

HOME SWEET HOME... IN ROMANIA

Hard hats, bricks and mortar, saws and hammers – this is what Carolyn McCormick and Donna McKee from the Memorial Fund will wake up to this September when they lead a 12 strong-team to Romania to help build homes. It's a far cry from their usual daily office work, but the two women are relishing the challenge.

The team will travel to Beius in Romania with non-profit Christian charity Habitat for Humanity which works in partnership with families with the most basic needs – a home.

Carolyn and Donna will be travelling with people from Northern Ireland who have been affected by the troubles, giving them a chance to travel overseas, to work on-site building the houses and to spend time with local people who have also suffered terrible hardship.

The Fund approached several victim support groups for nominations and the team will be getting together soon to talk about the trip and the hard work involved!

ON A STRING AND A PRAYER!

In what could be a scene from a James Bond movie, Carolyn McCormick, Daphne Trimble and Donna McKee from the Memorial Fund took the plunge off the 130ft high BT Tower in Belfast to raise money for the Memorial Fund's trip to Romania.

Late donations for these dare devils are still being gladly accepted. Contact them on 028 9052 7939!



Daredevils Carolyn McCormick, Daphne Trimble and Donna McKee breath a sigh of relief after their abseil.

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GROUPS' CORE FUNDING

Last month groups and organisations that applied for grants from the new round of Core Funding (2003-2005) received news of the decisions of the Committee in their case.

Sixty-three applications were received to the Scheme. When these were counted up they totalled more than £9 million against a fund of £3 million. We had planned to set aside roughly 10% of the £3 million to cover contingencies arising during the currency of the scheme – for example to fund successful reviews or to be able to make Core Funding grants to any new groups that emerge. In the event, we managed to identify an equivalent amount from within VLU and VU budgets and with the Minister's approval this will be added to the £3 million to make up a Core Funding contingency reserve.

This means we have been able to allocate all of the £3 million straight away. But with the best will in the world, it was clear that much trimming of bids would have to be done. In the final analysis, 15 of the 63 applicants for one reason or another will not receive Core Funding. They may of course qualify for other help, for example from the Victims and Survivors Development Grant Scheme, which is also funded by the VLU and administered by the Community Relations Council.

The awards were decided by a Committee appointed by the Intermediary Funding Body – the Community Relations Council. And in allocating money from the Scheme priority was given to groups and organisations that provide unique benefits to victims of the Troubles.

The procedures adopted by the Committee are open to scrutiny and anyone who feels they have grounds to do so may ask for a review of the decision – see paragraph 12 of the Guidance Notes for the Scheme.

While the Victims' Minister continues to press for more money for Victims' initiatives, we have no option at present but to work with what we have. One piece of good news is that all those that applied whose main business is working with victims will receive help either through the Core Funding Scheme or the Victims and Survivors Development Grant Scheme.

This may be a good time to remind those who are drawing Core Funding of some of the Key Best Practice Recommendations that came out of the recent Audit Report. In short, the auditors are saying responsibilities for groups' financial and operational management should be shared across the Management Committee. The Committee needs to be presented with financial and management information on a regular basis, they need to sign that they have seen it and that record needs to be kept. Groups who have not yet drawn up a Financial Procedures Manual need to think now about doing so and, of course, a separate bank account needs to be opened and maintained for all Core Funding (2003–2005) receipts and payments.

Copies of the Auditors' Recommendations were distributed to groups some time ago. They form a very useful guide for groups seeking now to draw up a Financial Procedures Manual. Extra copies of the recommendations can be obtained by calling Gail Brashaw or Anne Colville in the VLU on 028 9052 7902 or 028 9052 7861.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

The first round of Core Funding will soon be completed. To help with the transition to the new round, all Income and Expenditure claims must be submitted as soon as possible to C.F.N.I.

Victims' Minister visits new trauma treatment centre

During a recent visit to Omagh, Des Browne met the staff of the new Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma & Transformation and was taken on a tour of the recently refurbished premises at Retreat Close, Omagh, by the Director David Bolton.

The Minister said:

"I am delighted that all the months of development, planning and hard work have now become a reality. This centre will be a valuable regional resource in the treatment of those who have been traumatised by the Troubles."

The Centre is now open for referrals. If you need help, or know someone who you think might benefit from its services, please contact the Centre on 028 8225 1500 or by e-mail on info@nictt.org



Victims' Minister Des Browne meets the team from the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation.



Dan Harvey, Director of the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund meets up with Victims' Minister Des Browne at a Corporate Awareness evening at Hillsborough Castle.



Des Browne during a visit to New Life Counselling in January.



Brendan Bradley from Survivors of Trauma tells Des Browne about the work they do during a visit in January.

HUGE RESPONSE TO WESTPORT TRIP

A huge number of you responded to the offer of a weekend break to Westport, Co. Mayo. In fact, so many of you responded, that the offer was oversubscribed several times over.

Many readers may remember reading in the October issue of the Newsletter that, thanks to a further £1.3 million from Government, the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund decided to concentrate on helping those who lost a spouse/partner before 1 April 1991.

With this in mind, the Directors decided that this year the Memorial Fund's weekend break to Westport, Co Mayo should be offered to those who fell into this category.

Over 400 letters were issued on Friday 7th February and by the following Monday morning, all the spaces had been filled on a first come first served basis.

Many of you will be disappointed that you were not able to get a place on this trip, however, this will be taken into consideration by Directors if any further Memorial trips are planned.

TRAUMA ADVISORY PANEL CO-ORDINATORS

What are Trauma Advisory Panels?

Trauma Advisory Panels (TAPs) were set up in each Health Board area in 1999 to take forward work and develop partnerships in a range of areas relating to victims. Initially only the Western Board appointed a full-time worker, funded by the local District Partnership and

Foyle Health Trust, to co-ordinate the activities for that Panel. However, it emerged from the responses to both research carried out by the OFMDFM Victims Unit in 2001 and the Victims Unit's consultation paper on a victims' strategy that the work of the TAPs would be

an important consideration in the planning and development of services to meet victims' needs. The Victims Unit therefore offered to fund a full-time co-ordinator in each TAP until 2004 to develop its potential and work effectively with victims in its area.

Who Co-Ordinates the Panels?



Sharon Campbell - EHSSB

Sharon has been making contact with individuals within the statutory and voluntary sectors and self help groups within her Board area.



Sheena Funston - WHSSB

Sheena has been heavily involved in training for self-help groups and looking at ways to maintain sustainability.



Clare Quigley - Southern Board

Clare has been building contacts with Community Development Teams within Trusts and District Councils.



Sheelagh Sheerin - Northern Board

Sheelagh has been working on a policy on displaced families and has mainstreamed awareness training on victims' needs into social worker training in the Northern Board area.

What are their roles?

To analyse need and develop networks and services including compiling directories of the services available.

They all meet regularly with the Victims Unit to share best practice and feed back information on local need to the Unit.

All of the Co-ordinators feel that it is important to reach out to individuals as well as self-help groups and are doing this through

contact with churches, trauma counsellors, Community Development Teams, GPs, Councils and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and by running complementary therapy events.

If you would like to know more about the work of the Co-ordinators or the support services available in your area they would be happy to hear from you.

Contact details for Sharon, Sheena, Clare and Sheelagh are as follows:

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