

Review of the year



April - June 2011

MARTIN MCGUINNESS, DEPUTY FIRST MINISTER, VISITS AMH

AMH New Horizons Foyle hosted a visit from Martin McGuinness dFM, and Martina Anderson, the Junior OFMDFM Minister, where they acknowledged the remarkable steps clients have made on the road to recovery by presenting certificates to recent graduates of the 'New Horizons' programme.

In total 55 clients were presented with their certificates for a range of qualifications and subjects by the Deputy First Minister, including Rachel Reid who has been named CCEA's learner of the year. It was also an opportunity for the audience to hear from AMH client, Billy Henderson on his experience of living with mental ill health and how his life has been transformed by the training and self development opportunities at AMH.

Other special guests included Bernard McAnaney, Assistant Director WHSCT, who praised the work of AMH, saying most importantly it offered clients a sense of purpose, he also acknowledged the partnership the Trust has had with Foyle New Horizons for over 20 years. Also present were Raymond McCartney MLA, many local employers, and representatives from the University of Ulster and local colleges.

Martin McGuinness was presented with a memento of his visit - a piece of tiffany glass depicting the oak leaf, the River Foyle, and the new Peace Bridge. He said it would have pride of place in his office at Stormont and it would remind him of home and Action Mental Health.



Mickie Harkin, Service Manager, AMH and Martin McGuinness dFM

AMH Scoop Workplace Award



Kevin MacAllister PwC presents David Babington CEO AMH with the Award

Action Mental Health was among the high-profile businesses which scooped the gongs at the Irish News Workplace & Employment Awards in Belfast.

At the gala black-tie dinner in the Ramada Hotel Belfast, the Department of Employment & Learning minister Dr Stephen Farry, congratulated all the winners for their success in placing a firm emphasis on individuals and their positive contribution to the Northern Ireland workplace.

The prestigious event, hosted by award-winning BBC journalist Karen Patterson, saw 16 main awards being presented alongside a special 5th anniversary Champion Award. Jewellery tycoon Gerald Ratner provided fascinating and inspiring riches to rags and back again on how he reinvented himself after his infamous speech in 1992.

And as well as the blue chip companies honoured, AMH were awarded the Workplace Excellence Award, with Translink as runners-up.

The awards were supported by Tughans Solicitors, Royal Mail, PwC, Liberty IT, Firmus Energy and Investors in People and have been endorsed by key industry bodies the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD).

Tom Elliott MLA visits AMH



AMH New Horizons Fermanagh hosted a visit from the UUP leader where he saw the remarkable steps clients have made on the road to recovery. He was introduced to the range of activities on offer and had an opportunity to hear from AMH clients on their experiences of living with mental ill health and how their lives have been transformed by training and work opportunities.

Next Stop Hollywood!

A double bill of locally made films was screened in The Eclipse Cinema in Downpatrick. One of the movies “Downpatrick, Life in the 1950s – 1980s” was made entirely by clients of AMH New Horizons Downpatrick.

The clients also completed a Level Two CCEA in Occupational Studies, while making their film. All of the clients achieved a Grade ‘A’ in this qualification; a remarkable achievement and a fitting testament to how hard they worked on the film. Well done to Stephen, Peter, Jonathan, Hilary and David for their dedication, effort and enthusiasm over the past year; next stop, Hollywood!

The film has been supported and funded by the PEACE III Programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body and delivered by the North Down, Ards and Down District Council.

You can watch the film on our YouTube channel.



July - September 2011



Bernie Peoples, AMH Skills Coach; Rachel Reid CCEA Learner of the Year; Mickie Harkin, AMH Service Manager



Rachel Reid and CCEAs Vice Chair Helen McClenaghan

More than 20 of NI’s most promising students picked up awards at the CCEA Celebrating Achievement event in Lisburn’s Civic Centre. The students were joined by their teachers, tutors, family and friends to celebrate their achievements in skill-based, work-related and life long learning qualifications.

Among them was Rachel Reid from AMH New Horizons Foyle who walked away as the NI Winner in Creative Crafts. Joining Rachel was Bernie Peoples, AMH Skills Coach and Mickie Harkin AMH Service Manager. Presenting the awards was CCEAs Vice Chair Helen McClenaghan.

A CLIENT’S PERSPECTIVE

I had been unemployed for a very long time when I was referred to Individual Placement and Support (IPS). I was not securing interviews and was losing hope of ever finding gainful employment. I was beginning to think I was unemployable.

Under the expert guidance of AMH’s Employment Specialist Eoin, I realised just how much I needed specialist knowledge for the process of job hunting; from filling out applications to interview preparation. It really is an art form. But IPS is much more than that. AMH also provided invaluable support during the ups and downs of job seeking and its ensuing disappointments.

I believe the inherent beauty of the IPS programme lies in its focussing, NOT on the client’s mental health, but on the client’s skills and abilities, hopes and aspirations. Yet at the same time, recognising the barriers posed by long term unemployment coupled with mental health difficulties.

I thought the hardest part would be obtaining a job. But not long into my new post, I realised I faced new challenges, having been out of paid employment for so long.

Once again, Eoin’s professionalism helped me remain focussed and realistic. Eoin’s own brand of interpersonal skills makes it a joy to liaise with him. Above all else, the process of getting a job and keeping a job and the fact that Eoin is not from a mental health background, means that the focus is not on my mental health, or mental illness, something which I had allowed to eclipse my identity for the longest time.

Now, I’m so busy working, being a mum and doing what I do, I forget I have a mental illness!

Through engaging with IPS, I have re-claimed and rediscovered skills and attributes and aspects of my personality which I thought had long gone.

And most importantly, I have not just a job, but a career, at the tender age of 44. It has transformed the lives of my daughter and me.

AMH and The Community Pharmacy Programme Celebrate their “My Health, My Choice” achievements

A host of special guests joined AMH New Horizons Antrim at The Braid, Ballymena Museum and Arts Centre to celebrate the participation of their clients on the “My Health, My Choice” programme.

The “My Health, My Choice” programme is funded by the Building the Community Pharmacy Partnerships Grants Programme which is a partnership between the Community Development and Health Network and the Pharmacy Branch of the DHSSPS. The Programme aims to promote and support the local community to work in partnership with their pharmacists to address local health and well being needs. AMH were delighted to work with their partners Lindsay Gracey from Ballykeel Pharmacy, Ballymena and Martha McGowan from Randalstown Pharmacy.

Other special guests included AMH New Horizons’ staff and clients and their families, the Mayor of Ballymena Hubert Nicholl, Joy Hammond (Occupational Therapy Manager Mental Health, NHSCT) the Community Development and Health Network and Community Mental Health Team workers from the Northern Trust Area. As well as hearing speeches by AMH client Trevor McDonald and Pharmacist Lindsay Gracey everyone had the opportunity to have a taster in Indian Head Massage with local complementary therapists Jayne – Marie Gilmore and Suzanne.

AMH client Trevor McDonald said “I have to say when I was asked to attend the group, I was a little wary but decided to attend and can honestly say that I enjoyed them all, the after lunch events were excellent, I bonded with the class, made new friends, came out of my shell quite a bit, whereas before I was looking for any excuse to stay in the house”

Amanda Barrett, from AMH said “this has proved to be a very successful day and a great opportunity to promote the positive effects leading a healthy lifestyle can have on our mental health. We hope this programme will increase our clients’ understanding of important health issues and encourage everyone to seek support and information from their local pharmacy. I would like to thank all those who helped make today a wonderful occasion”.

Diane Dodds MEP visits AMH



Diane Dodds MEP visited the AMH New Horizons unit in Jubilee Road, Newtownards to see the range of vocational training, personal development and employment support programmes which are delivered to over 200 people in the North Down & Ards area who are recovering from mental ill health.

Selwyn Johnston, Service Manager was delighted to welcome Mrs Dodds to the Ards unit and introduced her to the staff and clients who were engaged in a range of accredited training such as IT, Retail, Catering, Creative Crafts and Employment Preparation.

Mrs Dodds joined clients who were enjoying a stress awareness and relaxation session and shared helpful experiences of how she has developed strategies which have helped her cope in stressful situations. Mrs Dodds answered clients’ questions on a range of issues including the changes in disability benefit and provided an overview of her role as MEP within the European Parliament.

David Babington, AMH Chief Executive thanked Mrs Dodds for visiting the service and acknowledged the significant funding which the organisation receives through the Northern Ireland European Social Fund Programme which enables the delivery of training programmes, support work based training and employment placements with a view to helping more than 1,700 people each year. He appreciated Mrs Dodds commitment to help ensure continued European funding for vocational training organisations such as Action Mental Health.

Mrs Dodds: *“I am extremely happy to continue to support the ongoing work by Action Mental Health and offer any assistance needed to secure future funding. It is extremely important that we ensure the continued success of the New Horizon’s unit so many more people in Northern Ireland can benefit from the support, guidance and training currently available.”*

Volunteering – Benefits Everyone!

The AMH Accept service which is based in Derriaghy, offers work preparation, guidance, support and access to training to people living with mental ill health. Many of our clients begin their journey back to the workplace by becoming a volunteer.

Every two weeks 13 clients from Accept work as volunteers in the Crosskennan Lane Animal Sanctuary, carrying out a range of duties such as dog walking, grooming horses, brushing up and cleaning out stables.

There are many great reasons why AMH encourage volunteering; it can influence career choice, it can open up a whole range of new opportunities, clients can learn new skills such as communication skills or leadership skills through hands on

experience. It opens up an exciting network of people. It can provide an increased sense of worth and accomplishment from making a difference. Everyone benefits, not just the animals!

It can perhaps be best summed in the words of some of the AMH volunteers;

“I get so much out of volunteering. It helps my mind to relax and I would volunteer here every week if I got the chance”.

“I love it up here with the animals and it helps me mentally. It takes my mind off things when I am here”.

“I get a lot of enjoyment out of it and I think it is very therapeutic”.

So a great big thank you to Crosskennan Lane from everyone at AMH.

John O'Dowd MLA Opens AMH Unit in Craigavon

AMH New Horizons Craigavon & Banbridge, welcomed local MLA John O'Dowd to open their new building at Tannaghmore Gardens in Craigavon.

AMH New Horizons has been providing services to local people with mental health needs on the Tannaghmore site since 1999. They offer a full range of training programmes and activities to support local people in their recovery from mental ill health. In Tannaghmore the clients also run a fully functioning garden nursery which is open to the public, from which visitors can buy a range of plants, shrubs and trees.

After a tour of the nursery, and a chat with Clients and Staff, special guest John O'Dowd MLA and an audience, which included; Chief Executive of the Southern HSC Trust, Mairead McAlinden; Chief Executive Craigavon Borough Council, Theresa Donaldson; Deputy Mayor of Craigavon, Cllr George Savage; AMH Chairman, Billy Kohner and AMH CEO, David Babington, listened to a brief overview of the New Horizons service from the Service Manager Colin Loughran and two former clients. Guests then heard about the work of AMH MensSana from project worker Naomi Brownlee and were then treated to performance of *"The King's Son – A Fairytale"* by its author Ann Donnelly, which features in their Provoking Thought workshop which they deliver in local schools to raise awareness of mental health issues.

It was then with great pleasure that John O'Dowd MLA, officially opened the new AMH New Horizons building and said, *"I am proud to be associated with AMH and honoured to be here"*.



David Babington, CEO, AMH; Billy Kohner, Chair, AMH; John O'Dowd MLA



Billy Kohner, Chair, AMH; John O'Dowd MLA; Mairead McAlinden CEO SHSC Trust; Cllr George Savage Dep Mayor of Craigavon; David Babington CEO AMH

HEALTH IN MIND LAUNCHED



Michelle Gildernew MLA; Irene Knox, Libraries NI; Michelle McIlveen MLA

The Health in Mind Project was launched in the Long Gallery at the Northern Ireland Assembly, with joint support of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committees for Culture Arts and Leisure, and Health, Social Services and Public Safety.

Health in Mind is the result of a partnership between Libraries NI and four leading mental health charities: Action Mental Health, Aware Defeat Depression, Cause and MindWise and will provide services to people with low level mental health issues, their families, carers and the general public, to encourage awareness and an increase in self-help strategies.

The Health in Mind project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund (through the Live and Learn Programme) and seeks to raise awareness and understanding of good mental health and to promote opportunities to improve wellbeing through information, learning and reading.

Michelle Gildernew Enjoys AMH

It was a great day for AMH New Horizons in Fermanagh when Michelle Gildernew, MLA, popped in to visit.

It was a relaxed and informal visit, and Michelle interacted very positively with clients. It's been a number of years since she last visited the service, and she clearly welcomed the opportunity to catch up with the changes in the service. She also had time for a cup of tea and had a go at "laughing yoga"

Michelle certainly left with a good feel for the challenges facing the organisation, and the value of the service provided.



Fermanagh's Mental Health Fair

AMH New Horizons in Fermanagh held a Mental Health Fair in a week filled with activities to celebrate World Mental Health Day. Visitors were so impressed by the support services that are available to people living with mental illness. The event was organised by Pauline Flanagan, Client Development Co-ordinator, and attracted 25 stands, among them the Fermanagh Community Mental Health Team, the Aisling Centre and SOLACE.

A delighted Pauline said, "the response has been magnificent. We've had students from Fermanagh College, The Integrated College and the Collegiate as well as the general public and our clients from the Beacon Centre in Enniskillen."



NEWRY WELCOMES DANNY KENNEDY MLA



Local MLA, Danny Kennedy, Minister for Regional Development, was the special guest at Newry's Certificate Presentation in AMH New Horizons.

This was the first time the ceremony was held in the new premises An Stóras at Ballybot House.

130 certificates were awarded to clients who had achieved qualifications in a range of subjects including IT, Retail Studies, Health & Safety, Career Preparation, Business Administration, Literacy & Numeracy, and Digital Photography.

Also present were members of the Newry Employers Forum, who are great supporters of the service and provide work placement opportunities for many clients wishing to re-enter the world of work.

One Flew Over Lost Horizons

A group of 14 clients from AMH New Horizons in Antrim came together this year with dare we say "trepidation" with Belfast based, Spanner in the Works Theatre Company's, Trisha Downey.

Initial comments being bandied about the room were "I'm not acting" and "I just want to help behind the scenes". However, after five high energy workshops, Trisha had worked her magic and turned 8, initially stage shy, men into budding actors.

Collaboratively, the group came up with the idea of adapting some scenes from "One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest", a 1962 Ken Kesey novel, which was adapted into a five times Academy Award winning film starring Jack Nicholson in 1975. The production was set in an Oregon asylum, and aimed to show the "old face" of mental health services and the dehumanising effects of institutionalisation.

The purpose of using theatre was to enable participants to explore issues that are relevant to them in a participatory, creative, dramatic and fun way. We also wanted to demonstrate the values of; using drama in learning and development; providing access to the arts for people who may not otherwise have the opportunity; and building confidence and encouraging participants to confidently deal with difficult issues.

The Theatre group worked towards the goal of performing the finished production "One Flew Over Lost Horizons", for World Mental Health Day in the newly renovated Old Courthouse Theatre in Antrim.

The premiere of the play was attended by 40 people and included family and friends, Northern Trust referral agents and AMH Clients and Staff. The event was supported by journalist Letitia Fitzpatrick who gave a very open, frank and moving talk on her experiences of mental illness, her admission to a psychiatric ward and the stigma still associated with mental ill health. Her talk was followed by the Theatre Groups 25 minute production which was rewarded with a standing ovation from the audience.

"Don't Lose Your Marbles"



Mayor Maurice Devenney and AMH Service Manager Mickie Harking are joined by representatives from Derry City Football Club and City of Derry Rugby Club

AMH New Horizons Foyle held a fun event in the Foyleside Shopping Centre to celebrate World Mental Health Day. The theme was "Don't lose your marbles" and various local sport teams, students and the general public took part in an obstacle course, in which they had to try to keep their marbles despite facing obstacles such as debt, bereavement, illness – events in life which can have an effect on our mental health.

The Mayor Maurice Devenney opened the course and Derry Football Club went head to head with City of Derry Rugby Club. Institute Football also had a go. Young people from St Cecilia's Oakgrove and St Columb's joined in the fun, as did University of Ulster mental health students and lecturers, councillors Pol Fleming and Joe Millar and the WHSCT's Assistant Director of Mental Health, Bernard McAnaney. There was such excitement that many of the shoppers didn't want to be left out and were rewarded with a t-shirt and refreshments kindly sponsored by O'Brien's Sandwich Bars.

The Health Promotion Agency carried out various health checks, and there was information available from the Equality Commission and AMH.

It was a wonderful opportunity to highlight mental health in the public domain and gave everyone the opportunity to think about events in their own lives which can have a positive or negative effect on their own mental health.

Fintona Golf Club support Mental Health

Members of Fintona Golf Club generously supported a recent fundraising event arranged by the Club Captain and AMH Board Member, Eugene Fee.

The funds raised were presented to two local mental health charities, with AMH New Horizons Fermanagh receiving £950.



Eugene Fee and Caroline Ferguson AMH

Health Minister Visits Clients at Work



Andrea Warwick, Employment Officer, AMH; Diane McLucas, Proprietor, Barkingham Palace; Edwin Poots MLA; David Babington, CEO, AMH

Health Minister Edwin Poots praised Action Mental Health for the innovative way it provides vocational rehabilitation and training for people recovering from mental illness.

Mr Poots was speaking as he visited the Hospice Shop and Barkingham Palace Dog Groomers in Lisburn where he met clients from AMH Accept in Derriaghy who are currently on work placements.

The Minister said: *"I am really impressed by the support and empowerment programmes that Action Mental Health offers people who are recovering from mental illness. The personal development training and work placements provide opportunities for people to develop the confidence, tools and skills that will enable them to lead independent lives."*

With up to one in six people possibly suffering from mental illness at some point during their lifetime, any programme that aims to create a positive and meaningful future where people in recovery are able to contribute in a positive way to their local communities should be lauded."

The Minister commended both the NI Hospice and Barkingham Palace Dog Groomers for providing diverse and innovative placement environments.

Barkingham Palace Dog Groomers, specialises in the grooming and hygiene of dogs. The work involves bathing, drying and cutting a range of different breeds. Diane McLucas bought over the Dog Grooming Business in February 2011 and is a training placement provider for clients who wish to develop skills working with animals in a grooming and care profession. The previous owner also facilitated work placements for AMH Clients. One former client is now studying to be a Veterinary Nurse at Greenmount College as a result of working in Barkingham Palace. One client is currently on placement.

The NI Hospice Shop opened in Lisburn in November 2010. Two clients from AMH currently volunteer in the shop.

Foyle's visit to Stormont



Clients and staff from AMH New Horizons Foyle accepted the very kind invitation by Junior Minister Martina Anderson to visit Parliament Buildings. Clients were given a grand tour of the building and then were able to ask their local MLA questions.

Newry Businesses supporting Mental Health

"Businesses must do more to help people with mental illnesses".

Leading businessmen in the Newry area appealed to employers to do all they can to facilitate people with mental health illnesses who wish to re-enter the world of work.

Neil Collins, General Manager of the Glen Electric plant at Greenbank and Pat Vaughan, of Easons at Buttercrane Shopping Centre, both felt that offices, shops and factories could do more to provide training places for clients of Action Mental Health who are overcoming mental health issues and who would derive great benefit from being able to work on a voluntary basis for short periods within a normal working environment.

Glen Electric and Easons are among a number of businesses that have enabled AMH clients to attend their workplace and gain experience in a return to employment. There is no cost to the employer and both Neil Collins and



Anthony Bannon on retail training placement in Easons, Newry

Pat Vaughan feel that this is a very worthwhile initiative that allows their business to make a contribution to the overall good of the community.

WORKING FOR MENTAL HEALTH



Lynne Miller; Minister Stephen Farry; Letitia Fitzpatrick; David Babington AMH

Our seminar – *Working for Mental Health – “Providing opportunities for people recovering from mental ill health”*, was held in the Europa’s Penthouse Suite, and attracted quite a crowd, with standing room only!

Our host for the afternoon was Letitia Fitzpatrick, who introduced our line-up of speakers, including Dr Stephen Farry, the Employment and Learning Minister; Lynne Miller, Central & NW London NHS Foundation Trust; and Alison Kerr from the Belfast Trust.

The seminar, which was sponsored by the Tughan Trust, began with Ann Donnelly, who performed a fun and interactive monologue about famous people through the ages who have succeeded in their chosen professions despite living with mental illness.

David Babington, Chief Executive of AMH, then addressed the audience, *“Work is not only central to most people’s lives;*

it has also been shown to have a positive effect on mental health. AMH deliver training programmes and support work based training and employment placements with a view to helping our clients re-enter the workforce, helping more than 1,700 people each year. We have developed very positive links with many businesses in the private sector, organisations in the voluntary sector and several Trusts and Councils but as the largest employer in Northern Ireland, the public sector needs to engage further than it has to date. With the cooperation of the public sector, these schemes could be extended at little cost, with huge benefit both to the people involved and to the wider economy.”

David was then followed by Lynne Miller, our visiting guest from Central & London NHS Foundation Trust, whose talk was entitled *“Increasing access to paid employment opportunities for service users in a large Mental Health and Addictions Trust.”* Lynne also referenced many service users’ experiences that placed employment at the heart of their recovery.

The Minister then took to the stage, *“With the right support, people with mental health conditions are able to make a significant contribution to Northern Ireland’s*

workforce. Not only do they play their part in the wider economy, but through meaningful and fulfilling employment, individuals can enhance the quality of their lives on all levels, including their physical and mental health. For those suffering from mental health problems, learning new skills and engaging with the employment market can have a positive effect on their own confidence and self-esteem.”

The Minister went on to pay tribute to the work of AMH, *“The support given by AMH to those with mental health conditions and learning disabilities is invaluable. My Department has a long and established working relationship with AMH and by continuing to work together to deliver a range of successful training programmes and initiatives, we can ensure that those afflicted by mental illness are given the opportunity to maximise their potential.”*

The Minister concluded, *“My Department will continue to support people with mental health issues to find and sustain employment and help those affected to enjoy the social, financial and health benefits of work.”*

Alison Kerr, from the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust then talked about how they have been able to provide placement opportunities, the benefits and the challenges they have experienced and advice and guidance to other organisations.

The highlight of the programme was three AMH client testimonials and a panel of clients, AMH staff, and employers who discussed the issue of work placements and took questions from the audience.

Colin Loughran, AMH Service Manager and Billy Kohner, Chair of AMH closed the event.

We’d like to thank all those who attended the seminar, and our speakers and panel members: Letitia Fitzpatrick, Ann Donnelly, Josephine Devlin, David Babington, Lynne Miller, Dr Stephen Farry, Alison Kerr, Lynda Duke, John McGeown, Dairmuid McKeown, Selwyn Johnston, Brian Annesley, Jason Nicholson, John Kerr, Dermot Donnelly, Colin Loughran and Billy Kohner.

We will continue to lobby for more placement opportunities and thank all those who continue to support AMH and our clients.

Christmas in Parliament Buildings, Stormont

Our Christmas Celebrations got off to a wonderful start, when AMH were invited to take part in the “annual switching-on of the Christmas lights” in Parliament Buildings.

The event, hosted by The Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Mr William Hay MLA, was dedicated to people who face the daily challenge of living with mental health issues and attended by a range of guests including the Health Committee and other Mental Health Organisations.

The Speaker welcomed his guests, and Ann Donnelly, who works closely with AMH in Craigavon & Banbridge, kicked off the evening by performing a monologue entitled “Persona Non Grata”. David Babington, CEO AMH then spoke briefly about the work of AMH, followed by Bronagh McVeigh from AMH New Horizons Newry, who talked about living with mental ill health and her road to recovery. The evening concluded with Dinner.



Bronagh McVeigh, Ann Donnelly, Brian Hughes, David Babington, Colin Loughran, Helen Brolly, Leona Wright, Bernie Best

THE JOHN WILSON MEMORIAL TRUST PLEDGES FUNDING TO AMH



Nick Coburn, John Wilson, Colin Loughran AMH, Roisin Tallon AMH, David Acheson, Richard Wilson

The John Wilson Memorial Trust was set up by Ulster Carpets in memory of John Wilson, one of the sons of GW Wilson the founder of Ulster Carpets, following his passing in 2009. The Trust fund is managed by appointed Trustees involved in Ulster Carpets, including two of John Wilson’s sons.

Like his father, John always had an enduring passion for the business; particularly the long held establishment of significant employment in Portadown in keeping with the company’s place in the community.

The trust fund actively seeks opportunities to support local organisations, particularly those working in the areas of mental health and depression. We were delighted that the trust recently pledged funding to AMH. The funding will be used to help support 2 of our projects in the Portadown area; AMH New Horizons and AMH MensSana.

Colin Loughran, AMH Service Manager commented, “Everyone in AMH would like to thank Ulster Carpets and the Trustees of the John Wilson Memorial Trust for their kind generosity and support of our work. The funding will be used to resource our training suite at Tannaghmore Gardens on the outskirts of Lurgan with modern IT equipment and enable essential poly tunnel repairs to be carried out in addition to refurbishment of the glass house ventilation system.

“The trust has also pledged significant funding to AMH MensSana which will secure a full time staff post for the next two years and enable planned and necessary work to continue.”

“Ma” celebrates with AMH

Down County Museum played host to the annual celebration and award ceremony for clients who attend AMH New Horizons in Downpatrick.

Presenting the awards this year was special guest the actress and performer, Olivia Nash, best known for playing “Ma” in BBC’s “Give My Head Peace”. A total of 70 clients received awards including NVQ’s in Horticulture, European Computer Driving Licence as well as many OCN accredited qualifications in a variety of subjects such as Confidence Building, Information Technology and Employability.

The special Endeavour Award was also presented and there was also an award for Photographer of the Year and this year’s Pool Champion!



Celebrating the Year of the Dragon



AMH New Horizons in Foyle had a Chinese Feast to welcome in the Chinese New Year. The year 2012 is the 4709th Chinese year and is the Year of the Black Water Dragon!

On the menu for starters were Mini BBQ Ribs, Mini Vegetable Spring Roll and Chilli Chicken Wings followed by Chicken marinated in Chilli, Ginger, Garlic Yoghurt and Coriander, served on bed of Lemon Scented Rice – all beautifully prepared by some of our talented clients and staff!

A Flippin Good Time in Foyle



They are a competitive bunch up in AMH New Horizons Foyle! The “Pancake Tossing Competition” has become an annual event on Shrove Tuesday, and this year was no exception!

AMH WELCOMES “ACADEMY AWARD WINNER” OORLAGH GEORGE



The clients and staff in AMH New Horizons had “two” very important visitors. Academy Award winner, Oorlagh George popped in to our Downpatrick unit in Ballydugan Road to show everyone her Oscar and chat about the Awards Ceremony, The Shore and future projects.

Oorlagh recently won an Academy Award in the category Short Film (Live Action) for The Shore. Oorlagh, raised money for the film and acted as its producer. The film was directed and written by Oorlagh’s father, Terry George, who had previously been nominated for his screenplays for Hotel Rwanda and In the Name of the Father.

The Shore was filmed at Terry George’s family cottage at Coney Island near Ardglass. It stars major Northern Ireland actors, including Ciaran Hinds, Maggie Cronin and Conleth Hill. The Shore is about a man who immigrated to America 25 years ago to escape the Troubles and is now bringing his daughter back to meet his childhood friends, while harbouring a dark secret.

AMH Promote's New Polytunnel



AMH Promote's new polytunnel is open for business!

The Polytunnel has been put up in the Promote garden in Conlig, Bangor. AMH Promote is a training centre which delivers training to adults with learning disabilities. Funding for the Polytunnel was gratefully received from Marks and Spencer, Bloomfield Centre, Bangor. The Conservation Volunteers were responsible for kitting out the inside of the tunnel including providing benches and growing containers at the appropriate height for wheelchair users.

The new poly tunnel will enable clients to gain experience in horticulture. They will be growing their own fruit and vegetables for use in the Promote kitchen by those undertaking catering qualifications.

Lough Erne Veiled Art Exhibition



Enniskillen Library was the backdrop for a most unusual, and impressive art exhibition showcasing the work of clients in AMH New Horizons Fermanagh. Visitors to the exhibition saw beautiful handcrafted glass and bronze work, a breathtaking display of photographs capturing the local landscape, and also had a chance to read from a selection of poetry inspired by the Fermanagh landscape. The exhibition was the culmination of a project taken forward by New Horizons Fermanagh, and funded by the Big Lottery through the Arts Council NI.

AMH PROMOTE CELEBRATE!

Lady Sylvia Hermon MP, was the special guest at AMH Promote's annual award ceremony. Each year this event recognises and celebrates the hard work of both clients and staff.

With an audience of special guests including North Mayor Cllr James McKerrow and parents and carers; certificates were presented to those who successfully completed courses in a variety of subjects including Confidence Building, Boundaries, Independent Travel, Numeracy & Literacy, Meal Preparation, and Current Affairs. A number of clients also talked about their work placements in local businesses, and their ambitions for the future.



Lady Sylvia Hermon congratulates Edith McClelland

A Celebration at Hillsborough Castle



One of our clients from AMH New Horizons Downpatrick, William Wade, was invited to attend the Essential Skills Awards Ceremony in Hillsborough Castle and was presented with the Highly Commended Essential Skills Co Down Award. Sarah Travers acted as host and the special guest was Alan Shannon, Permanent Secretary, Department for Employment and Learning. Congratulations William from everyone at AMH! Also pictured at Hillsborough Castle with William and Sarah is Stephanie McKeating Employment Officer AMH and Angela Bardon Essential Skills Tutor SERC.

Getting Back to Work



Gavin McConvey AMH; Rachel Blair, Ballynahinch Job Centre; Stephanie McKeating AMH; Michelle Grant, Hugh O'Boyle Training; Marion Ross, Downpatrick Job Centre

Back to Work - Jonathan's Story

"I had been unemployed for 18 months, after having to stop work due to depression. I was referred to the Condition Management Programme by my Community Psychiatric Nurse and after completing the programme felt I was ready to explore options for employment again."

I was then referred onto the Employment Programme in Action Mental Health and met up with one of the Employment Officers, Patricia Kelly. Patricia met with me initially to discuss my work history and potential opportunities and then supported me to find voluntary work in a charity shop.

I began working in the charity shop two mornings a week and really enjoyed the opportunity to get out of the house and do something worthwhile, whilst meeting new people and learning new skills. However, I was still really interested in going back to paid employment.

AMH continued to support me in the voluntary placement and also with job searches which included compiling my CV, completing application forms and offering me help, if needed, in preparing for interviews too.

Throughout this time Patricia continued to reassure me about finding work, offering support and encouragement along the way, I also attended a number of accredited courses run by Action Mental Health in Larne including Personal Career Preparation and Personal Confidence, these courses helped develop my confidence and my social skills.

I successfully found employment, working for NIAMH as a support worker. I was also able to continue working with Patricia during this time and could contact her and receive ongoing support, if required.

AMH contacted me to tell me about a post which had become available for an Occupational Therapy Assistant working with the Mental Health Teams in Belfast, as they knew I had an interest in this kind of work. When I sought more information, I found this was a new post which was being offered through the Belfast Trust in partnership with AMH and I decided to apply.

I was successful in my application and have now been in post for 5 months. I continue to receive ongoing support from AMH through Jenny Barr in the Workable team and I meet with her regularly to discuss how the job is going and how to deal with any issues or challenges I may face.

I have found Action Mental Health an excellent service in my recovery and found their ongoing support essential in finding employment as well as successfully carrying out my roles whilst in employment."

More Client stories can be found on the AMH Website.

Clients from AMH New Horizons in Downpatrick attended an event in the St. Patrick's Centre to learn more about moving forward into employment or further training.

AMH invited representatives from Ballynahinch and Downpatrick Job Centres, and Hugh J O'Boyle Training, to give a presentation on the options available.

The audience heard about the Department for Employment and Learning programmes such as Steps to Work, Access to Work, the Condition Management Programme, Permitted Work for those on Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance, Return to Work Credit, Job Centre On-line facility, Travel to Interview Scheme, Job Brokerage and much more!

All the information can be found on the Department's website www.delni.gov.uk in the Disability Employment Service Section, or talk to one of our Employment Officers who can steer you in the right direction.

Michelle Grant from Hugh J O'Boyle Training then talked about further training opportunities. More information can be found on their website, www.oboyletraining.com

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For more information and contact details visit

www.amh.org.uk



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