lindsay (Health / Family Worker / Outreach)

Alice Quinn (Teacher: English & RE)

Moira Cullen (Teacher: Maths & ICT)

Joe Dickey (Resilience Coach)

Rachelle McCurry (Resilience Support Coach)

Stuart O'Neill (Resilience Support Coach)

Gary McAreavey (Learning Support & ICT Administrator)

Billy Kane (Learning Support)

Jennifer Green (Placement Student)

Bronagh Ross (Placement Student)

Arlene Blaney (Volunteer)

Claire Crozier (Volunteer)

Joe Lavery (Volunteer)

Koulla Yaisouma (Chair Person)

Marie McIlwee (Treasurer)

Fred Brown (Board Member)

John Barry (Board Member)

Louise Brennan (Board Member)

Jim Donnelly (Board Member)

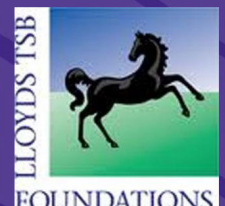
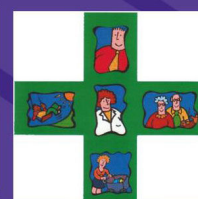
To Our Funders....

Newstart has been very fortunate to be supported by a number of very generous funders and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all of them. Firstly we must acknowledge the Department of Employment and Learning who administer the European Social Fund, which has been funding programmes at Newstart and staff salaries for a number of years now. Newstart is also supported by Belfast Education and Library Board and the local schools who have been our referral partners and worked in partnership with us to provide off-site education to the young people at Newstart.

DSD and BRO have been consistent in their assistance with funding for our Health and Wellbeing programmes and family support. These programmes are vital to our service users and we are grateful for the continued support in these areas of work.

BBC Children in Need Northern Ireland has funded our innovative resilience-building Jumpstart@Newstart programme since 2010 and have recently agreed to fund a 3 year funding package for a Resilience Coach and sessional workers.

We have also received small grants from other funders, CFNI, West Belfast Partnership Board, Lloyds TSB, Victoria Holmes Trust and St James' Place.



** Accounts are ready for collection on request **



newstart
education centre

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