

Dear Readers,

Throughout the summer, festivals around the country will celebrate Irish culture and heritage. The National Lottery provides funding to a diverse range of cultural groups nationwide, including **Earagail Arts Festival** in County Donegal. This festival takes place in July along the Wild Atlantic Way. Also featured in this issue is **West Cork Music**, which promotes three summer festivals in Bantry, Co. Cork.

This summer 88 Irish athletes will head to Los Angeles to compete in the 2015 Special Olympics World Games. National Lottery annually funds **Special Olympics Ireland** which helps provide the life-changing facilities that they offer to people with intellectual disabilities.

Also featured in this issue is **Skerries Harps** GAA Club in North County Dublin, which received a National Lottery grant to fund a new Clubhouse, and **Open Door** Day Centre in North Wicklow, who received a National Lottery grant for a new bus, which provides safe and reliable transport for people in the community.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Spark and wish you a very happy summer.

Nuala Kane
Public Relations Officer

Celebrating Arts Along Donegal's Wild Atlantic Way

Earagail Arts Festival, Donegal, takes place from 10 - 26 July 2015. Boasting a bi-lingual programme (Irish Gaelic & English) the festival



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celebrates the unique rural and unexplored landscapes along Donegal's Wild Atlantic Way on the North West Coast of Ireland. The Earagail Arts Festival is a venue-based music and arts festival with eclectic and alternative music, visual arts, circus and theatre programmes alongside spoken word, film, family and children centred events and workshops.

The festival aims to bring inspiring performers to this captivating European frontier, while also showcasing artists native to the area and providing opportunities for cultural exchange.

"The Earagail Arts Festival is proudly funded by National Lottery via The Arts Council of Ireland. The annual subvention supports the work of many Irish artists whilst providing access to cultural events for a wide demographic across the North West of Ireland." - Paul Brown, Festival Director.

Special Olympics Changes Lives

Special Olympics Ireland is a sports organisation for people with an intellectual disability, but it provides athletes with far more than the physical benefits of sport. Special Olympics changes lives. Through sport, athletes develop physically and emotionally, they make new friends, realise their dreams, and know they can fit in. Special Olympics Ireland enables our athletes to achieve and win not only in sport but in life too. Special Olympics Ireland currently has 9,165 athletes participating in 15 sports in 370 clubs around Ireland.

Matt English, CEO, Special Olympics Ireland, explained the importance of €1.2m in funding, partly funded by the National Lottery, which the organisation receives annually:

"Special Olympics' mission is to develop our programme of sports training so that every Irish person with an intellectual disability, who wishes to, has the opportunity to participate in sport in a community club setting. As a registered charity, funding is a vital component which enables the ongoing delivery of our programme. The Irish Sports



Niamh Thornton (13), from Clonsilla, Dublin and Billy Kane (14), from Swords, Co. Dublin, after competing in the gymnastics heats in last year's Special Olympics Ireland Games at University of Limerick.

Council grant that Special Olympics receive annually is part-funded by the National Lottery and without these funds the life-changing service that we offer to people with intellectual disabilities would be greatly diminished."

Celebrating Music in West Cork

West Cork Music promotes three summer festivals in Bantry, Co. Cork. The flagship event is the West Cork Chamber Music Festival, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year and one of Europe's leading chamber music events. Concerts from morning to late night take place in Bantry House and St Brendan's Church while



Natalie Clein and Thomas Larcher during the West Cork Chamber Music Festival

Ireland's only violin making exhibition runs throughout the Festival which takes place from 26 June to 4 July. Following on are the West Cork Literary Festival (12 – 18 July) and the Masters of Tradition (19 – 23 August), where traditional music is celebrated in its purest form.

During the autumn and winter months, the organisation's attention also turns to Tuning-Up, Cork County Council's programme of music in schools workshops which are organised and managed by West Cork Music. Sara O'Donovan, Marketing Manager with West Cork Music said,

“West Cork Music is generously supported by the Arts Council and therefore we are grateful for National Lottery Funding which helps the Arts Council fund organisations like ourselves.”



New Clubhouse for Skerries Harps



At the opening of Skerries Harps new Clubhouse in May 2015 are Club Secretary John O'Connor; Uachtaran Cumann Luthchleas Gael, Aogan O'Fearghail, and Niall Murphy, Chairman Skerries Harps

Skerries Harps is a very progressive sporting clubs in North County Dublin. A new Clubhouse was officially opened on 3 May 2015 by GAA President Aogan O'Fearghail. At a cost of €1.5million, the Clubhouse was developed thanks to a National Lottery sports grant of €550,000 and with equivalent fundraising efforts by club members.

The new facility includes four state-of-the-art dressing rooms, a modern bar facility with viewing balcony and two meeting rooms for use by members and local community groups. Also included in the development is a floodlit system on the main pitch.

With a membership of over 1,000, Skerries Harps Clubhouse reaches out to a broad section of the community. The club currently fields over 50 teams in competitive games within Dublin at all codes including football, hurling, ladies football and camogie.

Caring in the Community with Open Door

This year Open Door is proud to celebrate 30 years of caring in the community and would like to thank everyone who has helped make a difference to members lives.

Open Door, a charitable trust founded in 1984, cares for adults in North Wicklow and South County Dublin. The Centre provides activities for people with physical and sensory disabilities as a result of stroke, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, motor neurone disease, spina bifida and road accidents amongst others. Activities include art, music, computers, physiotherapy, ceramics and woodwork. Open Door is a vital social outlet for its members and also provides much needed support for carers and their families. Transport is provided in three specially adapted buses to and from the Centre as needed.

“We are delighted to have received National Lottery funding which allowed us to replace our oldest bus. This means that we have reliable, safe transport for our daily runs and also for outings to other centres,” said Suzanne Cox, Development Officer, Open Door.

To learn how Open Door can help you, or indeed, how you can help Open Door, visit www.opendoor.ie