

Chairperson's Report AGM 2004

Dublin West Education Centre AGM 23rd February 2004 Chairperson's Address.

Ba mhaith liom fáilte a chur romhaibh go léir anocht chuig an Cruinniú Cinn Bliaina d'Ionad Oideachais Bhaile Átha Cliath Thiar.

On behalf of the Management Committee of Dublin West Education Centre and on my own behalf as Chairperson I would like to welcome you all here tonight to our AGM. This AGM takes place after our first full year here in our Centre on the Grounds of IT Tallaght. Last year as I addressed the AGM we had just moved to the Centre and had been through the usual difficulties associated with moving in. This year we can say with certainty that we are well established with many programmes up and running in a busy and vibrant Centre.

Before I address the work of Dublin West Education Centre in 2003, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of our Director, Gerard Mc Hugh. Those of us who see him in action on a regular basis have come to realise that Gerard works tirelessly on behalf of the Centre. He is unfailingly generous with his time and always willing to provide a listening ear to any of the many Centre users who call upon him. On behalf of the Management Committee I take this opportunity to acknowledge the professionalism Gerard brings to his position as Director and to thank him for all of his work during the past year.

Our administrator, Deirdre Cleary, has as always presided over the smooth running of the Centre on a daily basis. This year we faced the challenge of generating income for the Centre and Deirdre has managed to establish partnerships with several organizations, some of whom would not have been traditional centre users.

The administrative staff of Dublin West Education Centre are a team second to none. I wish to thank most sincerely both our full-time and part-time staff members. Yvonne, Carmel, Angie and Belinda have provided support for the National programmes at Dublin West, PSCP (Local), Primary Schools Sports Initiative (PSSI) and the Substance Misuse Prevention Programme (SMPP) and the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) ICT Programme. They have provided tremendous support and back-up for tutors of local programmes and the participants on these programmes. They are also the friendly faces behind the reception desk and the voices that most of you hear on the phone when you call the Centre. Suzanne Lambe left our administration team this year, we wish her every success and thank her for all of her work for Dublin West.

Marion, our housekeeper, has received many compliments from Centre users this year for her friendliness and courtesy. Tony and Bernard, our caretaking staff make up the team that keeps Dublin West going.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the team who provide support for the Primary Curriculum Support Programme, Kathleen, the administrator, Mary and Susan, have provided an exceptional service again this year despite a dramatic drop in administration staff numbers. Mary Brady, Nicola and Beatrice left us in June, we wish them well in the future.

To all our staff, Management Committee wishes to acknowledge your dedication to the Centre and your contribution to the services we provide to schools and teachers in the area and to the projects we support.

Local Programmes:

Dublin West Education Centre has had an even busier year in 2003 than in 2002. Our Local Programmes and Activities are dealt with in greater detail in the Centre's Annual Report. Our usual courses and workshops including Walk Tall, Counselling Skills, Drama, Music, Swimming and Arts and Crafts, remain popular with teachers. We also have support groups for Resource Teachers, Learning Support Teachers, Support Teachers, Teachers of non-nationals and Principal Teachers. We have also made new departures in 2003. Following the development of our course for Special Needs Assistants last year we co-operated with

other education centres and the Colleges of Education in the design and delivery of the nationwide Introductory Course for Special Needs Assistants. This course has been delivered in all Education Centres and serves as a foundation module for those SNA's wishing to apply for the certificate course provided by the Colleges. We hope that the model of partnership used in this project will continue to be used in the design and delivery of new courses in the future.

As always DWEC is to the forefront in the provision of ICT Courses for teachers. I wish to acknowledge the work of our ICT Advisor, Fintan Keating in this regard.

National Programmes:

As a Centre we have long tradition of hosting National Programmes. At present Dublin West Education Centre is home to the following.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme (PCSP)

Substance Misuse Prevention Programme

National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) ICT Programme

The Primary School Sports Initiative came to an end this year and I would like to acknowledge that work of all the personnel associated with the project during its lifetime.

I would like to express my concern at this point at the failure of the Department of Education and Science to replace personnel who have had to leave our National Programmes. Vacancies exist at present for a Deputy National Co-ordinator and an Assistant National Co-ordinator in PCSP and for a National Development Officer in SMPP. As a result of the failure of the Department to fill these vacancies the existing staff are carrying an extra workload which the members of the Management Committee would feel is unacceptable. We have voiced our concerns to the Department on this matter at a recent meeting with them.

Before I finish, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the voluntary members of the Management Committee for their hard work and dedication to the Centre. The time they give to Dublin West Education Centre is in addition to demanding "day jobs" and can sometimes be a thankless task. Their membership of the committee is motivated by an intrinsic interest in, and a deep commitment to education. During the year some long serving and valued members of the Management Committee tendered their resignations. Michael Murphy has taken a sabbatical due to other educational commitments. Michael is a former Chairperson and was the longest serving member of the committee for many years. We reserve the right to call on him again! Frances Leahy, a former Chairperson and Conor Harrison, our vice-chairperson also resigned during the year due to commitments at work. It was with great regret that Management Committee accepted their resignations and we take this opportunity to thank them for the contribution they both made to DWEC.

This time last year I hoped that we would soon be hosting the official opening of our Centre, this remains a hope for the coming year. I also hope that 2004 will see Dublin West Education Centre continue as the progressive and vibrant Centre it has become over the past number of years.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh as ucht éisteacht ljom anocht.

Máirín Ní Chéileachair, Cathaoirleach
23rd February 2004.