



OWN

Older Women's Network Ireland
Bantracht na Sinsear

August 2011

Dear Members

Funding

Funding remains a challenge for OWN and even if we do not secure core funding this does not mean that OWN will not continue to exist. As long as there is a board and membership, the work of OWN will continue.

Lobby and Support

I would ask all OWN members to lobby their local politicians to restore our funding in order to allow the work of the organisation to continue.

It is ironic that the recent TILDA report on ageing in Ireland has stated that older women are in the majority - there are 150 older women for every 100 older men and this is set to increase. OWN is a unique organisation dealing with issues of ageing and gender so the Government gave us funding to have a voice and now they wish to silence us? A letter to the Minister supporting OWN would be most welcome. Please address this to: Minister Phil Hogan, T.D., Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, Leinster House, Dublin 2.

Trimming the Budget

In recent weeks, we have negotiated a rent review with All Hallows, which will allow us to stay at this location until August 2012. In

addition, staff hours have been reduced for the OWN Administrator.

We are very conscious that many members do not have or use an email address however in order to reduce postage costs we would like to request that members who do not wish to receive information electronically inform the office in order to receive information by post.

Website

There has been significant investment in a new website and this will be completed by the end of August. The new site will allow us to have more control over the content of the site and will include a members forum and an international forum which allow us to share information with OWN Europe, Canada and Australia.

A member from the Board of OWN Australia will be visiting Ireland in October and we have arranged to meet with her to discuss joint issues of concern. OWN Holland will also attend this meeting.

Board News and Appointments

OWN Board member Ruth Stenson has been appointed to the Board of the European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN).

Policy

OWN's Policy Officer, Mary Shanahan continues to work on policy issues and is currently carrying out an evaluation for OWN. On behalf of the OWN Board we wish to

congratulate Mary for achieving a scholarship to pursue her doctoral degree. Mary will be starting this in September whilst continuing her work with OWN.

Local Meetings

At the request of the members, local meetings will re-commence in Dublin on a trial basis in August. This will be reviewed by the Board in December and based on demand a decision to continue to facilitate these meetings in other locations will be decided.

Social Welfare Fuel Allowance Cut

Recent cuts announced by Government are a cause of concern to the network.

From September 6th next, the electricity allowance cash payment of €43.80 a month for anyone aged over 70 will be reduced to €35.80 a month. The gas allowance will also be reduced to €393 from €489 per year.

To top this off a number of free units of gas and electricity provided to older people have been reduced to 2007 levels while the fuel allowance will be standardised at €20 per week, with no extra allowance for living in a smoke free zone.

Minister for Social Protection and Dublin West TD, Joan Burton, defended the cuts saying there was an ongoing necessity to achieve savings due to commitments with the IMF.

The move is expected to bring annual savings of €65 million. However, news of the cuts has been greeted with anger, disillusion and disgust by network members and by our collaborative partners in the ageing sector.

As Bord Gais has been awarded a price

increase many older people, the majority of who are women will find it impossible to heat their homes this winter.

OWN is a member of Older and Bolder , an alliance of older peoples organizations whose director, Patricia Conboy, expressed surprise and concern at the lack of engagement by the Government with older people's organisations. She urged the Government to urgently publish its Fuel Poverty Strategy, in order to deal with the issue "in a considered rather than an ad-hoc way." Conboy went on to say, "It's vital that any future changes affecting older people take place in a planned and systematic way to ensure that we do not undermine the supports that allow many older people to maintain their levels of independence and participation."

Goodbye, Thanks and Farewell

On behalf of the Board and membership may we say a big "THANK YOU" to our American intern, Beth McReynolds, who returns home to the United States on August 11th. Beth made a great contribution to the work of OWN and she was a delight to work with. Beth returns to Michigan to continue her graduate studies in Political Science and Public Relations and we wish her every success in her future career.

OWN's Development Officer, Mary Rose Costello also leaves us to take up a post of Manager with An Síol in Stonybattery. Many thanks to her for her contribution to our work over the past two months and we wish her best of luck in her new position.

Finally, we bid a sad farewell to OWN member Maureen Curran who passed away recently after a short illness. Maureen, a Dubliner from Crumlin was an avid and active member of the network who gave us great support and

commitment over the past years. Our sincere condolences to Maureen's family and friends.

OWN NEWS

To mark Heritage Week A visit to the Belfast Museum will take place on Wednesday 24th August

The details for the visit to Belfast have been finalised:

- We are meeting at Connolly station by the ticket machines at **9.00** and getting the **9.35** train to Belfast. Please check in with OWN staff at the information point beside the ticket machines to obtain your lunch voucher **prior to boarding the train.**
- A private coach will transfer to the Ulster Museum where we have organised a hot lunch and presentation. Members are then free to tour the museum at their leisure.
- We will be returning to the train station via coach at 5.15pm to catch the **18.10** train to Dublin arriving into Connolly station at **20.15**.

The total cost of the visit is €20. Transport to and from Belfast is at your own expense.

If anyone has a companion pass and is willing to allow another member to go with them please get two tickets. Places are limited and pre-booking is essential so please contact the national office at 01-8844536 to secure your place.

Meet and Greet

Local Meetings August 29th and 30th

Meetings will be held:

August 29th at "Le Cheile," Donnycarney Community & Youth Centre on Collins Avenue East, Dublin 5 from 10.30am to 12.30pm

August 30th at the Carmelite Community Centre on Aungier Street, Dublin 2 from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Speakers have not yet been confirmed.

We also plan to hold a number of "meet and greet" mornings to give members an opportunity to meet and invite new members to join us... We wish to hold these nationwide and they will commence in Dublin followed by Cavan, Galway, and Cork. If you would be interested in hosting one of these events in your area please contact the national office.

Health Promotion Day Wednesday 21st September

OWN has planned a Health Promotion Day on the Wednesday 21st September in the Academy Hotel in Findlater Place (Cathal Brugha St) just off O'Connell St. The event will have a number of speakers on such topics as nutrition, gynaecological health, hair loss, exercise and cardio vascular fitness. There is a charge of €20.00, which includes a full day with a hot two-course lunch. To book your place please contact the national office on 01-8844536

Fashion Show Sunday October 9th

If you are interested in modelling or helping to organise the Fashion Show you are invited to attend a meeting to discuss details on **Tuesday, August 23rd at 11.30 am** at the

Methodist Hall Abbey St. Please contact the national office to confirm your attendance.

The Fashion Show has is being organised to raise much needed funds for OWN. This has been planned for Sunday, October 9th at the Gibson Hotel located beside the Point Depot, Dublin. We seek **Models - real women of every size and shape**. If you are willing, interested and available for this event, we are looking for members who would be able to attend several meetings/rehearsals prior to the event and take part on the day. Members from outside Dublin are particularly welcome.

Working Group – members who would like to take part in organising the event, looking for sponsorship, promotion/publicity and co-ordination of clothing etc.



We also hope this event will raise the profile of the organisation. Here is your chance to be involved so let's all work together, as the banner says, "WE CAN DO IT!"

Composting for Fun- September 14th and 21st Botanic Gardens with Master Composter Ruth Stenson.

There are still places available for OWN members to take part in this event on Wednesday September 14th and 21st at 2.30pm in the Botanic Gardens. If you would be interesting in taking part in this event please contact the national office to book a place as places, though free are limited.

Literacy Support

According to the last international survey, 25% of Irish adults have literacy difficulties. This

compares with 3% in Sweden and 5% in Germany. However, people in the age category 55+ who struggle with basic literacy is over 40%. Most adults with literacy difficulties can read something but find it hard to understand official forms or deal with modern technology. Some will have left school confident about their numeracy and reading skills but find that changes in their workplace and everyday life make their skills inadequate.

If you feel that you would like to improve your literacy skills at any level or if you would be interested in becoming a Literacy Tutor please contact the OWN office in confidence to find out information on how you can get help or support around literacy.

POSTCARD Project

Congratulations, to OWN members, Eve O'Toole, Ruth Stenson, Marie Fox, and Helen Carty for the marvellous artwork submitted for the postcard project. Their work will be printed and distributed to promote the work of OWN.

NEWS

Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011

The Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2011 provides for a number of changes to social welfare schemes and for changes to the rules governing occupational pensions. The Act provides for the changes to the State Pension age which have already been announced in the National Pensions Framework. This means that the State Pension (Transition) will be abolished from 1 January 2014 and the age at which you become eligible for the State Pension will be increased to 67 in 2021 and to 68 in 2028.

Elderly drinking too much, doctors warn

Safe recommended drinking limits should be slashed for the over-65s to take into account the effects of ageing, according to a doctors' report urging more action to tackle alcohol and drug misuse among the elderly. Recent evidence has shown that the upper safe limit for older men is 1.5 units of alcohol a day compared to a current recommendation of not more than three to four units daily. For women over 65, the limits should be lowered from not regularly exceeding two to three units a day to just one unit a day, according to a report from the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

EVENTS

European Anti Poverty Network (EAPN) Ireland: European and national commitments to reducing poverty and exclusion

In March 2010 EU Member States including Ireland agreed on the Europe 2020 Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth. This strategy includes 5 key targets on a number of areas including education, employment and a commitment to reduce social exclusion and the number of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion by at least 20 million by 2020. Regional workshops have been organised to give people from marginalised communities, their organisations and others the opportunity: (1) to understand the commitments that have been made as part of Europe 2020; (2) to look at the reality for people and their communities and; (3) to discuss what needs to be done to achieve these commitments

EAPN workshops on the Europe 2020 Strategy:

5 September: St Munchins Family Resource Centre, Clonconnane Road, Ballynanty, Limerick.

6 September: European Parliament Office, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

9 September: Northside Community Development Partnership, Forthill, Sligo.

All seminars run from 10 am – 12.45 pm (followed by lunch). **To register or for further information please contact the OWN National Office at 01-8844536 .**

Fingal Age Friendly County Initiative Seminar Friday 9th September 2011

OWN's Board member Hazel Abdulla, who represents the network on the Fingal Senior Citizens Forum, has informed us that Fingal County Council is inviting Fingal residents to attend the Fingal Age Friendly County Initiative Seminar, at the Europa Academy, Balheary, Swords on Friday 9th September 2011 from 10.00am until 2.00pm.

This important seminar will identify opportunities to make Fingal an age friendly county and seek commitment from national and local leaders to make this happen. To register to attend please contact the National Office on 01-8844536

The European Year of Volunteering Roadshow

The European Year of Volunteering Roadshow is coming to Dublin: 22 – 26 August, 11 am – 4 pm, The Public Space and EP Conference Room, EC House, 18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

For further information please contact Kate, Volunteering Ireland, E: kate@volunteer.ie, T: 01 6359446 or visit www.eyv2011.ie.

The Irish Writers' Centre Novel Fair Competition

The inaugural Irish Writers' Centre Novel Fair for first-time novelists will take place on **March 10th 2012**. The Novel Fair aims to introduce up-and-coming writers to top publishers and literary agents, giving novelists the opportunity to pitch their ideas and place their synopsis and sample chapters directly into the hands of publishers and agents. There is no limitation on style, genre, or target market, the only requirement being that the writer has not published a novel before. This is an incredible opportunity for first-time novelists. **Deadline for submissions: November 11th 2011**

For more information or queries e-mail: novelfair@writerscentre.ie

The competition entry fee is €35 and can be paid by cheque, postal order or by paying in person with cash, credit or laser card in the Irish Writers' Centre.

National Heritage Week

National Heritage Week starts on August 20th – 28th nationwide. There is a marvellous selection of events planned to take place around the country – all free! To find out more www.heritageweek.ie or callsave 1850 200 878 for details.

EU NEWS

Freedom of movement for dogs from 1 January 2012 subject to treatment for tapeworm

For those members who wish to travel with their beloved pets, the Commission last week adopted a regulation permitting, as from 1 January 2012, a pre-movement treatment for dogs travelling to the four Member States (Ireland, Finland, United Kingdom and Malta) which have been listed as echinococcus (tapeworm) free. Any dog travelling to one of these four countries as from 1 January 2012 will need to receive a specific treatment administered by a vet. The details of the treatment should then be added by the vet to the pet's passport and the owner can travel with his pet from 24 hours to five days (120 hours) after treatment.

European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) photo contest

Going on holiday this summer to another EU country? Make it a safe and easy one!

Taking your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) with you on holiday can save you time, hassle and money if you fall ill or suffer an injury while abroad.

Enjoy your holidays and share with us photos featuring European Health Insurance Card in holiday/travel situations. You can win a fantastic trip to Mallorca!

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) photo contest runs from 14 July to 31 August 2011.

TIMETABLE OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Belfast educational visit to the Ulster Museum, Wednesday, 24th August, meeting at Connolly Station (Amiens Street) at 9.00am to catch the train.

The European Year of Volunteering Roadshow, 22-26 August, 11am-4pm, The Public Space and EP Conference Room, EC House, 18 Dawson Street, Dublin 2.

Dublin Meeting, Monday, August 29th, 10.30am-12.30pm, "Le Chile" Donnycarney Community & Youth Centre on Collins Avenue East, Dublin 5.

Dublin Meeting, Tuesday, August 30th, 10.30am-12.30pm, Carmelite Community Centre on Aungier Street, Dublin 2.

Health Promotion Day, Wednesday, 21st September, Academy Plaza Hotel in Findlater Place (Cathal Brugha St) just off O'Connell Street.

Fashion Show, Sunday, October 9th, the Gibson Hotel beside the Point Depot, Dublin.

European Anti Poverty Network workshops on the Europe 2020 Strategy:

Monday, 5th September, St. Munchins Family Resource Centre, Limerick

Tuesday, 6th September, European Parliament Office, Dublin

Friday, 9th September, Northside community Development Partnership, Sligo

Fingal Age Friendly County Initiative, Friday, 9th September, 10am-2pm, Europa Academy, Balheary, Swords.

Composting for Fun with Ruth Stenson, 14th and 21st September, 2.30pm, Botanic Gardens.

The Irish Writers' Centre Novel Fair Competition Submissions Deadline, 11th November.