

Trav Times

Newsletter of Donegal Travellers Project • July 2020

Features 4 pages
of articles and
photos celebrating
Traveller Pride

• Issue 31



DTP Manager Siobhán McLaughlin in the DTP reception area which, like the rest of the office, has been fitted with perspex screening and a sanitising station to prevent the spread of Covid-19 now that the lockdown has eased in Ireland.

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DTP's intensive work to support and protect Travellers and Roma during Covid-19

THROUGHOUT THE Covid-19 crisis, DTP has been working intensively to inform, support, and protect the Traveller and Roma communities in Donegal.

“Travellers and Roma can be very proud of the work that DTP and they themselves have put into protecting community members from Covid-19,” said DTP Manager Siobhán McLaughlin. “The uptake of social distancing and other measures advocated by DTP has resulted in a near-zero number of cases of the virus among Travellers and Roma in the county.”

The wide range of initiatives by

DTP to address the Covid-19 threat is detailed throughout this edition of *Trav Times*, including in the areas of health, accommodation, education, and support.

All of the efforts have been led out by the DTP Voluntary Board of Management, which met every two weeks during the lockdown over Zoom to discuss the best ways to meet the needs of community members during the crisis.

Now that the lockdown has begun to lift DTP's virus prevention work continues, including by outfitting the entire DTP office with perspex screens and sanitising stations to

protect staff members and visitors. Also, the number of DTP programmes has had to be reduced.

“For now we have had to limit the number of programmes that we run in order to comply with Covid-19 safety restrictions,” Siobhán said.

The popular DTP Summer Programme has had to be cancelled, but summer activity packs will be distributed to all young Travellers and Roma in the county.

And a new one-on-one Walk and Talk Programme is available to anyone who would like to take an hour-long walk each week with a member of the DTP staff.

Donegal Travellers Project is a partnership of Travellers and settled people working for Traveller rights through the five principles of Community Development:

- 1) Collectivity; 2) Community Empowerment; 3) Social Justice and Sustainable Development;***
- 4) Human Rights, Equality, and Anti-Discrimination; and 5) Participation.***

DTP Primary Health Care Team responses to the special threat Covid-19 posed to Travellers

THE DTP Primary Health Care (PHC) Team played a massive role in addressing the special threat that Covid-19 posed to Travellers due to health inequality in Ireland.

“DTP was very, very active in the lockdown phase of the pandemic,” said Ann Friel, PHC Team Leader. “We didn’t just close our doors and go home...we were out in the community, but just using different ways of communicating.”

At the beginning of the lockdown, Ann said, “a lot of Travellers were feeling very isolated and unsure of the guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid-19.”

The seriousness of the situation was made worse by the underlying health conditions faced by many Travellers due to health inequality.

“Old age for members of the Traveller community starts at 60 because of health inequalities that

lead to higher rates of conditions like heart disease, COPD, asthma, and diabetes,” Ann said.

As a result the DTP PHC Team delivered a wide range of responses to the virus, including:

Phone calls

Each week between 250 and 300 phone calls were made to Travellers in Donegal as a way of checking in, offering information about Covid-19, and providing support for dealing with the situation.

“We had a good relationship with the Traveller community, so we were able to reach them any time,” said Chrissie McGinley, Community Health Worker (CHW). “People were glad to hear from us, they looked forward to the phone calls.”

Additionally, throughout the lockdown an emergency weekend phone service was available for assistance with any issues that arose.

Care pack deliveries

Two different care packs were delivered to older and vulnerable Travellers, one filled with food and the other containing hand sanitiser. All workers making deliveries wore Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and gloves.

“If you had to cocoon the packs gave you a stock of supplies and sanitisers,” said CHW Patrick McGinley. “There was enough stuff to keep people who couldn’t go out shopping going...even flour so could take up their own baking.”

Information about Covid-19 prevention and services

Every day between March and June the team developed and posted numerous messages and Traveller-specific videos on Facebook as a way of providing information about how to prevent Covid-19 and how to access services available during the lockdown. The team also de-



DTP's Patrick McGinley delivering care packs to older Travellers during the lockdown.

signed information posters about Covid-19 which were laminated and delivered to sites all over Donegal.

Services that the team provided referrals to included the We Care Letterkenny Foodbank, ChefAid Letterkenny, Donegal County Council’s Covid-19 Helpline, the National Traveller Helpline for Covid-19, St. Vincent de Paul, The Samaritans, and more.

Support filling out forms

Throughout the lockdown team members found safe ways to assist Travellers in filling out forms for vital state services and entitlements.

“If families needed help with forms, what we did was to get the information needed for the form on the phone,” said Rose McDonagh, DTP Project Worker for South Donegal. “We’d then visit the family wearing PPE so the form could be signed before sending.”



DTP's Katie Boyle making phone calls to Traveller community members during the lockdown.

DTP Accommodation Team's role in promoting the safety of Travellers during Covid-19

THE THREAT posed by Covid-19 to Travellers living at the side of the road with no access to facilities and to those living in over-crowded accommodation meant special measures were needed to promote Traveller safety right from the start.

“A massive amount of work was done,” said Hugh Friel, DTP Accommodation and Men’s Health Worker. “DTP has been out on the ground within the guidelines since Day 1 to make sure that the most vulnerable members of the community got support.”

Information about how quickly the virus was spreading meant the accommodation many Travellers were living in left them at a high risk of becoming infected.

The seriousness of the threat resulted in the inclusion of Travellers on the Irish government list of groups who were a priority to receive Covid-19 testing.

In order to address the special accommodation-related threats the virus posed to Travellers, Hugh and other members of the DTP Accommodation Team (Ann Friel, Kate Hagen, Rose McDonagh, and Siobhán McLaughlin) developed a Strategic Plan for immediate action, which included:



Photo courtesy of Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre.

Ensuring that all Travellers had easy access to water was a priority for the DTP Accommodation Team during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Advocacy

The team advocated on behalf of Travellers with the Council and the HSE for a number of different Covid-19 risk prevention measures.

“Anyone homeless or who needed accommodation with facilities, we advocated to the Council for them to be accommodated,” Hugh said.

The team also advocated for the Council to make special caravans available for parking on sites in the event anyone living there developed Covid-19. Fortunately, no site ended up needing one.

Hand sanitiser

“Because of the number of Travellers living on sites we advocated for extra portaloos to be installed in

order to limit the number of people sharing toilets,” Hugh said.

Soap, gloves, hand sanitiser, and cleaning products are other items the DTP Accommodation Team advocated for the Council and HSE to provide to Travellers. The team then delivered hygiene care packs to sites according to guidelines for the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including masks and gloves.

Phone calls

“Making phone calls really contributed to our efforts to keep Covid-19 out of the Traveller community,” Hugh said. “We were able to provide information about preventing the virus and also to support people with the isolation and fear that many of them were feeling.”

Donegal Covid-19 Community Response Forum

More than 20 local agencies and organisations took part in the Forum, which helped to design Donegal’s response to Covid-19.

“We used our seat at weekly Forum meetings to ensure that Travellers, Roma, and other minority ethnic communities were included in all plans to address Covid-19,” said Hugh, who was the DTP representative on the Forum.



The DTP Accommodation Team advocated with the Council and the HSE for the essential services needed to help keep Travellers safe from Covid-19.

DTP/Involve Youth Team finds creative new ways to engage with young Travellers during the lockdown

A NUMBER of creative approaches were used by the DTP/Involve Lettorkenny Youth Team to inform and support young Travellers during the Covid-19 lockdown.

“All our normal chances to have a chat were gone, so we had to come up with new ways of keeping in contact with young people in order to inform and support them during Covid-19,” said Martin Mongan, Involve Youth Worker.

Phone calls

“We started out by using phone calls to check in with young people and see how they were doing,” Martin said. “We found they had questions about Covid-19, and also that some of them were struggling with their homework.”

Informational posts and videos

The team followed up with Facebook posts and videos about how to avoid getting Covid-19. The videos, by Martin and DTP Youth Worker Kyle Quill, addressed questions

they’d heard from young Travellers.

Activity packs

The team also created activity packs full of arts and crafts, colouring, and problem-solving workbooks to support youngsters with their learning and homework. An accompanying video was posted on Facebook of 10-year-old Lena Mongan showing how to use items in the packs to create paper flowers.

The packs were welcomed by parents in Facebook comments.

“I would like to thank the youth workers for the children’s pack and also the rest of the staff in the DTP for the hard work supporting the community in this difficult time,” wrote Kathleen Kelly McDonagh.

“Thanks very much, appreciated it,” wrote Bridget Brogan. “Kids busy all evening colouring in.”

Online games

The team also used online games to engage with young Travellers.

“While playing games online

we’d all be wearing headsets, which made it possible to share a joke or have a chat about how the young people were keeping,” Martin said.



Video of Lena Mongan, 10, showing how to make paper flowers.

DTP Roma Project provides support despite huge challenges created by Covid-19

COVID-19 BROUGHT huge challenges to ways the DTP Roma Project linked in with families due to restrictions placed on the normal home visits and assistance from translators. Despite the challenges, the Project managed to support the community in a number of ways:



A DTP activity pack for youngsters.

Phone calls

“Keeping in phone contact was key to providing families with information about the virus and helping them access supports like the food bank and the children’s clothing available through DTP,” said Joleen Kuyper, DTP Roma Project Support and Advocacy Worker.

Form-filling and translating

While normally this would take place in person, Jolene assisted Roma community members over the phone with filling out forms needed for supports including Medical Cards and social welfare. She also translated letters from state agencies and helped with following through on any instructions they contained.

Multi-lingual posts and videos

Throughout the lockdown the Project posted messages and videos in English, Romanian, Czech, and Slovakian to ensure the community was fully informed about Covid-19.

School liaison

“Links to the websites of schools that Roma children were attending were posted on the Project Facebook page, and I also acted as a liaison between families and schools to help children stay engaged with their education,” Jolene said.

Activity packs

The Project also distributed activity packs for youngsters, as well as kits containing hand wash, masks, and other hygiene aids for families.

Celebrating Traveller Pride 2020

DTP Board of Management member Eileen Flynn named first Traveller woman member of the Seanad

RTÉ News: Were you surprised to get the call [from new Taoiseach Micheal Martin]?

EILEEN FLYNN: Absolutely, 100 per cent. It was the best call I ever got in me life. It was absolutely amazing, I felt like I was dreaming. I didn't know what to do!

Was I expecting the call? I wasn't 100 per cent sure, because it was up to the Taoiseach and nobody else, but I do know three party leaders was happy to nominate me, so for me as an individual and for the Traveller community that's phenomenal. I had great cross-party support, and want to particularly thank Deputy Thomas Pringle for his support during my campaign.

What will you do now? What do you see yourself standing up for in the Seanad?

Today I think I'm going to take in an awful lot and just enjoy the day. I just came from Dáil Éireann and it was brilliant not being there as a person signing in...I'm there now as part of the Seanad, so I'm delighted with that. It's been a very emotional day for me...both my parents are dead, and with the pandemic the celebration can't be as big as how I'd like it. But I know my parents are with me in spirit, and I know the whole Traveller community are behind me and are very proud that a Traveller woman was elected, so that's very good.



You're not in a political party, so you'll give a truly independent voice in the Seanad.

I'm giving an independent voice, but I'm also giving an equality voice. I'm being a voice for ethnic minority groups in Ireland, not just for Travellers but for all those at the very end of Irish society.

A day of victory in the annual Soap Box Derby on Main Street, Letterkenny

DANNY McGRORY: That photo was taken at what you call a buggy derby, or a soap box derby, at the square in Letterkenny. The race started there, and you'd race down the hill to the bottom of Main Street. You got a big push and then you were away.

I won that year, so I did, and a couple of years in a row. That boy on the other buggy, I think he ended up as a national rally driver.

It was 1979 and I'm 55 now, so I would have been 14 in the photo. That's my father, Ned, behind me. There's a couple of other Travellers in it too, John Friel, uncle of Ann, and Willie Boyle.

We won easy that year. My father gave me such a good push that I was well ahead from the very start of the race.

He was a fit man, a very fit man. He was a long distance runner. He used to run 26-mile marathons in his time. He lived out of a tent in Milford and would run with the local running club. He used to go running up and down the Glenshane Pass near Belfast.

My father was a great athlete altogether.



He was years younger then than I am now.

I made that buggy, it had four old-time pram wheels. They were well oiled up, so there was no excuse!

Celebrating Traveller Pride 2020

Wedding day shared by two Ward sisters featured in the local newspaper

ANNIE (WARD) MONGAN: Meself and me sister Mary got married on the same day, 20th September, 1971. We had no cars and no wedding dresses. We wore our sisters' Communion veils with plaid skirts our mother made for us and boots.

A local man in the shoe shop took our photos and put them in the local newspaper in Ballaghderreen, Co. Roscommon, where we were from. After the wedding we went to the pub and had sandwiches. The first dance was to an accordion, playing Irish music.

We went home to tents that night and had our supper, but we had no drink. Women had to wait one year after the wedding before they could drink. After that me husband, Paddy, and I travelled in a horse and cart, and later on in a van. We travelled to Dundalk, Co. Louth, and then to England.

The top photo is of me with Paddy and Mary with her husband, Thomas McDonagh. The bottom one is me family: me parents, Paddy and Mary, the four sisters, Ellie, Annie, Mary, Winnie, and two brothers, Thomas and Charlie. We travelled all over by horse and cart, living in bag tents and a barrel-top wagon.



The Ward sisters Ann (left) and Mary after their double wedding in Ballaghderreen last week. Ann married Mongan and Mary married Thomas McDonagh.



Below some of the guests at the wedding. The male guests declined to be photographed. Pic. by Joe

“We were reared in a way that your family is everything”

ANN (KELLY) FRIEL: Mammy and Daddy was great parents to the 12 of us, five boys and seven girls. We were learned in practical ways about looking after ourselves. Mammy learned us how to fix things, to cook, clean, and look after children.

We handed that to our children then, because you can have all the education in the world, but it's nothing without the basic life skills.

We were reared in a way that your family is everything. That's something I take away from my childhood. It's why holidays like Christmas, New Year's, and St. Patrick's Day are very important to me.

My parents met in Scotland. A lot of Travellers would have travelled to Scotland to work, doing seasonal labour. They returned to Ireland and

got married in Letterkenny Cathedral. My mother was 17 and my father was 19. On Mammy's wedding day she carried a bouquet of paper flowers that were made by a

local Traveller woman. I got engaged when I was 15 and married a month after my 18th birthday. My bouquet was also made of paper flowers by a local Traveller woman.



The wedding of Hannah Friel and William Kelly on 26/10/76 (photo on left) and of their daughter Ann to Hugh Friel on 26/9/98.

Celebrating Traveller Pride 2020

Pat McGinley celebrates turning 80 surrounded by his loving family



Pat McGinley on his 80th birthday, shown in the photo on the left with his sons Ennis and Michael and his daughter Nellie. The photo on the right shows him with some of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

PAT MCGINLEY: I was born in 1940 and turned 80 on the 27th of May. Me eyesight's gone but I have a great memory, me memory is 100 per cent.

I was born in a barrel-top wagon by Doon Well outside Kilmacrennan, in Brian Murray's garden. Me brother John and sister Katie were also born there. Any time we saw the penny nurse coming on her bicycle we wains would run alongside her.

When I was 11 we went to Scotland, tatty-hoking. From 11 to 29 I was in Scotland. I married when I was 30 and me wife was 29. We had seven children, four now dead and three living.

Me father fought for the Free State Army in World

War I. He was 17 in the photo of him in his uniform with me uncles and grand-uncle. Another uncle who served was killed, would you believe, while he was home on leave. He lived in Falcarragh and was in Kilmacrennan for a big race day there. The English police thought he'd deserted and beat him to death. They wouldn't give him time to get his papers or to contact Falcarragh. It was the time of the Black and Tans.

I'll tell you one thing, it's a long road from 18 to 80. On your 18th birthday you're starting your journey; once you're at your 80th, you're ending it. You never know how many miles are left or what's ahead. What's left for you in life, you're never going to change it.



Pat with his beloved wife, Margaret.



Pat's father, Alec McGinley, is shown on the right with other members of the family who fought in World War I: (from left) Pat's Uncle Simey, Grand-uncle Tadgh, and Uncle Tadgh.



Pat at 18 years of age (on the left). He is with his young cousin Francie McGinley and Josie Boyle from England.

Celebrating Traveller Pride 2020

Family name as highly skilled tinsmiths is a source of pride for the younger generation

CHLOE MCGINLEY: The photo below is of my father, Owen McGinley, and Charlie McGinley. It's from back in the day of them when they were young.

The one to the right is of my brother, Barney McGinley, and Luke Kelly when they were young boys collecting tyres for the fires.

The photo under that is of Tadgh McGinley outside his mobile home with a tin watering can. It's a pic-

ture on the wall of the DTP office.

Tadgh's story was amazing, and for meself as a little girl, listening to him telling his story of how years ago was like, it was lovely to hear and listen to.

I'm a big fan of the tin watering cans, the tin washing bowls and that myself, and the McGinley name was well known for tinsmiths.

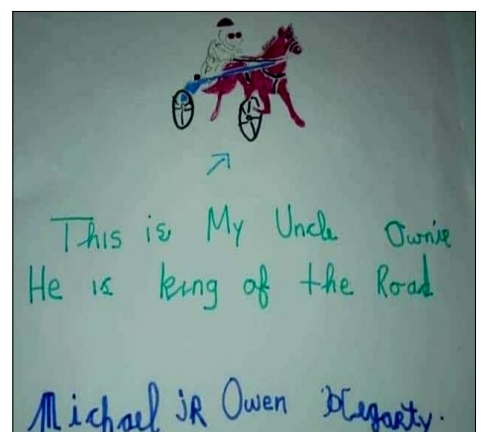
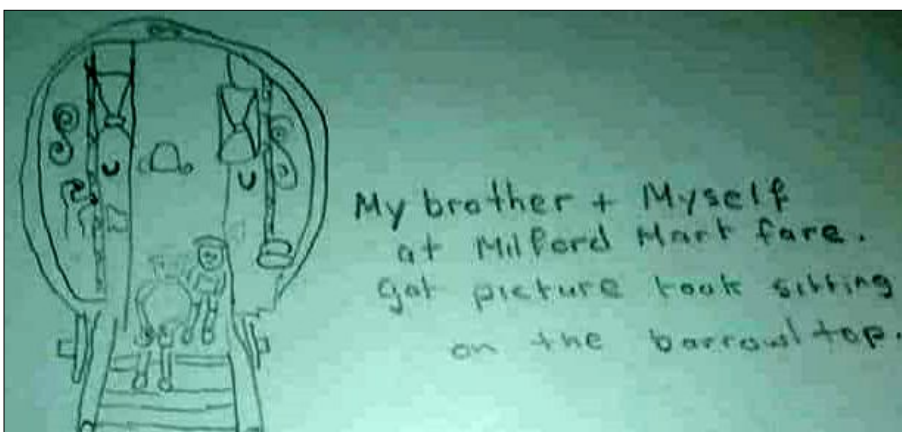
Tadgh's story will always live on in my heart.



Brothers Ronan and Michael Jnr. Hegarty celebrate Traveller Pride with beautiful artwork

YOUNGSTERS FROM all over Donegal were invited to create symbols of Traveller history and culture as part of a Traveller Pride Art Challenge run by DTP and the Regional Cultural Centre. Participants included

Ronan and Michael Jnr. Hegarty, whose contributions featured a number of beautiful illustrations. One shows the boys in a barrel-top wagon at Milford Mart, while another is of their Uncle Owenie sulky racing.



Change of focus for Traveller Job Coach during lockdown is now shifting back again

A WIDE range of supports were available to Donegal Travellers, Roma, and asylum seekers during the lockdown as a result of teamwork between DTP and DLDC Traveller Job Coach Maeve McIvor.

“During the lockdown my focus shifted to helping employed clients access the Covid Pandemic Unemployment Payment, including by writing letters to the DEASP case officer for some clients who weren’t offered the payment,” Maeve said. “Social welfare recipients were also



assisted to file the form needed to receive payments directly into their bank accounts so they could avoid leaving the safety of their homes.

“One client managed to get a job just as the lockdown started easing and another engaged with Donegal Volunteer Centre to provide valuable support during the lockdown.”

Children’s clothing and baby item donations

“A number of Donegal charity shops made very generous donations of children’s clothing and baby items such as nappies and cots,” Maeve said (see list of shops on page 10). “These were then delivered by DTP and myself to families all over the county to support them through the challenges they faced due to the lockdown.

“Families were also supported to link in with foodbanks and

emergency meal programmes.”

Online Management Training

“Although most training shut down during the lockdown, two clients took an online QQI Level 6 Management Development training through An Cosán,” Maeve said. “One of them is going on to do QQI Level 6/7 Addiction Studies, which is an outstanding outcome.”

Employment is becoming a focus once again

“Now that the lockdown has eased clients are enquiring about employment and online training, and one client has a job interview this week,” Maeve said. “I’m looking into suitable online courses and sourcing laptops that can be used by clients to take the courses.”

Anyone interested in support with employment or training can reach Maeve on (087) 130 5866.

St. Gabriel’s Preschool making plans for a safe re-opening this Autumn

LIKE ALL other schools in Ireland, St. Gabriel’s Preschool closed in the middle of March due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Learning by students at the school continued during the lockdown, however, due to the creativity and commitment of the teaching team.

“Every Friday we would brainstorm an educational theme for the following week, including Messy Play, Construction, Imaginative Play, Loose Parts, Arts and Crafts, Cooking and Baking, and Outdoor Sports and Exercise,” said Lead Teacher Kelly McClafferty. “We’d then pick five activities that fit the chosen theme and post one each day on Facebook the following week.”

When schools re-open St. Gabriel’s will be ready to meet new guidelines for safe student drop-offs



Part of the beautiful educational playground which will allow lessons and learning to take place outdoors when St. Gabriel’s Preschool re-opens.

and pick-ups, and will also offer a curriculum that focusses as much on outdoor learning as on indoor.

“We’ll be adapting the curriculum to make school as safe as possible but also so children get full enjoyment from their learning experience here,” Kelly said of St. Gabriel’s, which is managed by DTP with an intercultural ethos.

“For safety we will be using a

coloured bib system so that only two children are in any of the learning stations on the playground at any given time.

“We will also only be using equipment and toys that are easily washed and sterilised. We will be fully sterilising all equipment and toys between the Morning and Afternoon sessions and also at the end of every school day.”

DTP thanks to organisations that helped support Donegal Travellers and Roma during the lockdown

Donegal Travellers Project extends a special thank you to all of the organisations that assisted in supporting the Donegal Traveller, Roma, and asylum-seeker communities during Covid-19. They include:

- ChefAid Letterkenny at the Honey Pot Café
- Donegal Local Development Company (DLDC)
- DLDC Helping Hands Service
- Donegal Volunteer Centre
- God's Shoestrings Charity Shop
- Hope Dropinn Charity Shop, Newtowncunningham
- Kindness of Strangers Charity Shop, Newtowncunningham
- Lifestart Newtowncunningham
- NCBI Charity Shop, Ballyshannon
- The Exchange Inishowen Food Bank
- We Care Letterkenny Food Bank



DTP's new Walk and Talk Programme supports Traveller health and wellbeing



A NEW DTP Walk and Talk Programme supports the health and wellbeing of Travellers anywhere in Donegal while at the same time following Covid-19 guidelines.

The programme links each participant with a DTP staff member of their own gender for weekly hour-long walks in areas they decide upon together.

"We walk and talk together one-on-one, men with men and women with women, in a really relaxed environment," said Hugh Friel, DTP Men's Health Worker.

Hugh added that the programme can provide a chance for participants to get support or assistance accessing services if needed.

"The Walk and Talk is a very

confidential service that gives people an opportunity to talk about personal things if they want," he said. "If someone wants help accessing services, that will be followed up by the staff member."

More information about the DTP Walk and Talk Programme is available by ringing the office on (074) 912 9281.



DTP's Summer Programme cancelled but activity packs to be distributed



DUE TO Covid-19 restrictions and safety concerns the popular DTP Summer Programme for young Travellers and Roma has had to be cancelled this year.

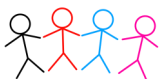
Instead, DTP will be distributing 100 activity packs to youngsters

throughout the county that are full of items for outdoor games and activities, including skip rope, football, hopscotch, and more.

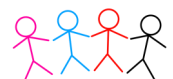
"We are disappointed to have to cancel our usual Summer Programme of group activities due to

Covid-19," said DTP Manager Siobhán McLaughlin.

"We hope the activity packs that we'll be distributing help Traveller and Roma youngsters have a wonderful summer while at the same time staying safe from the virus."



Free new "DiversityAware" course available on DTP website



A FREE new "DiversityAware" certificate course is now available on the DTP website.

The course, which has been designed by DTP and the Donegal Intercultural Platform, takes participants through the key elements of becoming diversity-aware so they can play a productive role in promoting respect and inclusion in

their communities and workplaces.

DiversityAware is made up of eight modules which are taught through informational videos.

Module topics include: Understanding Diversity, Understanding Ethnicity, Interculturalism, Who are Asylum Seekers and Refugees?, Who are Travellers in Irish Society?, Who are the Roma?, Under-

standing Racism, and Respecting Diversity on Social Media.

Following each video participants are invited to take a short quiz based on the information provided. A DiversityAware course certificate is awarded upon successful completion of all eight modules.

The course can be found at www.donegaltravellersproject.ie.



DTP offering a Home/School Liaison Service to support students this Autumn



A DTP Home/School Liaison Service which supports students and their families throughout Donegal when schools re-open will be on offer this Autumn.

The Service will provide a link between students and schools to address any concerns students or their families have about returning to school, as well as any other

school-related issues.

“It is vitally important that all students return to class once schools re-open,” said Siobhán McLaughlin, DTP Manager.

“The government has said that schools will not re-open unless it is safe to do so, which means that once they do re-open students will need to return to their classes while

at the same time following any safety guidelines that are in place.

“The DTP Home/School Liaison Service will be available to offer support with any safety concerns students have, as well as with all other school-related matters.”

More information about the Service is available by ringing the DTP office on (074) 912 9281.

Advice from LYIT student Caitlín McGinley: “At least get your Leaving Cert”

THE IMPORTANCE for students to do their Leaving Cert was highlighted by Caitlín McGinley, who is studying at LYIT for a degree in Early Childhood Care, Health, and Education.

“I would always say get your Leaving Cert, because then you’ll at least have it there if you decide to continue your education,” Caitlín, 18, said.

She added that she has continued her own education because a third-level degree is needed to work in the field she is interested in.

“I know what I want to do and

I want to get there,” said Caitlín, who is the first person in her immediate family to attend third-level education.

“I know what I want to do and I want to get there.”

She has just finished the first year of a four-year programme for her Bachelor’s degree and already has her eye on doing a Master’s as well.

“I’d love to work with children,”

she said. “You enjoy yourself, but at the same time you’re always kept on your toes and surprised with what they come out with.”

This Autumn Caitlín is due to start a placement at a childcare facility, which could then lead on to a further placement in a primary school.

“At the moment my aim is to go into teaching primary school, but that could change,” she said. “Even if I change my mind about this course, though, I can still return as a mature student when I’m 23 because I’ve done my Leaving Cert.”



Information about the Back to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance 2020



THE BACK to School Clothing and Footwear Allowance (BTSCFA) helps parents meet the cost of uniforms and footwear for children going to school. It is paid automatically to many families, which means they do not have to apply for the payment.

If you qualify automatically, you will get your payment the week beginning 13th July.

If you do not get a payment notification letter by 6th July you will need to apply online for the BTSCFA. From 6th July you can apply using MyWelfare.ie.

If you have applied for a social welfare payment or have appealed a decision not to award you a payment and are waiting for a decision on your application, you should still apply for the BTSCFA before the scheme closes on 30th September.

Your entitlement will be established when you get a decision on your application or appeal.

The Covid-19 Pandemic Unemployment Payment is a qualifying social welfare payment for the BTSCFA. In order to receive the Allowance, however, you will need to satisfy a means test.

Allowance Rates

The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 4 to 11 on or before 30th September is €150.

The allowance paid for each eligible child aged 12 to 22 on or before 30th September is €275.

Children aged between 18 and 22 years must be returning to full-time second-level education in a recognised school or college in the Autumn of 2020 to qualify.

More information about the BTSCFA is available on the Citizens Information website at www.citizensinformation.ie.

High tribute paid to PHN for Travellers Ita Ward



HIGH TRIBUTE was paid to Ita Ward, HSE Public Health Nurse for Travellers, at a DTP socially-distanced event marking her retirement after 15 years on the job.

In addition to visiting Traveller families throughout Donegal to offer support with any health issues they might have, Ita has worked closely with the DTP Primary

Health Care (PHC) Team, sharing her own wisdom and experience and learning from the wisdom and experience of team members.

“You’ve been an inspiration,” said Ann Friel, PHC Team Leader. “When I started in my new role you were always there if I had any questions or concerns.”

“In South Donegal there’s a big

trust in you, and there were never any delays when supports were needed,” said Rose McDonagh, Project Worker for South Donegal.

“Older Travellers will miss you terribly,” said Patrick McGinley, Community Health Worker (CHW).

“Not just my family but all the families will miss you badly,” said CHW Annie Mongan.



DONEGAL TRAVELLERS PROJECT
 Port House, Port Road, Letterkenny • (074) 912 9281
 Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Email: travcom@eircom.net • Facebook: Donegal Travellers Project
 Website: donegaltravellersproject.ie




Ireland's European Structural and Investment Funds Programmes 2014-2020
 Co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union



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 DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) 2018-2022 is funded by the Irish Government and co-funded by the European Social Fund and includes a special allocation under the Youth Employment Initiative.