



newstart education centre

Chairpersons Report

This is my first year as Chair of Newstart and it has been an honour to witness Mary and her team working with young people to both realise and release their enormous potential. The organisation continues to develop its services and supporting systems to ensure that it remains robust in uncertain times. We await guidance from the Department of the Education with regards to the future direction of alternative education across the North. By working in partnership with other providers through the AEP, the Department and Belfast Education and Library Board I am confident that Newstart is well placed to continue to provide education to some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people in our communities.

It is fair to say that Newstart has been on quite a rollercoaster ride in the last 25 years but always at the centre has been the needs and rights of the young people and their families. This report outlines the young people's magnificent achievements over the year and is a testament to the effectiveness of the holistic approach that Newstart has. The child and family centred approach which supports young people to develop their personal and social skills has resulted with continued improved educational attainment and with the young people more confident as they enter adulthood.

Head of Centre Report

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Annual General Meeting of Newstart Education Centre. I would like to share with you the work undertaken by the Board, the Staff Team, the young people and their families and our adult learners during the past year highlighting our achievements and signalling our future plans. This coming year we are celebrating 25 years of a very successful and unique organisation.

Newstart Education Centre evolved out of 'Lower Falls Newstart Project' set up in 1989 – one of four Belfast wide 'Auto Projects' - to provide diversionary activities for Young People in the city. The Education Centre was established in January 1998 to address the educational / social and life skills of Young People, aged 14 – 17. As an Alternative Education Centre it 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. Newstart also works with the local community networking with other providers to engage adult learners over the age of 17.

The team at Newstart promotes Young People's (re)engagement in education and training to realise their potential and improve their life opportunities and choices. We not only work to improve the lives of our users through academia but also through personal and social development allowing space for many of them to be speak, be heard and make appropriate change in their lives when they feel ready with our support. Many of our beneficiaries face complex issues and find the safe, welcoming and professional environment where they are individually valued, respected and indeed challenged, is 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.

Newstart has developed an innovative approach to the education of young people and a holistic, wraparound support service for them and their families. We deal, sometimes on a daily basis with issues such as drug and alcohol misuse, mental health difficulties, behavioural challenges, violence in the home, the effects of generational unemployment and the multiple effects of poverty.

We take referrals from all the statutory organisations, and network closely with them to provide the most effective service delivery to ensure best practice, including Education & Library Board, Local Schools, Education Welfare Service, Social

Additionally Newstart continues to develop work with young people and adults who are over 16 years providing education, training and employability services for the whole community.

The success of Newstart is due to the partnership between the committed, passionate and excellent staff and volunteer team who regularly go that extra 10 miles and the young people who daily demonstrate an eagerness and commitment to learn and achieve.

I would like to thank my colleague Board members for their commitment and diligence – we may be small in number but we are big on dedication to Newstart. My final thanks goes to Mary, our Director who with her team lives and breathes Newstart. It is a real privilege to be involved with such a wonderful organisation.

Koulla Yiasouma

Services and the Youth Justice Agency, and we operate five days a week including 3 evenings and occasional weekend work. Sessions are provided to cater for different aptitudes, abilities, one-to-one and education packages tailored to meet the needs of the individual. We also provide a range of courses, support and opportunities for adult learners, lone parents, economically inactive and unemployed people. Newstart is also involved in facilitating seminars, research, lobbying and campaigning.

We view learning as life long and mentor the young people and adult learners to reassess their position within their community and wider society. Our Mission statement is "Realising Potential" and our primary aim is to address the needs of our service users by adopting a holistic approach. Newstart believes in acknowledging the different ways in which our user groups have applied themselves and put in the effort towards achieving their potential, often in the face of adversity and/or previous negative experiences. We acknowledge their perseverance and determination to achieve and the tireless efforts and support provided to them by the Staff in the organisation to help them achieve their goals.

I would like to thank the Board for their continued voluntary support and dedication to this project, their sharing of knowledge and professionalism that helps to guide us, especially to our Chair Person Koulla Yiasouma who is forever making herself available especially in crucial times giving her time and support.

I would like to thank the Young People for their commitment to their education and the parents for their continued support and all of the community, voluntary and statutory agencies that support our project. Our much needed and valuable work would not happen if it were not for the support of our funders so I take this opportunity to thank, Belfast Education and Library Board, European Social Fund, Belfast Regeneration Office, Children in Need, Youth Council Northern Ireland and Department of Education.

Last but by no means least may I say a huge thank you to a staff team who is dedicated, committed and enthusiastic about the work we undertake. They go above and beyond to provide a full and varied programme of learning to best suit the needs of all our groups and have stamped the Newstart name and image to all our users and the local community.

I look forward to working both with and for you over this next year.

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. This year, Newstart is pleased to offer our biggest ever curriculum to our young people, with 5 GCSE's, alongside Essential Skills, experiential learning and residential.

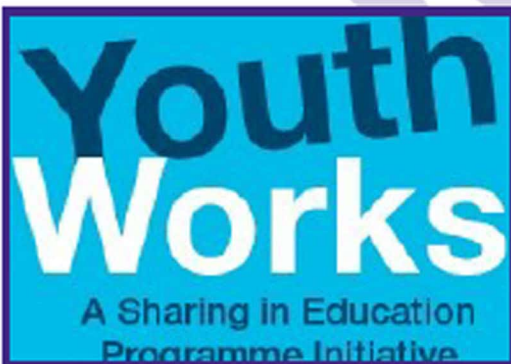
Newstart provides a range of courses, support and opportunities for adult learners, lone parents economically inactive and unemployed people. As part of the Alternative Education Providers Forum, Newstart is also involved in facilitating seminars, research, lobbying and campaigning.



Residential at Kinnahalla, June 2012

Once again we had a residential jam packed with activities. When we arrived at the house Marty and Seamy split the group into three teams and team flags and names were created. Each team was given a little friend to look after and care for in the shape of an egg. The little team member was very fragile and valuable if some one from another team was to get their hands on it. We seen the competitive sides come out and Sean and Moid became front runners for taking the award from most competitive participants then we realised that no young person would be getting that award because the two most competitive people on the planet were on Residential, yes Moira and Gary I am talking about you!! And they were on the same team!!! Marty what were you thinking?? Our little eggs and the teams got ready and abseiling we went. You can breath...no eggs were damaged on that activity. Later that evening it was games and a Dutch auction the fun and laughter was amazing but eyes were taken of the ball or should I say egg and Moira's teams egg was 'eggnapped' her and Gary were devastated they are still dealing with the trauma today. Marty replaced the egg but it cost them a lot of points so the team was determined Egbert would be safe and well looked after. After a LONG night in the house Sharon aka scary hair got everybody to bed and sleep at 6am. The next day was once again filled with singing in the middle of Newcastle in a town challenge were lots of people got hugs for free to be able to go Go-Karting in the evening. Lots of friendships were affirmed and great relationships built between the young people and the staff. I have to say that Moira and Gary's team came second but they are working on strategies as we speak for this year's end of year residential where they intend to be the leaders of the winning team.

Youth Works @ Newstart



Youth Works, a major initiative to help young people boost their employment prospects is being extended to other areas of Northern Ireland was successfully piloted in 2011 - 2012 in North Belfast and has now been extended to young people across the city. Newstart are delighted to be one of Youth Works' centres in the west of the city and to have three Youth Works staff members on-site, Arlene Blaney (full-time youth worker), Aine Fryers (part-time youth worker) and Joe Dickey (youth mentor). This cross-community initiative is funded by the International Fund for Ireland through its Sharing in Education Programme and managed by the Youth Council NI on behalf of the Department of Education and the Fund.

Youth Works offers unemployed young people aged 16-17 who are not undergoing education or training, and who live in communities that suffer from economic and social deprivation, the support needed to fulfill their potential. It offers young people in the target areas a 26-week programme structured around peace and reconciliation, mentoring and personal development. It is designed to help young people re-engage with formal education and training in order to make a real difference to their long-term prospects for training and employment.

The programme continues to be delivered by a partnership of youth work organizations in North Belfast led by Include Youth along with Artillery Youth Centre, Challenge for Youth and North Belfast Alternatives; with Newstart Education Centre and East Belfast Alternatives joining the partnership to reach young people from across the city.

Staff Classes

- **Family, Health and Support Work at Newstart:** This has been another extremely busy time for the Project with the delivery and completion of a range of courses and programmes. Well done to all those who 'sat' their Child Development and Home Economics exams! Newstart delivers a number of health programmes, one of which - the Suicide and Self Harm Awareness programme - is based around self-care and positive mental health and is co-delivered with Belfast Education and Library Board's West Belfast Area Project. Unfortunately it is still a sign of the times we live in that the programme is in such demand. Anyone interested in this can contact Sharon on 02890315674.

The Level Two Community Pharmacy programme was a big success and enjoyable for all those who participated. Through the programme we were able to forge and develop better links with other health professionals and we hope to apply for further funding in the New Year as there have been many tangible health benefits to the community and our members.

- **English and Religion at Newstart Education Centre:** We are very proud of our students who undertook their literacy examinations. We had a great range of results from Entry level to a B grade at GCSE. All our young people improved on their skills and undertook their coursework with great enthusiasm. All the students realised their own ability when it came to creative writing - the creative juices were flowing and the end production was outstanding, so we may have discovered the next J.K. Rowling or Roald Dahl! This increased the students' confidence and self-esteem when it came to their work.

It was also our first year as a centre studying Religion, the students' work for the entry level was outstanding and they all got top marks for this portfolio of work and examination. The GCSE students did a great job in their class work and enjoyed studying topics like capital punishment and euthanasia.

- **Learning for Life and Work:** As part of our continued curriculum development we are piloting the Learning for Life and Work Entry Level. The young people are currently working through the healthy relationships section of the exam and they will be starting to complete course work after Christmas time.

- **Substance Misuse:** As part of our belief in continued development and after the success of all in the Level 1 Substance Misuse Awareness we have decided to progress onto the Level 2. I would like to highlight the achievement of all of the young people last year who took part in Substance Misuse Awareness last year and congratulate them all in achieving their Level 1. Well done!!!



- **Newstart Education Centre Learning to Learn project:** As a teacher of Mathematics and ICT I found certain engagement methods were not capturing the young people attention so I found it very difficult to re-engage the young people in a classroom setting. It is for this reason that I applied for funding to buy an interactive board, in the hope that through the use of more interactive sessions I would be able not only to re-engage the young people but also meet the mixed ability needs of the group. As is evident from the results achieved, and the fun we had, the project was a huge success.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank The Lloyds TSB Foundation on behalf of myself and the young people in my class, for their support with the Learning How to Learn project.



Volunteer Perspective by Jodie Moore

I first came to Newstart as a placement student in September 2011, spending nine months in the project as part of my degree in Psychology from University of Ulster, and, having loved every minute of my time here, I have since stayed on as a volunteer working towards my 200-Hour Certificate with Volunteer Now's Millennium Volunteers programme.

My time in the Centre certainly started with a bang; two weeks of team building and fun activities. Intense? Definitely but the best way to start off when you're trying to learn people's names and introduce yourself! I have been working alongside Moira in the maths class and also assisted John, Alice and Sharon in some of their classes. My roles have included working one to one with young people, leading group discussions, and lesson planning, marking, providing resources and acting in a supervisory role on Friday afternoons when we took part in the JumpStart resilience programme.

Working side by side with the young people has been my favourite role, really getting to know them as individuals and watching them progress and develop over the year has been amazing. The highlight for me so far has been the residential in June 2012. The best part was without question the Dutch-Auction, in which we took part in silly activities and bidding with make believe money for sweets and toilet brushes. Everyone had a great time and it was the perfect way to end the academic year! Newstart Education Centre works with some brilliant young people and I feel privileged to have been given the opportunity to be a part of such an organisation.

Income & Expenditure A/C for April 2012 - March 2013

A COPY OF OUR MOST RECENT ANNUAL ACCOUNTS ARE HELD ON FILE AT THE CENTRE

Receipts

Balance	15,083.52
Income	387,088.88

Expenditure

Total Expenditure	369015.33
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402,132.40

369015.33

Receipts minus payments

33,117.07

Closing balance as shown on bank statement @ 31st March 2012

29,105.60

Staff 2012

Mary Nolan (Head of Centre)

Gary McAreavey (Volunteer: Learning Support & ICT Administrator)

Betty Murray (Finance / Administration Officer)

Billy Kane (Volunteer: Learning Support)

Geraldine Telford (Policy Officer)

Jodie Moore (Volunteer / Placement Student)

Maeve O'Lynn (Development Coordinator)

Sarah Steele (Volunteer / Placement Student)

John McComb (Youth Development Officer)

Daniel Fawcett (Placement Student)

Sharon Lindsay (Health / Family Worker / Outreach)

Joe Dickey (Youth Mentor - YouthWorks)

Alice Quinn (Teacher: English & RE)

Arelene Blaney (Youth Worker - YouthWorks)

Moira Cullen (Teacher: Maths & ICT)

Aine Fryers (Youth Worker - Youth Works)

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.

BBC Children in Need Northern Ireland has funded our innovative resilience-building Jumpstart@Newstart programme since 2010 and have recently agreed to fund a full-time salary post for a Resilience Coach for a further year in 2013.

Comic Relief awarded us a grant to run the successful Jailbreak programme earlier this year and Prince's Trust supported one of our young people, Beata, with a Development Grant to fund her progression with music lessons. We have also just received our first grant from Belfast City Council Good Relations Fund for the Open Air Education project which is running this month and next. Celtic FC very generously made a contribution to the Centre in December 2011 to audio-visual equipment for the Centre, Lloyds TSB Foundation funded the Learning to Learn programme and the San Damiano Fund who made us a recipient of their Daily Giving project. In addition, Asda supported Newstart by allowing us to do a fundraising bag pack earlier this year and West Belfast Taxi Association made us their charity of the month in September 2012.

We were also the recipients of a very generous £10,000 legacy donation from the family of Jackie McGreevy, who have honoured the late Mr McGreevy's legacy by ensuring that vital projects for young people and their education receive crucial support so that they can continue their work.

We also have to thank the organisers of the Community Pharmacy programme for involving outreach and in-house groups at Newstart in 2011-2012.

Young people in Newstart have also been taking part in the Landmarks Project with another group of young people from Include Youth, facilitated by the Community Arts Partnership, coordinated by Clare McComish and led by sessional artist David Cunningham.

Last year Newstart became a member organization of Volunteer Now, who will be honouring the time given up by three of our young volunteers at their Millennium Volunteer 200 Hour Award ceremony at City Hall next month. We look forward to further collaborative working with Volunteer Now in future.

