



Annual Report
January 2009 -
March 2010

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Vision

People with learning disabilities are fully integrated and accepted within society



Mission

To provide training and support which enables people with a learning disability or learning difficulty to fulfil their work potential

Values

- ✓ Everyone's rights and dignity should be **respected**.
- ✓ Everyone has the right to work towards achieving their **potential**.
- ✓ Everyone has the right to appropriate employment and the **dignity** that it can bring.
- ✓ Everyone is different. Diversity should be acknowledged and **celebrated**.
- ✓ Quality is important. **Excellence** should be reflected in everything we do.
- ✓ Everyone's opinion is of value and should be **heard**.
- ✓ **Integrity**, honesty and trustworthiness should underpin everything we do.

Chair's Report 2009/10

During 2009, we strengthened our partnership with NOW and delivered some fantastic results specifically with regards to our employment programme. Well done to all involved in making this happen. Meeting and in some cases beating our targets means that we have very real evidence of the impact we are having on our trainees' lives. This in turn places us in a strong position when it comes to drawing down future funding.



We can never be complacent about our future financial security. Particularly in these austere times we need to show extra scrutiny in managing our resources and be even more creative and competitive in identifying and securing funding streams.

It is additionally important that we lobby and demonstrate our value at a Ministerial level and we were delighted to welcome Minister for Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Michael McGimpsey in March 2009. A lot of preparation work went into the visit and my thanks to everyone who contributed on the day. The Minister was very impressed by the work of Stepping Stones and we had a special reference in his departmental newsletter after his visit. We will continue to make this type of lobbying activity a priority in coming years.

It was another year of staff movement in 2009. During the Chief Officer's maternity leave, our Operations Manager Emma Moriarty very capably acted up and then during Emma's maternity leave and until the return of Paula, Cara Cash stepped into the front line. I think it is a credit to all our staff, how

everyone pulled together and still made great things happen during this period of change.

Every year the Board reviews and refreshes our strategy and this year was no exception with Board members and senior staff undertaking this in April. One of the key things to emerge from this session was the requirement for a review of our organisational structure. Stepping Stones, has expanded considerably since it's inception 12 years ago and we believed that a review was necessary to ensure that our structures and roles were fit for the future and capable of delivering our strategic ambitions. A considerable amount of work was undertaken relating to this including a review of the external market alongside interviews and reviews of every member of staff's job description. We are currently in the process of implementing the outcome of this review.

As reported last year, we have amended our mission to include people with learning difficulties as well as disabilities. As a result, it was important to update our marketing literature and website to reflect this change. The new website looks great and is much more vibrant and user friendly.

We continue to refresh our board and will be able to report on new board members in next year's report. Sadly, in August 2009, our dear friend and fellow board member George Graham passed away. As acknowledged in last year's report, George was a fantastic supporter of Stepping Stones and we miss him dearly. At our celebration event at Hillsborough in July 2009, many people were only too delighted that George was able to attend, as he had been instrumental in organising these and other fundraising events over many years.

Our social enterprises did well during 2009 despite the slowing economic conditions. We will continue to monitor them closely and are pleased that marketing plans are in place for each to grow business. Undoubtedly winning awards such as Best Eating Establishment 2009 from Lisburn City Business Awards, the achievement of the coffee shop, in Seymour Street, is a major boost to staff morale and business.

Thank you once again to our trainees, parents and carers for your continued support of Stepping Stones. The trainees' commitment, drive and enthusiasm is infectious to all who work with them. It's why we are here and makes our jobs all the more rewarding.

The Board is also very thankful to the staff of Stepping Stones. During another year of considerable change, they have shown real professionalism and commitment to the charity. The wonderful work of Stepping Stones could not be achieved without them and we are very proud to have them.

Finally, thank you to my fellow board members for all their time, patience and support.



**Thank you once again
to our trainees, parents
and carers for your
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Acting Chief Officers Report

2009 was an incredible year for Stepping Stones, while I was still Employment Manager, we successfully launched our Transitions Service to great acclaim. This service is testament to the fact that Stepping Stones continue to develop person centred initiatives to further enable our trainees.



We worked hard to develop strong links with local schools, both mainstream and special education as well as local employers, to enable work experience weeks to happen throughout the year. In this period 17 local students availed of our service and have since made the move to further training at local colleges, at Stepping Stones or made the move into employment.

We also had more clients of the employment service go into paid employment and voluntary work than ever before which was very welcome news in a difficult economic climate. This was helped by the fact that we are now able to work with people with learning difficulties. We also continued to develop our relationship with jobs and benefits teams throughout the Trust area, leading to greater numbers of clients accessing our services. The hard work and dedication of the employment team helped to make these results happen and I would like to sincerely thank them all for their continuing support and enthusiasm. They are continually thinking of original and tailored ways to support the differing needs of our clients to enable them to enter employment, and have made us a force to be reckoned with in the field of supported employment.

I spent the 2nd half of the year as acting Operations Manager and acting Chief Officer as Emma Moriarty left to have her son Adam and our Chief Officer was on maternity after the birth of her daughter Kate. Congratulations to both families.

I continued the good work of Emma and Paula by further reiterating to all of our trainees, parents, carers and all other parties that we were here to support our trainee's progression to the world of work in whatever capacity their ability allowed. I worked closely with our management board to have a structural review carried out on the organisation as a whole to ensure we are fit for future purpose. This review further highlighted the dedication and commitment of the entire staff team and the recommendations made will make us a stronger more robust organisation.

Our partnership with the NOW Project continued to develop throughout this period and special thanks should be afforded to them for the support shown from their senior management team in the absence of our Chief Officer. The employment and training teams continued to do joint marketing and carry out partnership meetings to ensure all parties were performing to a high standard. The partnership continues to deliver high level services to adults

with learning disabilities and learning difficulties throughout the trust areas, with Stepping Stones focusing on our South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust areas.

The training at Stepping Stones went from strength to strength with the appointment of our new training coordinator Helen Jelly. The training team worked incredibly hard this year to launch new training programs to include Safety Skills, COSHH and Customer Care. They also carried out renewed marketing to encourage new relationships and partnerships.

Our social enterprises experienced a difficult period as a result of the economic downturn but were proactive in designing more robust marketing plans and strategies to ensure we were reaching our customers. The trainees continued to work extremely hard to produce exquisite cards and framing products and the food in our coffee shops was, as always delicious. So much so that our Seymour Street Coffee Shop was awarded Best Eating Establishment in Lisburn 2009. The award was high praise indeed, and acknowledgement of the teams dedication and hard work.

We also saw trainees progress in Picture Framing as well as the business achieving membership of the Fine Art Trade Guild. This is proof of the high quality products and services we deliver to all of our customers and was a great achievement for the staff. The staff also introduced a computerised order system to make our services more streamlined and this has helped them deliver the highest possible level of customer service.

Pink Elephant Cards invested in meeting the customer's needs by developing new designs in wedding stationery in order to generate much needed income for the organisation. The trainees also saw achievement in completion of the WEA craft course which required a lot of hard work and the end results were beautiful pieces of work.

This year also saw new partnerships for Stepping Stones; Lisnagarvey Arts Society donated artwork to the organisation to increase income, this was a welcome addition to work for Picture Framing trainees to work on. We were also awarded the Charity of the Year by the Lisburn Soprotimists Society; this led not only to donations from the group, but their members volunteering their time at our Saturday car park helping us to fundraise.

Whilst we have been operating in difficult times the resilience of the staff, volunteers, board members, clients and trainees has, as always been amazing. We have as an organisation managed to grow, develop and achieve more than ever and all parties involved should be wholeheartedly congratulated. We have also remained true to our mission supporting young adults with learning disabilities and learning difficulties to fulfil their work potential.

I am extremely proud of the year that we have had and I am excited to see what we can do in the year ahead.

Employment Service

The impact of our Employment Service

Transitions Service	17 people
Employment Service	65 people
Working with	100 Employers

As an organisation delivering services for people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties we have during this period developed our Employment Service in partnership with NOW Project to be successful and most of all there to support our clients find and keep a paid job.

With a motivated and committed team our Employment Service provided the mechanism in which people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties got the support they need to access employment opportunities and the support they need to ensure that it worked well into the future.

2009 saw the launch of the Transitions Service, which has been a resounding success to date. In the first ten months since its fruition in June 2009, the Transitions Service has proved to be an invaluable service to local school leavers, in both special educational and mainstream schools, in their post school development. We have seen continued and significant interest in this and our other services from local schools, parents, social workers, employers, and the education boards. Students have been successfully supported into further education, training, and employment, which is the overall long term aim of this vital service.

Clients into Employment and Voluntary Work

Part time	11 people
Full time	7 people
Voluntary	22 people



Working with employers is vital to the success of the Employment Service and Stepping Stones values the excellent working relationships that have been established and built upon during the reporting period to ensure opportunities for young people through work trials, work experience leading to employment.

Here's Aarons story

Aaron's story began when he joined the Training Department, while still at school to complete a Travel Training course. He progressed onto the Transitions Service in June 2009 to undergo vocational training in our Picture Framing Department. Aaron showed enormous potential during this short time and as a result he and his parents recognised that progression onto employment was indeed achievable and within his reach.

With the ongoing support and training provided by the various services in Stepping Stones Aaron will no doubt reach his full work potential.



Here's James's Story

"Stepping Stones has helped me to get a paid job."

Joseph's
at Menarys

- Breakfasts
- Speciality coffee & tea
- Lunch
- Sweets
- Desserts

James joined the Training Service with Stepping Stones in September 2008. Through the service he has been a high achiever completing his NVQ Level 1 in Food and Drink Service, Food Hygiene Awareness, Customer Service Certificate, Welcome Host Certificate, and Work Preparation. He is currently doing his NVQ Level 1 in Food Preparation & Cooking.

During this time, with the support of his Employment Officer, James was able to put theory into practice outside of Stepping Stones. He began a work placement in Josephs Cafe, Menarys, Lisburn, in July 2009 as a Catering Assistant.

James proved to be very successful and became a great asset to Josephs. With ongoing support from Stepping Stones and Josephs he was offered part-time paid employment in April 2010, due to his enthusiasm, commitment and great skill in his work.

James says "I enjoy helping and talking to customers when clearing the tables. Stepping Stones have helped me to get a paid job and also help me with any problems I have"

James is undoubtedly a great role model for those eager to progress into paid employment in their chosen field of work.



Here's Reggie's Story

Reggie became a client of the Stepping Stones Employment Service in June 2009. He had previous work placements in a retail environment and wanted to find a paid job within it.

As Reggie was interested in working in the retail sector his Employment Officer secured him a work placement in July 2009 at Beechlawn Service Station as a Retail Assistant.

His duties included stocking the shelves, working in the stockroom, cleaning the windows, washing the forecourt and keeping the forecourt tidy. The Management of Beechlawn Service Station, from the outset, was impressed with the standard of his work and the progress he continued to make.

When a job opportunity came up at Beechlawn Service Station, with the support of Stepping Stones, Reggie applied and successfully achieved the position of Retail Assistant with the organisation.

Reggie is very pleased with his new job "I really like it here. I would like to thank Stepping Stones for helping me to get this job. I'm very happy"

Reggie commenced his new role in August 2009 and is continuing to enjoy it. His employers are pleased with his work and his progress .

"I would like to thank Stepping Stones for helping me to get this job. I'm very happy".

“I wanted to work but just couldn’t get a job. I was sitting at home doing nothing and it was really boring. Stepping Stones helped me to get my job and still helps me now.” Nicola

Training

Achievements in training courses

- ✓ 8 Level 1 NVQ in Catering/ Food Service and Food Preparation
- ✓ 12 OCN Independent Travel Training
- ✓ 5 OCN accredited Workability
- ✓ 20 Royal Society Public Health and Food Hygiene Awareness

- ✓ 10 Customer Care
- ✓ 5 Working with others
- ✓ 4 Barista Coffee Training
- ✓ 7 Travel Training Refreshers
- ✓ 63 people accessing training
- ✓ 15 CCEA Creative Craft Course Level 1



The Training Department has worked closely with the Employment Service and the newly launched Transitions Service during this reporting period to deliver excellent training courses in Customer Care, Royal Society Public Health Food Hygiene and Appropriate Work Behaviour to pupils at Parkview and Beechlawm Schools.

We have continued to develop strong working relationships with other organisations across Lisburn and the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust Area e.g Down Residential Project, Beeches at Aghalee to name a few. Working with these organisations has provided the opportunity for people with learning disabilities attending their various services to access accredited training courses with the support from the professional and skilled training team of Stepping Stones.

A trainee who has achieved her Barista qualification becoming skilled at making a variety of coffees for our customers says "I found the Barista training very interesting. I learnt how to make espressos, Lattes, Cappuccinos, Choca Mocha and Americanos. This is very useful because I now have the coffee making experience to help me in the future."

The Stepping Stones training team deliver quality professional training to our trainees and clients, and look forward to the year ahead to help our young people develop their skills and learning.



Delivering
quality
professional
training to
our trainees



Our Social Enterprises

The Avenue

The Avenue, our social economy coffee shop, business venue and catering provider has continued to support 6 people with learning disabilities who wanted to be volunteers.

During this reporting period our volunteers have successfully undertaken Welcome Host Training and our Coffee Shop has benefited from a makeover with funding received from the Modernisation Fund from the Department of Social Development. Through this fund automated doors were also installed in order to make our premises more accessible to wheelchair users accessing the premises.

theavenue

Supporting
6 people
with
learning
disabilities



Picture Framing

Throughout the reporting period Stepping Stones Picture Framing has further developed the skills of 10 trainees in Picture Framing.

The professional staff and volunteers work hard to support trainees to develop practical, social and work related skills, providing them with the tools they need to progress into employment.

Our trainees have great enthusiasm for their work and, alongside staff, are committed to producing high quality framing and excellent Customer Service. One trainee recently commented on his progression and experience "I learned to use the machinery in Picture Framing. I am very happy here."

We have achieved our Guild Framers Award during the reporting period, which is evidence of our quality service and the product. A customer recently stated "The staff are friendly and polite and do their best in all aspects to help you get the frame you want."

We have achieved our Guild Framers Award



Pink Elephant Cards

Pink Elephant Cards continues to go from strength to strength.

During the reporting period we have continued to raise our brand identity within the highly competitive wedding stationery market and have increased positive feedback from customers, "Fantastic cards and great choices available."

Our products are always developed to the highest standard, enabling our trainees to further develop, Sarah a trainee commented "Pink Elephant has helped me to improve my skills so I can go out into the world of work, my job is great fun and I have met loads of new people."

With increased marketing, attendance at wedding fairs and our new website www.stepping-stones.org.uk/business/pink-elephant-cards we increased our customer base. The continued development of the business has the positive outcome of creating a realistic working environment for 5 trainees per day.

Throughout the period 15 Trainees achieved personal success by completing a CCEA Creative Craft Course Level 1, we would like to take this opportunity to congratulate them.



"My job is great fun and I have met loads of new people."



Stepping Stones Coffee Shop

Our Coffee Shop provides a fantastic training facility for our trainees to gain catering experience in a realistic working environment.

The organisation has centre approval from City and Guilds to deliver NVQ programmes in Level 1 Food & Drinks Service and Level 1 Food Preparation & Cooking, and in March 2009 we are delighted to report that 8 trainees successfully completed their training in catering with the completion of their NVQ qualifications.

Kelly Ann is one of the 8 trainees who achieved her NVQ qualification and progressed on to employment as a kitchen porter with the Hastings Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle Co Down as a result of her training. When asked about Kelly Ann Vincent Duffy (Head Chef) at the Slieve Donard commented "Kelly Ann works with us as a kitchen porter part-time. We have found her to be hard working, willing, and enthusiastic about her role. We are glad to have Kelly Ann as part of our professional team."

Kelly Ann commented "I recently got my first paid job in the Slieve Donard, I have to do the dishes and clean the wine glasses. I really love my job and the people I work with are dead on."

One of the highlights of 2009 was the presentation of "Best Eating Establishment in Lisburn (non licensed) at the Lisburn City Business Awards by Lisburn City Council. This was a great achievement for the team of trainees, volunteers and staff at the Coffee Shop and a testament to our dedicated quality and service. Additionally we also achieved and maintained our 5 Stars Scores on the Doors from Lisburn City Council.



Finances Jan 2009/Mar 2010

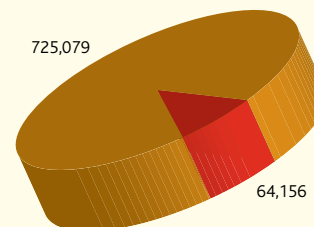
Total Resources Expended:	£789,235
Costs of generating voluntary income	£725,079
Fundraising trading: cost of goods sold	£64,156
And other costs	£789,235

Total Incoming Resources:	£833,716
Voluntary income	£661,361
Activities for generating funds	£146,929
Investment Income	£1,875
Other Investment Income	£23,551

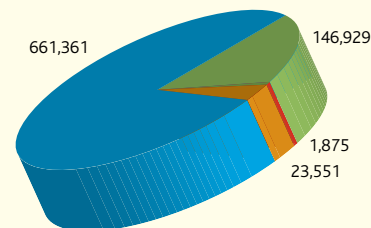
Sources of Income 2009/2010

Donations	£5,565
South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	£229,348
ESF/DEL/DAS	£373,946
DSD	£28,624
Charitable Trust	£15,000
Deferred Income	£8,878
Charity Car Park	£18,456
Other	£5,095
Social Enterprise income	£146,929
Investment Income	£1,875

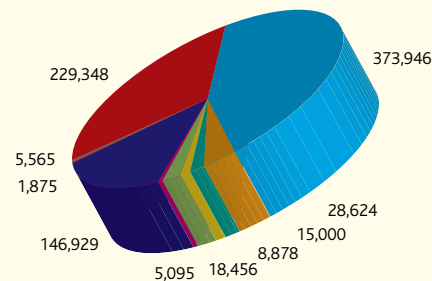
Total Resources Expended



Total Incoming Resources



Sources of Income



Thank You

We wish to say a very big thank you to all our funders and customers who have given us assistance and financial support throughout the period from January 2009 to March 2010.

In particular we appreciate the continued support through our service level agreement with South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust (SEHSCT) and the funding received for our Workforce Project from ESF and part funded from Department of Employment and Learning with match funding from the Disablement Advisory Service and (SEHSCT). Without this funding people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties would not be able to be supported through training into sustainable employment.

We were delighted to receive funding from the Modernisation Fund through the Department of Social Development in order to make improvements to our premises for wheel chair users with the installation of automated doors, and the overall appearance our Social Economy premises.

As always we appreciate the support from all our volunteers who give up their free time to help so willingly and generously at the Saturday Car Park and throughout our services. A big thank you to all of you.

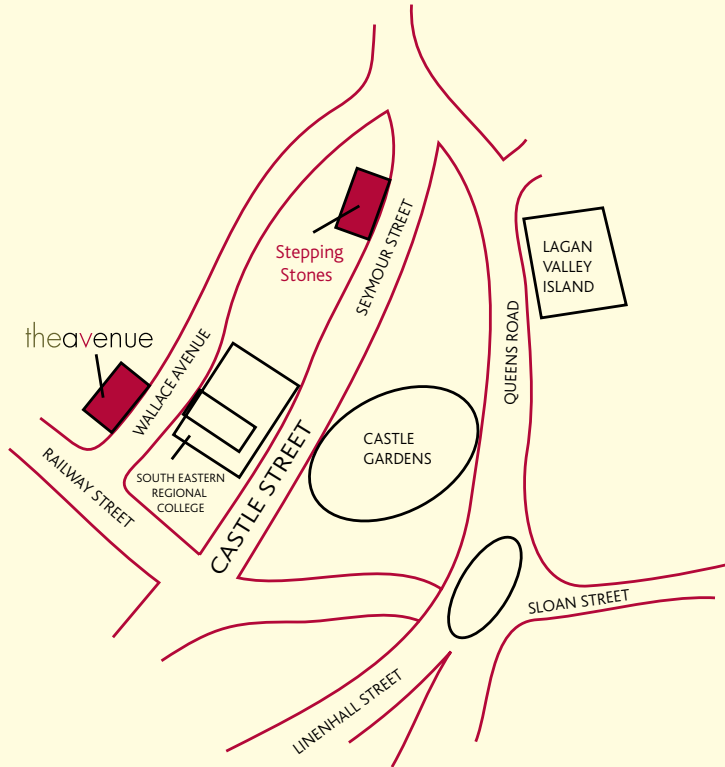
Also we thank our Employers and Companies in the Lisburn Community who assist with work placements, work trials and give employment opportunities to our trainee and clients.

Finally may we thank the trainees, clients and staff of Stepping Stones for all your hard work, motivation and commitment during this reporting year.



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