

MIDNIGHT MADNESS



As part of our second year as Belfast International Airport's chosen Charity of the Year, AMH were invited to the airport's annual "Midnight Madness" event, a VIP shopping experience at night for friends and family of the 4,000+ staff. AMH staff and volunteers attended both nights in December until midnight, wrapping gifts in exchange for donations and bringing along the "Big Belfast Choir" to bring festive cheer to the many shoppers. Our elephant was also there to provide some light entertainment while guests were enthralled by the "Read Between the Lines" art exhibition which had made its way from Foyle on its year-long tour of Northern Ireland. Many thanks to everyone who volunteered their time in the busy run-up to Christmas! We met over 2,000 people at the events. There was also significant activity on social media with the airport tweeting about us to their 11,000+ followers. Our fundraising this quarter at the airport has raised £1,083.14!

AMH LAND SECOND YEAR AS BELFAST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT'S CHARITY PARTNER



VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



A former AMH client has been awarded the Marsh Trust NI Regional Volunteer of the Year Award for his volunteering role with Barnardo's. Many congratulations to Lee Maddocks who has been volunteering with the charity's Newtownabbey Family Connections service for the past three and a half years. Lee started volunteering with the service in spring 2011. Volunteering was suggested as a path back to work by Action on Mental Health following a period of depression and anxiety.

FUNDRAISING THANKS

A GREAT GRANITE CHALLENGE



Once again the weather was kind to us and almost 200 cyclists set off from AMH in Downpatrick, along the coast via Dundrum and Newcastle, up, up, up to Spelga Dam and down the other side, through Maghera, Clough and home to a bowl of homemade soup in our annual cycling sportive on October 5th! Many thanks to everyone who took part, to all our volunteers, traybakers, sponsors and North Down Physios for massaging the weary legs. The event raised £1,872 for AMH!

THE "WEE WALK" FOR AMH

Congratulations to Richard Simms and Ken Strang who recently trekked to the most iconic base camp of all, at the foot of the greatest mountain in the world – Mount Everest – and have raised £1,375.13 to date for AMH. Walking for 17 days in total they conquered two peaks and two passes reaching Base Camp on day 10 which sits at a height of 5600m. Thank you so much and well done!



MOVEMBER IN FOYLE



November is the largest global men's health charity with campaigns in 21 countries. This year the campaign will invest in men's mental health initiatives. Teams took part in services and projects across AMH in Northern Ireland including our New Horizons service in Foyle, who raised £365!



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WORLD MENTAL HEALTH WEEK ANTRIM ARE "HAPPY"



A survey by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) revealed that Northern Ireland is the happiest place to live in the UK. Four Northern Irish counties made it into the 'happy five', with Antrim taking the top spot, and AMH New Horizons in Antrim launched a short film on 3rd October to prove it! [www.amh.org.uk/news/amh-happy-video/](http://www.amh.org.uk/news/amh-happy-video/)

Over the summer months a film crew followed staff and clients as they took part in a range of activities offered at the service. Highlights included surfing in Portrush, Tai Chi, gardening and guitar lessons while the video also shows the charity's board members and staff getting into the spirit and renowned local entertainer Fiddler Adams dancing with the crowds at the Client Celebration Day at Crawfordsburn Country Park.

NATIONAL POETRY DAY

2nd October was National Poetry Day and AMH New Horizons North Down & Ards were in Carnegie Library Bangor with 'Wise the Bap' North Down Community Network.



Creative activities such as craft, art and writing can provide a powerful outlet for people to explore and express their feelings. For people with mental health difficulties, understanding and articulating feelings can be an important step on the journey. Our clients were sharing their self-penned poems which we also shared widely on Facebook and Twitter to join the national debate.

LET'S TALK ABOUT... SCHIZOPHRENIA

A series of awareness-raising and training sessions began in AMH New Horizons Ards service with an informative talk by John O'Grady on this year's World Mental Health Day Theme - "Living with Schizophrenia".

This was a free event open to service users, carers and health workers and was a packed room in the end with an engaged audience learning a lot from the science and the personal testimonials from the brave clients who told their stories. The next in the series, "Let's Talk About... Depression" was held in Bangor and Newtownards in December.



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# TOGETHER FOR YOU



Together For You, a mental health and wellbeing project funded by the Big Lottery Fund, organised a mental health and wellbeing event in CastleCourt, Belfast. The day was an opportunity to talk about mental health, and got off to a great start with a visit from the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Nichola Mallon.

## MINDING YOUR BUSINESS IN NEWRY



AMH New Horizons Newry hosted an employment conference as part of their week of events to mark World Mental Health Day 2014. "Mind Your Business" in the Canal Court Hotel on the 8th October provided managers and business owners with guidance on how to support their staff's mental wellbeing, as well as providing an overview of the law surrounding these issues. Guest speakers from a range of partner and expert organisations came together to help local employers better manage mental health to improve employee welfare, corporate responsibility and productivity.

# READING BETWEEN THE LINES IN FOYLE

Pat Ross, in association with AMH, embarked on an exciting year which began on World Mental Health Day with the launch of his art exhibition, "Read Between the Lines", in The Play House Derry. The exhibition is on tour and will be displayed in a host of different venues across Northern Ireland. Currently at Belfast International Airport, the exhibition will also visit Belfast City Hall, Parliament Buildings Stormont, The Guildhall Derry and many more. Follow us on Twitter and Facebook for the latest information. Pat gives us, the audience, an insight into his experience of living with schizophrenia. Pat's work is courageously honest and thought provoking. Pat would consider the realisation of this body of work a success if it could go some way towards giving hope to others, be they relatives, carers or individuals new to the sometimes frightening and confusing world of schizophrenia.



## NOVEMBER 2014



## SILVERWEAR FOR FOYLE BOXER

Congratulations to Michael Coyle from AMH New Horizons Foyle who recently competed in two rounds of the Martial Arts Championship in which he won two silver medals! Michael proudly wore his AMH hoodie prior to the beginning of the bout and for the duration of his time in the competitors' arena. He has donated both medals to AMH and had "Taking Action on Mental Health" inscribed on the reverse side.

## "EVERYTHING GOES" IN DOWNPATRICK

The play 'Everything Goes...' was performed in the recently refurbished training area of AMH New Horizons in Downpatrick. Clients had been working collaboratively over the past few months to create 6 original short scenes which explored issues from unemployment right through to couples who find themselves 'stuck in a rut'. The performance was also assessed as part of a CCEA Performance Skills qualification. This qualification has given clients the opportunity to explore and develop both practical and theoretical aspects of Performance Art.



## CLIENT SUCCESS IN PORTADOWN



Family, friends and supporters of AMH gathered in Portadown Town Hall to celebrate the many achievements of clients in the last year. Mayor of Craigavon, Mr Colin McCusker and Joanne McConville, Primary Healthcare Manager at the Southern Health and Social Care Trust were in attendance to listen to clients' "Roots to Recovery" personal stories. The special guests stayed to present certificates to clients for a range of OCNs and NVQs in personal wellbeing, employment, computer skills, domestic cooking skills and horticulture.

## MEN'S SHED CHAMPIONS

Many congratulations to our Men's Shed, Steeple Antrim who won the Community Champion award from the South Antrim Community network. The Shed later featured on BBC Newsline in December as part of their Christmas Appeal "Playing Our Part". BBC Northern Ireland worked with Age NI to highlight the needs and experiences of older people. Donna Traynor visited Antrim where the project is helping alleviate the symptoms of loneliness.



## PROMOTE GET FESTIVE

Our Learning Disability Service, AMH Promote, got into the festive spirit early by selling hand-made decorated pots with spring bulbs, Christmas wreaths, delicious treats, jewellery as well as some 3D pictures at St George's Market!

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY MENSANA!



On the 9th December AMH MensSana Protect Life Resource Service Southern Area celebrated their 12th Birthday. They have reached out to over 48,793 people during this time. From 2,792 people in the first year to 11,793 people within the last 12 months benefiting from Mental Health Awareness sessions and programmes, demand for our service is steadily on the increase. Many thanks to everyone who has supported our work over the years.

## TAKING THE ELEPHANT OUT OF THE ROOM

On #GivingTuesday - a global campaign to encourage giving on the second Tuesday in December - AMH launched their #ElephantInTheRoom campaign. Mental



illness remains the 'elephant in the room', whether at home, work or school. It's an issue that we are aware of but choose to avoid talking about. Here at Action Mental Health we wanted to take the elephant out

of the room, encouraging people to discuss their mental health, this Christmas. We took our (as yet unnamed) elephant onto the streets of Belfast and encouraged people to use our hashtag on Twitter to show they care about the wellness of others and demonstrate that they are a safe place to talk about mental illness without fear of being judged. Our photos reached 44,978 people on Twitter in one day.