

Stepping Stones NI Newsletter



Issue 2 Nov 10

Wishing all you all a **Very Happy and Peaceful Christmas**
and New Year from Stepping Stones NI

New Board Members

Stepping Stones NI is proud to welcome 4 new Board Members with the skills and expertise to bring good governance and strategic direction to the organisation. The recently appointed Board Members are:



Mike Jones – Mike is Regional Director/Ireland for Penna PLC – a UK, Ireland and European HR consultancy.



Richard Knox – Richard is currently employed by Translink involved in a strategic role as head of organisation development, and he is also President of Lisburn Chamber of Commerce.



Paul Fox – Paul works for Ulster Bank and has held roles in recent years such as Area Manager and Divisional Head of Direct Banking.



Canice Hamill – currently runs his own consulting business Canice Consulting based in Lisburn.

Good luck and we hope that you will enjoy your new appointments.

ICU!

We were successful in gaining funding from European Union's Regional Development Fund (ERDF), managed by the Special European Programmes Body (SEUPB) and administered by the Lisburn/Castlereagh Peace III Partnership to deliver a new training programme to adults with learning disabilities and learning difficulties.

The "Inclusion, Communication and Understanding" (ICU) programme will enable our trainees to better understand what it means to be part of a community and how to be a valued citizen. 30 trainees will have the opportunity to access the programme which runs to March 2011.

Thank you to the Peace III Partnership for the funds to deliver the project.

If you would like to register for the programme please contact Helen Jelly (Training Coordinator) for details.



Stepping Stones says NO to Bullies

Stepping Stones NI supported the National Anti Bullying campaign from 15th November delivering a week long programme packed with "anti-bullying" workshops. The workshops were attended by our Stepping Stones trainees who all agreed that we need stamp out bullying. The workshops were also a great way to engage in discussion on the different types of bullying and how we can react to bullying and bullies.

Welcome Back:



We would like to welcome back our Chief Officer - **Paula Jennings**, Operations Manager - **Emma Moriarty**, and Craft Development Worker - **Susan Cunningham** following maternity leave.

Volunteering at Stepping Stones

We recently launched a new initiative to further support our incredibly loyal base of volunteers. A new "Volunteers Forum" will ensure that all our Volunteers are supported, included and appreciated as much as possible. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our all our Volunteers who give their time in many ways to making a difference to our charity. If you would like any information on how to become a Volunteer please contact Emma Moriarty our Operations Manager.

Contact Stepping Stones NI

Tel: 028 9266 7124 www.stepping-stones.org.uk
39 Seymour Street, Lisburn, Co.Antrim BT27 4SY

theavenue

celebrates 5th birthday



The Avenue Coffee Shop & Business Venue recently celebrated its 5th Birthday.

To help us celebrate, on Wednesday 27th October 2010 we were joined by The Right Worshipful the Major Alderman Paul Porter and Jonathan Craig MLA who were treated to speciality coffee and birthday cake provided by the team.



As well as birthday celebrations the Avenue team have been busy designing a new corporate catering menu, a Kids birthday party menu and developing a delicious winter menu to keep all of our customer's taste buds busy over the coming months.

For all your catering needs we are open 8am to 3pm, Monday to Friday. Tel: 028 9260 4055.



Congratulations to

- **Kyle Duncan** (Employment Officer) and **Joanne Murray** (Acting Employment Manager) who were recently successful in passing their Foundation Diploma in Supported Employment (Open Training College accredited through National University of Ireland.) Well done to them both!
- **Cara Cash** (Acting Operations Manager) who through the Advanced Diploma in Management Practice from the University of Ulster Business School attended a residential hosted by Boston College.
- **Mandy Jackson** (Trainer) and **Helen Jelly** (Training Coordinator) both completed their EDCL at college.
- The **staff from Stepping Stones Coffee Shop and the Avenue** who successfully updated their Basic Food Hygiene certificates.

New Appointments

- **Cara Cash** has been appointed as Business Development Manager and **Joanne Murray** as Employment Manager. Good luck in your new roles.

Our Partnership with the NOW Project

Stepping Stones has been successfully been delivering its training and employment service in partnership with the NOW Project in North and West Belfast since June 2008. During this time Stepping Stones have been able to support over 65 people with learning disabilities and learning difficulties into employment and volunteering opportunities. This programme is called Workforce and is funded by ESF part funded by the Department of Employment and Learning. Through the Workforce Project we have seen 34 clients of the Stepping Stones Employment Service gain employment, supported by our professional team of staff and through the partnership approach to the delivery of our services.

Transition Service

During 2009 Stepping Stones launched its new Transitions Service which prepares young people for life after school.

With support from Jamie Greer our Transitions Officer pupils have the opportunity to access work experience placements and training courses. These courses teach important skills that are transferable into work and home life as well as accreditation in recognised qualifications.

Since June 2009 we have worked closely with many local schools, mainstream and special education. These relationships have led to many pupils making the move from school with ease and continuity.

James Scott, a pupil from Parkview school says "I am on placement 2 days out of school each week working on an open activity farm and a riding school. When I leave school I want Stepping Stones to get me a job working outdoors."

Parkview's Vice Principal Nicola Kelly commented "As a school, we are pleased to welcome the introduction of the Stepping Stones Transition Service. In its' first year this programme has helped several of our pupils prepare for the difficult process of leaving school. We hope that this young and growing service prospers in the years ahead."

"Stepping Stones continues to provide many excellent services to a number of SEELB Statement pupils, whether it is assisting them to gain various skills and experience or aid their development into adult life and make their goals a reality." Gary Harpur, SEELB Transitions Co-coordinator.



Five Star Treatment for our Award Winning Coffee Shop

Our busy Stepping Stones coffee shop recently upheld its 5 Star" Scores on the Doors Award", a testament to the hard work from both staff and trainees.

Awarded the Best Eating Establishment in 2009 by Lisburn City Business Awards we provide excellent customer service and delicious food all prepared by our trainees.



NVQs and Training

The Stepping Stones Coffee Shop and delivers high quality accredited NVQ training in Level 1 in Food Service and Food Preparation. Our trainees undertake their NVQs supported by our assessors. Gillian is a trainee who came to Stepping Stones last year as a volunteer to help in the kitchen; she has since become a trainee at Stepping Stones. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Gillian and all our trainees who are working hard to complete their NVQs and training courses.

Left: Margaret
Johnston (Vocational
Training Officer)
Right: Gillian
Crothers (Trainee)

“Stepping Stones means everything to me it is going to help me to get a job and get paid and when I pass my NVQ I will get a job. I like cooking and preparing food and making food for customers”. Gillian, Sept 2010.

Opulence in new designs at Pink Elephant

Pink Elephant Wedding Stationery received great response from customers at the recently attended Bridal Fayre at the Kings Hall in October. New designs were well received from wedding planners and customers. Our ranges of fabulous wedding stationery can be seen on our website www.stepping-stones.org.uk, finding us on Facebook and or by just calling into the workshop in Seymour Street.

facebook



In the Frame with the Fine Art Trade Guild

Having recently become members of The Fine Art Trade Guild our customers can be assured that the highest levels of skill, attention to detail and technique are applied to each piece we receive.

Picture framing also celebrated the launch of their independent web page www.lisburnframing.com. Our customers can find out about all of our services, the training we deliver and what sets us apart from other picture framing businesses.

Our Stepping Stones Employment Service

Aaron recently joined the Employment Service at Stepping Stones NI having progressed through our Transitions Service in June 2010. With the support of his Employment Officer Aaron secured a 16 hour permanent job as an Administration Assistant in Reid & Co. Solicitors in Lisburn.

Aaron is autistic and currently requires ongoing support in the workplace to enable him to develop his key work skills. Stepping Stones NI, recognising Aaron's potential, advised him and his employer to join the Workable NI Programme, a Department of Education and Learning (DEL) programme, delivered in partnership with the ACCET and NOW consortium by Stepping Stones NI.

The workable programme aims to provide support for both employees and employers to ensure that people with disabilities and learning difficulties find and keep appropriate jobs. This support is initially provided for two years but can be extended if required.

The programme provides person centred support to enable employees with a disability to integrate into the workplace. It will help them to develop and improve skills, confidence independence, and support career development.

The programme assists employers helping them to meet the needs of their workforce by providing



support and promoting equality. Throughout the entire programme Stepping Stones will also provide access to advice and guidance on/off site and disability training for all staff.

Since joining the programme Aaron continues to develop in his work and his skills are growing every day.

Stephen Reid of Reid & Co. Solicitors commented "We have found the Workable Programme to be an excellent plan for Employers with employees with special needs or disabilities.

The skills training given through the programme is providing our employee, Aaron, with the essential basics to work as an Administration Assistant in a busy legal firm. Our expectations for

Aaron's progression are now much higher with the input of Stepping Stones and the Workable Programme.

We have found the skills matching to the job role and the ability of Stepping Stones to highlight a gap in skills and provide advice and the tools to develop that skill, beneficial to both the employer and employee. It is about looking at what needs to be developed and determining what can be done about it, observing the gap and developing training interventions."

For more details on the Workable programme or our on how the employment service can help you call Joanne Murray (Employment Manager) on 02892666404

Modernisation Fund

In November Paula Jennings Chief Officer at Stepping Stones attended an event hosted by the Social Development Minister Alex Attwood who endorsed projects funded by the Department for Social Development Modernisation Fund Capital Programme. Stepping Stones received £34,610 to make improvements to its social enterprises and improve the accessibility of its premises for wheel chair users. The organisation thanks the Modernisation Fund for the grant to improve its facilities to the benefit of its trainees and its customers.





Celebration Event

On 15th Sept 2010 we were joined by over 200 guests to celebrate the achievements of our trainees and clients over the last year at a fabulous event at the Island Centre Lisburn.

The event was hosted by Tim Mc Garry from the "Hole in the Wall" Gang who presented trainees with over 70 certificates and 17 awards for employment. At the event the Fire Authority for Northern Ireland were awarded Stepping Stones Employer of the year and 8 other local employers were recognised as champions of Stepping Stones.

Special thanks to our employers who sponsored the event – Super Value and The Car Cleaning Company Lisburn as well as our funders European Social Fund, Department of Employment and Learning, Disablement Advisory Service and South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust for their support.



Soroptimists International of Lisburn

Stepping Stones greatly appreciates the generosity of the Soroptimists as they have appointed us as their charity of the year. During the year its members have volunteered their time at our Saturday Car park at Lisburn Health Centre helping to raise funds for the organisation. The Soroptimists have been great supporters of our work in which we are grateful.

Karen Elliot President of the Soroptimists said "We just love the work of Stepping Stones and how it helps people with disabilities, as members we are glad to help by and giving our time to help with this a local service"



Trainee Away Day

In August this year over 23 of our trainees attended their first trainee team building event at the Life Centre Castlewellan forest park. Trainees participated in activities such as canoeing, archery and orienteering. It is hoped that this will be an annual event in the organisation.



Employer Breakfast

On 10th November the employment service held its first employer business breakfast at the Avenue Conference Room. The event was a great opportunity to further develop links with the business community and local employers who employ or support clients in their workplace.

If you are an employer and want to find out more please contact Joanne Murray (Employment Manager) on 028 9266 6404 or 07912 085669

Training course

If you know someone who might be interested in our services please contact us on 028 9266 7124

See us at the Fashion Souk on Sunday 11th December 2010 in the Waterfront Hall.

Workability Course

Congratulations to the five trainees who completed our OCN accredited Workability course at the end of October 2010. This course included preparing for work, appropriate work behaviour and communication skills. Our trainee's motivation and commitment to achieve on the course was to be commended. Well done to you.



Workability Trainees; Michael Byrne, Andrew Marks, Aileen Austin, Theresa McMahon and Sarah Alderdice.