

## ADULT SERVICE USERS ORGANISE FAMILY FUN DAY



Service User Roberta Connolly with a group of children at the Adult Services Family Fun Day

On a very rare sunny day in August, Enable Ireland Adult Services in Dun Laoghaire held its now annual 'Family Fun Day'. As the title suggests, the emphasis is on having a very informal

and fun day that allows both service users and staff to invite family and friends into the centre. The day is aimed at a younger audience, so sons/daughters and nieces/nephews have all enjoyed these visits to Dun Laoghaire.

This year was also special in that we opened up our Family Fun Day to other groups. We invited family members from the Methodist Church, with whom we work in partnership with on some events, and they were very helpful on the day especially on the catering front. We also invited service users and staff from the other Dublin centres, with the view

to sharing the day and showing how we can promote the service in a positive and fun way.

The challenge of entertaining a group of young kids for the day meant the staff and service users had to work hard at providing fun things to do. So on the day we had a bouncy castle, face painting, barbecue and lunch, kids cinema, karaoke, computer games and toys.

The bouncy castle was a great success – for the young and some of the 'older' visitors on the day – I won't mention names! The food was excellent, especially the cakes, biscuits and sweets which all disappeared very quickly. Some very pretty butterflies and flowers were seen on smiling faces. The older children watched 'Godzilla' on the big screen, while the smaller ones enjoyed 'Bob the Builder'. ABBA and in particular Mama Mia were performed all day long – I can still hear it playing in my head.

It was indeed a Family Fun packed day hopefully enjoyed by all.

Gary Morris, Co-ordinator  
Enable Ireland, Dun Laoghaire

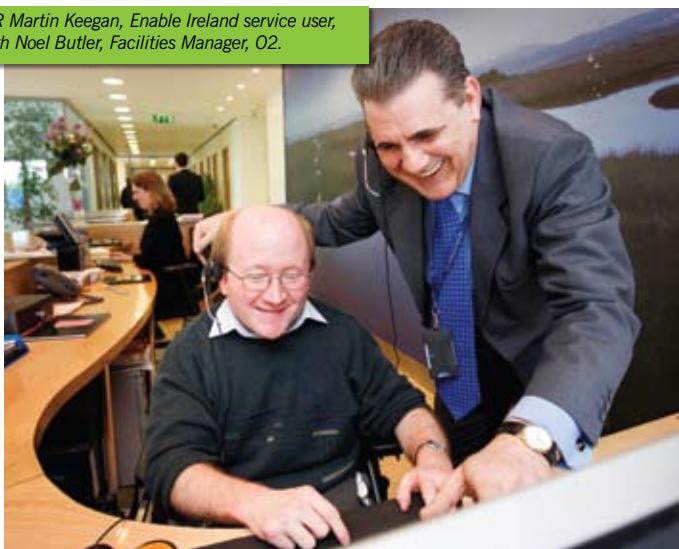
## TALLAGHT SERVICES SHARE ACTIVITY WEEKEND

After the success of last year's trip to the Share Activity Centre in Lisnaskea, Co Fermanagh a group from Enable Ireland in Tallaght headed off again on 13th June for a weekend of fun and excitement. This year 10 children attended, ranging in age from 12 – 16 years. For some it was a return trip and for others it was their first time away from home. An action packed weekend full of rowing, swimming, speed boat rides, banana boat rides and paper mache crafts, not to mention a disco, was had by all. At meal times everyone had to join in the clean up and wash up - for some this was a new experience! By the end of the weekend everyone was exhausted but looking forward to the next adventure. This year's trip was another great success with requests for next year's trip already flooding in!

# JOB SHADOW DAY

## ENABLE IRELAND AND O2

L-R Martin Keegan, Enable Ireland service user, with Noel Butler, Facilities Manager, O2.



Job Shadow Day took place on 23rd April 2008. Organised by the Irish Association of Supported Employment, this was a nationwide campaign dedicated to giving people with disabilities a unique opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor as he or she goes through a normal day at work. The ultimate goal of the initiative is to mobilise the employment of people with disabilities, while raising awareness of supported employment.

Martin Keegan from Dundrum in Dublin attends Enable Ireland's services in Sandyford. He spent Job Shadow Day in O2's headquarters in Dublin city centre, manning the reception desk. He said "I would like to thank O2 for the opportunity to spend a day within their company. I was really looking forward to the challenge of working on a busy reception utilising my skills to further my employment prospects and I wasn't disappointed, it was a fantastic experience"

Cyril Barrett of Enable Ireland said "The Job Shadow Initiative gives people with disabilities a unique opportunity to shadow a workplace mentor as he or she goes through a normal working day. It gives job seekers with disabilities an insight into employer's requirements and expectations and also gives employers an increased appreciation of the talent represented by jobseekers with disabilities. Well done to O2 for promoting and encouraging an inclusive workplace and demonstrating positive leadership in their community."

Majella Fitzpatrick, Head of Corporate Affairs for O2 said, "O2 Ireland is delighted to be involved with The National Job Shadow Initiative which enables people with disabilities to discover and learn about the skills and education required to compete and succeed in the work place. As sponsors of the O2 Ability Awards for the last three years, O2 understands and encourages best practice in recognising the real contribution that can be made to business in Ireland by people with diverse needs."

## UNITE THE UNION

The National AT Training Service delivered an AT Workshop to the Northern Irish "Unite the Union" in September 2008. Unite is the largest union in the UK, with over 2 million members in both the public and private sectors. This workshop came about as a result of our partnership with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions on whose Disability Champions courses we had delivered two AT workshops earlier in the year. The Unite workshop was attended by seven union representatives who wished to find out about Assistive Technology and how it might support employees with disabilities at work. A range of hardware and software was demonstrated, and the attendees expressed a particular interest in 'low cost/no cost' solutions such as the use of Microsoft's Windows Accessibility Features, which come bundled in all Windows PC's, as well as alternative keyboards and mice.

The question of legislation and funding was also addressed, and attendees expressed particular concern about the limitations in

National High Tech Assistive Technology Manager Siobhan Long addresses the 'Unite the Union' workshop in September



the current Access To Work funding scheme, available in Northern Ireland and the UK. The Irish equivalent of this funding is the FAS Workplace Equipment Adaptation Grant.

We look forward to continuing our work in partnership with employees to push information about Assistive Technology into the workplace. Other examples of our links with employment include our Employer Seminars which target senior HR and IT professionals in both the public and private sector. We have delivered one employer seminar to date this year, in partnership with BT, and are currently collaborating with Intel with a view to co-hosting a similar event in the near future.

## EYE GAZE WORKSHOP

Enable Ireland Assistive Technology service hosted a workshop on 12 September, focusing on an overview of three leading eye gaze products, all from the UK. These products enable individuals to control technology using eye gaze, and offer an exciting alternative to those who find standard and other specialised methods of controlling technology inaccessible. The three products were: My Tobii (from Smartbox AT), Erica (from QED) and the TM3 (from Techcess). A total of 33 people attended this workshop, including AT users, parents, therapists, AT professionals, job coaches and supported employment co-ordinators. Feedback was extremely enthusiastic. We plan to invite a range of potential users to trial each product individually over the coming months. For further details of each product, why not visit the companies' websites:

**Erica:** [www.qedltd.com](http://www.qedltd.com)

**My Tobii:** [www.smartboxat.com](http://www.smartboxat.com)

**TM3:** [www.techcess.co.uk](http://www.techcess.co.uk)



## LISBON TREATY DEBATE

In advance of the Lisbon Treaty referendum in June, Crumlin Adult services held a debate on the issues in association with the Dublin 12 Disability Mainstream Access Project. DMAP is a community group who work with people with disabilities and assist them in accessing mainstream services. They have facilitated lobbying and advocacy groups in Enable Ireland Crumlin and the Walkinstown Association.

MEP's Proinsias De Rossa and Mary Lou MacDonald, and local Councillor Charlie Ardagh took time from their packed diaries to attend. At the event the politicians debated issues put to them by the attendees. The diverse issues covered included concerns about

policing and safety, education and healthcare, and neutrality.

The debate was often heated, with arguments for and against the treaty strongly contested. The word disability is only mentioned once in the text of the Treaty but the importance of the vote was well known to the group who requested the information event.



The final outcome was that 53.4% of voters rejected the Lisbon treaty with a margin of just 109,164 votes. Debate still continues as to whether Ireland will have to hold another referendum on the document or a version of the document.

After the votes were counted, we went back and asked some of the service users about the future of Lisbon. Here's what they had to say:

**"What is point of voting if they just ask us again?"**

**"Another referendum makes no sense, we will just say no again and what will that mean?"**

**"There's no point in having another referendum the result will be the same, people will have the same opinions"**

**"If we vote yes things will stay the same. Nothing will change in the bad health system and unemployment."**

**"Why can't we find a better way? The Lisbon treaty is dead."**

## E-INCLUSION AWARD FOR ENABLE IRELAND

Enable Ireland has received a European e-Inclusion award from the European Commission for its innovative use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for people with disabilities.

This award is in recognition of the AT Training Service's launch of Ireland's first National AT Training Centre in November 2007.

Enable Ireland's National AT Training Centre is one of just 35 short listed entries that impressed the judging panel in the 2008 European e-Inclusion Awards.

As a medalist in the e-Accessibility category, Enable Ireland has been invited to exhibit at the e-Inclusion Ministerial Conference and Exhibition in Vienna from November 30 to December 2, 2008. Overall winners in each category will be announced during the Conference and Exhibition.

The European e-Inclusion Awards received more than 469 entries with participation from every European Union country.



## THE IRISH POSTURE & MOBILITY NETWORK (IPMN)

IPMN was formed in 2006 by therapists and others working in the field of mobility and postural management for individuals with physical, learning and sensory disabilities. The main aim of the network is to provide a forum for sharing knowledge so that practitioners can enhance their level of practice and thus improve the quality of services provided to service users.

The IPMN network continues to grow from strength to strength. IPMN has successfully organised two Education Days, in February and September 2008, for clinicians and others with an interest in mobility and postural management.

Looking forward to 2009, IPMN plans to increase opportunities for members to share information and experiences. For any comments or for more information regarding the IPMN please contact Aidan McGarry, Chairperson, IPMN at [amcgarry@enableireland.ie](mailto:amcgarry@enableireland.ie).



Comparing notes on a night positioning system at an ERPM Equipment Evaluation day

## PRODUCT SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Many of the products we use every day come under the classification of medical devices. Bandages, contact lenses, lifting and handling devices such as hoists, and wheelchairs and buggies designed for special needs are some examples.

The Irish Medicines Board (IMB) is there to protect and enhance public health and in this capacity, they regularly publish Medical Device Safety Notices. These are information bulletins, intended to inform people of shortcomings relating to medical devices.

All those who have been involved in the provision and prescription of these devices should play an active role when a response is required. It is possible to subscribe to have these safety notices sent to you, on a monthly basis, by signing up at <http://www.imb.ie/subscribe.aspx>.

## SLEEP SYSTEMS AND NIGHT POSITIONING

Night Positioning is a key part of any 24-hour postural management program for those who cannot independently alter their position in bed during the night.

Therapy, seating systems and medications used during the day to promote and support good posture will be less successful if the person adopts a poor posture during the hours spent in bed.

There are a few systems available on the market to support a good lying position. These provide the opportunity for a supportive posture over an extended period of time when the body is relaxed and less influenced by muscle tone.

The supports are built into the bed to ensure that the person maintains the position they are placed in, while they sleep comfortably.

For more information please contact Linda at ERPM on 01 2615926 or [lwynne@enableireland.ie](mailto:lwynne@enableireland.ie).



## PEER PLAY ON THE AUTISM SPECTRUM

In June 2007, Enable Ireland Early Services expanded to include all children requiring Early Intervention in Co. Meath. For the first time in Co. Meath, this included diagnosing and treating children on the Autism Spectrum. To assist with this change, Enable Ireland North East hosted clinical training on Play and Imagination on the Autism Spectrum.

The 2-day seminar was presented by Dr. Pamela Wolfberg, of San Francisco State University. Dr. Wolfberg, is Associate Professor of Special Education and Director of the Autism Spectrum Graduate Program (Project Mosaic) at San Francisco State University.



Dr Pamela Wolfberg, third from right with Enable Ireland Early Services Staff

# A WORD FROM OUR SPOKESPEOPLE!

These spokespeople were the voice of Enable Ireland in the media throughout Action Week and their personal stories and expertise were a source of great interest and education for everybody who heard them. Other spokespeople included Geraldine Kelly, Niambh and Sarah Doolan, Lisa, Paddy, Ben and Max Cunneen, Lucy Riordan, Bernard James, Oragh Murray, Amy O'Donnell, Kevin English, James O'Donahue and Shane King. Thanks to everyone who made the week such a success!

"Going out in the evening as a group down to the local pub is not always possible. Imagine going away on a holiday and not being able to go to the pub with your friends!"

**Sharon Byrne, Dun Laoghaire and Lucy Riordan, Greystones.**

"I would love to be in full time or part time employment. I worked with Irish Life a few years ago and really enjoyed the experience. Having a good job coach is essential to help secure employment."

**Martin Keegan, Dundrum**

"My ambition is to be a professional actress. I'll continue to follow my dreams no matter what. There will always be things in life that you can't do but don't let the things you can't do hold you back from the things that you can do."

**Ciara Brougham, Dalkey.**

"Supermarket planners should think about making their shelves more accessible for wheelchair users. For clothes shopping I'd love to be able to bring new clothes home, try them on at home and then decide whether to buy them or not."

**Imelda Delamere, Blackrock.**



## SWING WHEN YOU'RE WINNING!



*Pictured at the Swing Dance Extravaganza that took place on Mainguard Street in Galway are members of Galway Swing Tara Breathnach and Vincent Guillemont*

"Some pathways are broken. You can literally tip over and out of your chair. I'd love to see the pot holes filled and the pathways fixed. "

**Andrew Fagin, Tallaght.**

"Our Ability Group want to take action and get our voices heard in the community. We have rights and we want equal opportunities. We do not want to be seen as a drain on resources or a silent group that will accept cutbacks that cut our independence. We want to be contributing members of society playing important roles in our communities."

**Richard Fitzgerald, Cork.**

"I've recently started a volunteer job working with people with intellectual disabilities and I love it. Being a part of the staff team and being on the same level as the other team members is really important to me. "

**Laura Dempsey, Tallaght.**

"The access issue that annoys me most is people parking in disabled parking spaces when they do not have a permit to do so"

**Avril Jordan, Tallaght.**

## SCHOOL FRIENDS TAKE ACTION ON DISABILITY



*Friends Emma Compagno (right) and Aine O'Callaghan presenting the proceeds of their Action Week book sale to Ann McCarthy, Fundraising Co-ordinator, Enable Ireland Cork. The pair sold books to neighbours and friends and also provided information on Enable Ireland.*