

Stepping Stones NI Newsletter



Issue 3 July 11

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Mayor of Lisburn, Alderman Paul Porter helps Stepping Stones Trainee Rosie Scott and Chief Officer Paula Jennings celebrate the Charity's 13th Birthday at an event held at Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn.

Stepping Stones celebrated its 13th birthday recently at a gala event hosted by the City's then Mayor Alderman Paul Porter.

Reuniting past and present board members, staff, funders, supporters, trainees and clients, the event - held at the Island Civic Centre, Lisburn - recognised the success of our Training, Transitions and Employment programmes, which since 1996 have helped over 400 people with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Chief Officer Paula Jennings said the event was a perfect showcase for celebrating the story of Stepping Stones. She said, "We've been on an incredible journey since launching 13 years ago, and the event was an ideal way to reflect on

this journey, thank our supporters and reiterate our message to the local business and political community."

Also speaking at the event was Rosie Scott from Lisburn, one of the first trainees to work with Stepping Stones. Having completed various training courses, Rosie secured employment in Lisburn's Four Seasons Nursing Home four years ago and described the employment as "a great way to make new friends" who are very special to her. Rosie commented "I am very proud of myself, and of Stepping Stones".

Stepping Stones Company Membership

Would you like to become a Company Member? For just an annual subscription of £10 you can. If you are interested just email Stepping.Stones@nireland.com or check out our website for more details.
www.stepping-stones.org.uk



Fundraising Event Speed Style

On Wednesday 14th September 2011 at the Tannery, Moira. Tickets £20 available at Stepping Stones
For More details and ticket sales contact Cara Cash on
Cara.Cash@stepping-stones.org.uk
or 028 9266 7124



Business Award Success for the Avenue!

The Lisburn City Business Awards were held at the Lagan Valley Island Centre on 19th April 2011.

The awards host, Comedian William Caulfield, steered the 250 strong audience through the evening's packed programme of 12 prestigious award categories. We are delighted to report that in **The Best Non-Licensed Eating Establishment category** Stepping Stones Coffee Shop and The Avenue were nominated for the award, with The Avenue winning the overall prize.

We won the award on "our warm welcome, impeccable service, great menu selection and an excellent, tasty lunch experience" stated the mystery shopper. We are delighted with our achievement and would like to thank our staff and volunteers for all their hard work.

theavenue



Supporting people into Employment

April 2011 saw the launch of the second phase of the Workforce Project, run in partnership between Stepping Stones NI and NOW.

The first programme supported over 50 people into supported into employment and training delivered to over 150 people. The programme continues to be funded by the European Social Fund through the Department of Employment and Learning. Since the start of April 2011 Stepping Stones Employment Service has supported 6 people with learning disabilities or learning difficulties into paid employment



Employment Success

Congratulations to Stephen!

After being recently made redundant, Stepping Stones Employment Service supported Stephen Gillespie to find a new job that would make good use of his particular and unique skill set.

Stephen gained paid employment with the Northern Bank at the end of May 2011 and has been busy learning the ropes and getting to know his new colleagues.

Stephen is responsible for sorting and delivering all of the internal and external post to the different departments within and throughout the offices at Killeaton House, Dunmurry.

This has been an excellent achievement for Stephen, Well Done from all at Stepping Stones.



Stepping Stones up for Awards

Stepping Stones has had an incredible few months receiving recognition for the work of the organisation.

We have been named as finalists in the following awards ceremonies:

- Finalists for Best Community Project in the Belfast Telegraph “Make the Difference Awards”
- Finalists for Best Social Enterprise in the Lisburn City Business Awards
- Finalists for Most Innovative Employer (small business) in the Irish News Workplace and Employment Awards
- Finalists for Managing Talent Employer (small business) in the Irish News Workplace and Employment Awards

Paula Jennings Chief Officer stated “It is wonderful for us to know that the work we do is being recognised in some of the biggest awards ceremonies in Northern Ireland. We are up against some incredible projects and private companies, and are delighted to nominated for these fanitastic awards.

Travel Safe Guide Launch

Stepping Stones were delighted to be involved in the redevelopment of Department of Regional Development Travel Safe Guide.

In February two of our trainees Aaron Reid and Aaron Bartolo worked with the Department on their new Travel Safe Guide by demonstrating the safe way to travel around Lisburn, pausing every so often for the camera. The opportunity to be involved in such a guide was welcomed by Stepping Stones and our trainees.

Mandy Jackson Trainer at Stepping Stones delivered Travel Safety Skills training to trainees during the year and commented “Using safe travel skills is an important part of everyday life; we are delighted that the Department of



Regional Development recognise the importance of educating people with learning disabilities in safe travel. We will certainly use the pictorial, easy read guide as part of our training to enhance individual's safety skills to travel safely to work.”

The superb photographs of Aaron Reid and Aaron Bartolo are part of the new updated Travel Safe Guide developed by the regional Planning and Transport Division Northern Ireland. <http://www.drndi.gov.uk/newsDetails.htm?newsRef=1570>. Copies also available at Stepping Stones Coffee Shop at Seymour Street.



Volunteers making a difference

To celebrate Volunteers Week the team at Stepping Stones wants to say a big Thank You to our team of wonderful volunteers who help our organisation.

Our volunteers give so much of their energy and time that make a difference to the trainees supported by the organisation.

One of our volunteers Muriel Patterson, volunteers her time one day per week in Stepping Stones Coffee Shop in Seymour Street, Lisburn. As a Coffee Shop volunteer Muriel helps support adults with learning disabilities reinforce their skills in catering, helping them to gain the skills to move into work.

Muriel enjoys her volunteering so much that she is now into her 13th year of Volunteering with the organisation, she really feels that she gets a lot more back than she gives to the trainees.

When asked what she brought to the role, Muriel reflected on her previous experience with learning disabilities through her working life. However this was to a younger age group, she really feels that she brings patience to the role to enable trainees to reinforce and further develop their skills in catering.

She also has a real interest in seeing trainees develop their skills. Muriel commented "It is rewarding to see how much enthusiasm trainees

bring to their learning and how as a volunteer I can help trainees progress, it is a pleasure to see them access employment when they reach that path."

Trainees and Staff in the coffee shop at Stepping Stones thoroughly enjoy working with Muriel as part of the team and would like to thank her for her continued dedication and support.

Emma Moriarty, Operations Managers added; "It really is very exciting to see trainees grow and develop their skills. For these skills to be further enhanced through the support and learning that volunteers can bring to trainees, is as added bonus for all involved.

As an organisation we realise the value of our volunteers, they are a group of kind, committed and dedicated people who have a genuine interest in the future of the trainees they work with.

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of everyone at Stepping Stones to thank all our volunteers for their continued support and for the diversity that they bring to our organisation."

National Food Safety Week



Stepping Stones embraced National Food Safety week by delivering workshops on the theme “What Goes on Behind Closed Doors”.

Our Training Coordinator Helen Jelly commented “Our team value the importance of good practice when it comes to food hygiene; our Coffee shops five star award for Scores on the Door is testament to this.”

During National Food Safety Week we raised the awareness of food safety at home and work, involving our trainees in workshop training sessions which complimented NVQ progression.

Our Vocational Training Officer, Sue Patterson said “Our team value the importance of good practice when it comes to food hygiene and work to excel in all aspects of this.”



Just Giving™

Stepping Stones Launches “Just Giving” and “Text to Give”

In order to make donating easy Stepping Stones launched their Just Giving account and have seen a great response! Supporters have been extremely generous to our charity.



A Huge thank you to all our runners and walkers who helped us with our fundraising during May and June. We raised an amazing £9,000. Over 50 people supported us by running/walking various distances in the Belfast River rock Marathon in May and in June the Lisburn City Road Race, such a great success!



Have you liked us Yet!

Stepping Stones NI and Pink Elephant Cards are now communicating with their customers and you through Facebook.

Business Development Manager Cara Cash commented “Being able to communicate with our customers is of the upmost importance so the move to Facebook was a natural one for us.

We are delighted with how well the pages have been received”.



Go to Facebook and Like us today.



Johnsons Coffee Company helps with Coffee Making

Stepping Stones NI and Johnston's Coffee work together on training

Stepping Stones N.I will be starting their new Barista coffee training in July at Johnson's Coffee. This local family business has been going since the 1900's importing the highest grade of coffee that are blended and roasted at their site in Lisburn.

The trainees from Stepping Stones N.I are looking forward to learning how to make specialised coffees such as Latte's and Cappuccino's which they can then put to good use in the award winning coffee shops The Avenue and Stepping Stones Coffee Shop.

Richard one of the Trainees who will take part in this training said "I want to learn how to make Latte's as I love to drink them and when I am training I can drink as many as I can make."



Employer Breakfast Seminar

The Employment Service at Stepping Stones NI recently held their second very successful Employer Breakfast.

It was attended by 10 local employers eager to find out about the Employment Service, Supported Employment, and the part that they can play in helping clients into employment.

The Equality Commission spoke at the event about:

- How employers can use positive action to make their workforce more representative of the community in which we live by employing people with disabilities
- How employers can make reasonable adjustments both in the recruitment and selection process and in employment
- Addressing any fears that employers may have regarding employing individuals with disabilities.

An employer commented 'Before the breakfast I was unsure about employing someone with a disability. However, I now understand that employing someone through Stepping Stones means that I get support too'.



Arts Encounters in Pink Elephant Cards

Recently our workshop began an exciting Arts Development Programme called “Arts Encounters” supported by the Island Arts Centre, Lisburn City Council.

Therese Gorman, a local Professional Community Artist, supported our Trainees to create a tailored arts project to enhance the Pink Elephant brand and generate an opportunity for our Trainees to show their hidden talents in the form of art.

All the Trainees and even staff have contributed small pieces of work which will come together in one final large piece for display in August.

The Trainees have enjoyed the freedom to develop their own thoughts and ideas through art and have used the many skills learnt in the Pink Elephant workshop to create strong, vibrant pieces of work.

Madeline Dickson a Pink Elephant Trainee has commented “It was really great, a super idea. Brilliant!”

Inclusion Communication and Understanding



Stepping Stones have delivered the Inclusion, Communication and Understanding course to 34 trainees to date.

Participants have benefited from a varied course content including units on Working Together, Communication Skills, Keeping Safe and Rights and Responsibilities.

Stepping Stones have been delighted to welcome Community Policeman George Ellis to speak on issues regarding internet safety and cyber bullying.

As well as delivering the course in-house, our training team have also worked on an outreach basis enabling Parkview School, Lisburn Adult Resource Centre and The Beeches Resource Centre to avail in this training opportunity.

This programme is accredited by the Open College Network and is funded by Peace 3 administered through Lisburn City Council.





Stepping Stones Transitions Service

Over the last year with the help of Stepping Stones NI Transition Service and Training Department our students have been involved in various activities helping develop life skills and prepare for moving on from school in the future. It has been an exciting, busy and eventful year for all concerned.

This year work placements have been ongoing in a wide array of businesses. Many have also completed accredited training courses and attended workshops such as 'Safety Skills', 'Workability' and 'Inclusion Communication and Understanding.'

Well done to all our students for their successes this year and especially to those who are moving on! We wish them every success in their next step and for those who are continuing through Stepping Stones Services we look forward to continue to working with you.

'GET THE PICTURE'...



To help with those difficult gift purchases, Stepping Stones Picture Framing now provides gift vouchers... a perfect solution to that all too common problem of what to buy someone as a present when they have everything!

Our gift vouchers are designed and handmade in house by Pink Elephant Cards and are available to purchase in values of £15 upwards.

Keep an eye on our website for updates on further offers, promotions, and our new selection of frames coming soon!...

Developing our people

Congratulations and a big well done to our team:

Debbie Montgomery (Employment Officer) and **Jamie Greer** (Transitions Officer) who recently completed and passed their Foundation Diploma in Supported Employment (Open Training College, accredited through National University of Ireland).

Emma Moriarty (Operations Manager) recently completed two OCN accredited programmes relevant to volunteers. Recruitment and Selection of Volunteers, and Managing and Motivating Volunteers.

Cara Cash (Business Development Manager) successfully passed with commendation the Advanced Diploma in Management Practice from University of Ulster Business School.

Jackie Smyth, Carolyn Kerr, Joanne Murray, Helen Jelly, Margaret Johnston, Emma Moriarty, Pauline Cunningham and **Cara Cash** all recently took part in OCN accredited management training delivered by NICVA.

Good luck **Pauline Cunningham** will be taking part in the Fine Art Trade Guild Exams in August.



Website Relaunch

Pink Elephant, Stepping Stones Picture Framing and The Avenue Coffee Shop have all relaunched their pages on the Stepping Stones website. Visit our Website to download our menus, see galleries of our latest card designs, and see what is happening. www.steps-stones.org.uk



Stepping Stones User Forum



Stepping Stones launched its all new User Forum in April 2011.

At the first session Stepping Stones Training Team talked to the group about 'Working with Others' which led to an open discussion on the issues that our clients with a learning disability face in their workplace.

The User Forum is an opportunity to ensure that all Service Users have the opportunity to raise issues that affect them and are important to them in their lives.

Next meeting is on 27th July 2011 at The Avenue 3 Wallace Ave Lisburn. Contact Joanne Murray Employment Manager on 028 9266 6404 for more details.



Don't forget Pink Elephant Cards for every special occasion! Contact our design team for more details on 028 9266 7124.

