

SKWA NEWS

Southwest Kerry Women's Association, The O'Connell Centre, Carhan Road, Caherciveen, Co Kerry

Phone: 066-9473397 Fax: 066-9473398 Email: skwanet@iol.ie

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EDITORIAL

Our first newsletter published at the end of last year was made as widely available to women in the Southwest Kerry area, as we could manage. It highlighted the launch of a project called 'Learning for Living', run by the Southwest Kerry Women's Association. Newsletters will be one vehicle by which we keep you up to date with this project and the other work of SKWA, as well as improving the communication and support between us and strengthening our identity and network.

At present the following groups are active and part of your network

- * Mná an Gleanna
- * Caherciveen ICA
- * Iveragh Women for Education
- * Bantrach Na Dromoda (ICA)
- * Glencar Women's Group (ICA)
- * Women with a Mission
- * Sneem Women's Group
- * Women in Agriculture
- * Mna an Sceilge
- * Mna Cuan Caislean

If you would like to be put in contact with any of these groups please call the SKWA office.

Through the 'Learning for Living' project we are actively supporting the establishment of new groups in a number of communities, which are noticeably absent from the list above, and look forward to celebrating a growing and vibrant network.

MORE ABOUT SKWA

Through our newsletters we want to let you know about the type of work SKWA committee members are involved in and therein see the links, benefits and opportuni-

ties that this work can bring to women in the region.

In this issue Maggie O'Shea, of Caherdaniel, talks about :

The Open Door Network – Kerry's Response to Violence Against Women and Children. Maggie has represented SKWA on the committee of the The Open Door Network for a number of years.

The Open Door Network is a group of all the services who come into contact with women experiencing violence in the home. The Network does not provide direct services to women – but is involved in raising public awareness, providing training for workers and volunteers in dealing with disclosures, and in supporting the three main agencies in Kerry. These being:-

- * ADAPT- *Kerry Women's Refuge Service* (066) 7129100;
- * Kerry Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre 1800 633 333 and
- * The Tralee Women's Resource Centre (066) 7120622.

An example of co-operation between SKWA and the O.D.N. was a multi media competition/exhibition "Shadow and Light". Highlighting the effects of violence against women and children and the courage of all who survive violence and

**International
Women's Day**
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Martina Brennan
and Maggie O'Shea

abuse. The exhibition and award ceremony was launched in the New Library, Caherciveen. The exhibition was then shown in Siamsa Tíre, Tralee before touring the libraries in the county.

Prizewinners were:-

1st Martina Brennan—Tralee



Laura McCarthy
and Maggie O'Shea

2nd Laura McCarthy—Caherciveen

3rd Agnes P. Gilbert—Cork

“Shadow and Light” was followed by a seminar “Working with Crisis”, to raise awareness amongst workers and volunteers of the effect of working with

crisis and to identify methods of support and supervision. Both the exhibition and seminar were organised to run during the 16 Days of Action 2003 (Nov 25th to Dec 10th) which marked International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and International Human Rights Day.

The Open Door Network will continue their work raising awareness with a variety of campaigns throughout 2004 and beyond. Their primary funding comes from the Southern Health Board and the Network's Co-ordinator is Catherine Casey who can be contacted at 2, Denny Street, Tralee, or by email:

opendoornetwork@eircom.net



Agnes Gilbert

BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING

We have been running Bereavement Counselling for two years now. The service is free and completely confidential. If you feel you need to talk to someone because you are finding it hard to come to terms with a loss in your life.

Please call: 087 9230160

and make an appointment. This service is available **every Friday** in Caherciveen and is open to

A WOMEN'S MODEL FOR SOCIAL WELFARE REFORM

SKWA were one of several women's groups and organisations that worked with the National Women's Council of Ireland to launch their campaign to reform the social welfare system. The first seminar was in Killarney on 29th January '04. The changes recommended are based on the information and assessment in an excellent report researched and written by Mary Murphy, called 'A Women's Model for Social Welfare Reform'

The report looks at how the social welfare system is still based on the idea of the 'male breadwinner' which is outdated and does not truly reflect the lives of women today. Indeed it is a system which reinforces dependence on spouses and can further hinder women locked into violent and bullying relationships.

Women who have spent major periods caring for children face old age with little access to adequate pensions because they gave up paid work or engaged in part-time employment. In 2002 only 25 per cent of women got a State pension based on their own PRSI contributions. This compared with 67 per cent of men.

In certain categories such as farming, family business or caring, the percentage of women with no personal pension is as high as 90 per cent.

Ninety-five per cent of "qualified adults", that is those who are claimed for by other adults, are women and these women receive only 70 per cent of the full adult rate. In most cases even this qualified allowance is not paid directly to them, but to their husband.

The NWCI state that women need to be paid 100 per cent of the full qualified adult rate and they need to be paid the money directly. It is calling for homemakers' work from 1973 onwards, when the ban on married

women working in the civil service ended, to be recognised for the purposes of pension and wants homemakers' credits to be introduced.

It wants an end to the household means test for the carer's allowance and unemployment benefit made available to people looking for part-time work.

These aspirations will not be achieved unless we women make this an issue from the 'grass roots' level to the inner sanctum of political decision making.

Learning more.....

Nancy Holmes-Smith from the 'Learning for Living Project' (SKWA), and Mary Grandfield, Citizens Information Officer will be visiting as many groups as possible to explain and highlight issues in this report and assess follow-up support that may be needed.

LEARNING TO DRIVE?

Are you a woman over 50 without a driving licence? We can help and support you to apply for a licence and help with the Theory Test.

Phone 066 9473397

MONEY / FUNDING

The SKWA cannot supply financial assistance directly but we are looking to support women and women's groups in other ways. For example running courses and projects in local communities. Don't hesitate to contact our office if you would like a course run locally. We will also support access to these courses for those who have transport difficulties or need to cover the costs of bringing in a substitute carer for a family member or relative.

We will also keep groups informed of funding opportunities and can support the task of filling in application forms.

This issue we are highlighting the following funding source which could be useful:

The Community Foundation for Ireland.

Prioritising projects that relate to isolation or diversity.

For further information contact the SKWA office on 066 9473397

CORNER ON HEALTH

Each newsletter we plan to bring you information on health. We use reputable sources and have the information checked by an appropriate professional before going to print.

STIFF, ACHING NECK?

Your head is the heaviest part of your body, so your muscles have to work hard just to hold it up and it is easy to overstrain them. If poor posture has been sustained for a long time it can be difficult to get your neck muscles to relax at all. Doing the following exercise slowly and gently should help to reduce tension in the neck and shoulders by using the weight of the head to gently stretch the muscles.



EXERCISE

Concentrate on lengthening the spine, lifting the chest and keeping a downward pull on the shoulder with a firm hand hold .

How to do it – Sit on an upright chair and hold the seat edge with you left hand.

Keep your arm straight and, without raising your shoulder, slowly lean head and neck as far right as you can. Feel the stretch and hold for 15 seconds. Return to the upright position. Change hands and lean to the left. Repeat three times on each side.

Next hold the back edge of the chair with both hands, then stretch and tilt your head to the left and slightly forwards. Return to the centre then hold the front edge of the chair with both hands and incline your head to the right and slightly backwards. Repeat three

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY Specific interest to women

The Southwest Kerry Women's Association

Will be celebrating

International Women's Day

on Saturday 6th March 2004

In the Tech Amergan, Waterville from **2.00—5.00pm**

The invited speaker is **Nellie Ó'Cléirigh**, who will be talking about her recently published book *'Hardship and High Living' - Irish Women's Lives 1808 - 1923*

Refreshments will be available and there will be a chance to talk to Nellie and the committee of the Southwest Kerry Women's Association.

Do bring a friend and if you need transport please call

Mairead on **066 9473397** before Wed. 3rd March

NOTICE BOARD General interest events in Southwest Kerry

COURSE DETAIL	DATES / CONTACTS
<p>Introduction to software for parents and adult tutors working with students behind in their reading and maths skills. The course is free and will run for 7 weeks</p>	<p>Starting 24th Feb 7.30pm to 9.30pm in the O'Connell Centre, Caherciveen – phone Lucy on 066 9473166 for further details <i>(late-comers still welcome)</i></p>
<p>IT Course – from basics, internet use</p>	<p>Starting 24th Feb 7.30pm to 9.30pm in the O'Connell Centre</p>
<p>Ceramic Classes –8 week course €70 at Colaiste na Sceilge</p>	<p>Contact The O'Connell Centre on 066 9472414 for further details</p>
<p>Dining without Stress demonstration of culinary skills.</p>	<p>Contact The O'Connell Centre on 066 9472414 for further details</p>
<p>First Aid – 8 week course €70</p>	<p>Contact The O'Connell Centre on 066 9472414 for further details</p>
<p>Local Activity Guide Course – 11 week course for those involved in tourism / hill walking.</p>	<p>Contact Fergus Horgan at The South Kerry development Partnership 9472724</p>
<p>Talk on 'Early Agriculture in Ireland' – from Mick Monk.</p>	<p>Thur 18th March at 8.00pm Tech Amergan, Waterville 066 9478956</p>
<p>'Stretch and Dance' yoga based exercises and dance</p>	<p>Mon 1st March at 8.00pm Tech Amergan, Waterville 066 9478956</p>
<p>Gardening - 5 week course</p>	<p>Wed 24th March at 8.00pm Tech Amergan, Waterville 066 9478956</p>