

## **Clondalkin Partnership - PRESS RELEASE**

### **Community Healthy Living Centre Launched by Minister Harney**

The Community Healthy Living Centre and the Pieta House Outreach Service was launched by the Minister for Health Mary Harney. A 'one stop' health house is now open for residents in the heart of Clondalkin where they can avail of health related training and activities.

The Clondalkin Community Health Initiative (CCHI) recently secured the tenancy of the 3 bedroom house in Neilstown from South Dublin County Council. With support from various local agencies, including the Clondalkin Partnership, the house was developed into a Community Healthy Living Centre.

**Debbie Scales**, Co-ordinator Community Health Initiative says: "One of its aims is to develop health programmes in the community. To date we have held a number of peer training courses. Local residents have been trained as trainers in healthy eating, Relationships and Sexuality Education and Promoting Positive Lifestyles. We have run courses in stress management and relaxation, yoga, baby massage, baby and child first aid, heart defibrillation and Applied Suicide Intervention skills. Other activities will include a healthy eating kitchen and a health information library".

**Mary Harney**, Minister for Health and Children launched the Community Healthy Living Centre: "Thank you for inviting me, it is a privilege to be here today, especially as it is in my own constituency. The Clondalkin Community Health Initiative that was set up in 2001 has been instrumental in identifying the health issues on the ground and has helped promote good mental health. This is important as many people in need do not know where to go. Pieta house, [who will be providing counselling from the Community Healthy Living Centre] have already had an enormous impact in the community in Lucan and lives have been saved as a result, I therefore welcome the setting up of this outreach office in Clondalkin. The presence is essential to meet the needs of the community and to provide support to the many families that struggle to survive. I was invited here to launch the Centre so I hereby declare it open."

The need for a project base was highlighted early on in the initiative to set up a Healthy Living Centre. Through visiting and reading about other Community Development and health projects in Ireland and Britain the Clondalkin Partnership recognized that having a community healthy living centre in the heart of the community enabled and encouraged community participation in the projects and helped give them an identity. This is a great opportunity to get local people strongly involved in the project from the very start and make it their own.

Thanks to the South Dublin County Council for providing the house and further thanks to the Clondalkin Partnership, Wyeth, RAPID, Dormant Accounts, and the members of the Clondalkin Community Health Initiative (CCHI).

There was a huge interest in the event and neighbours, local community representatives as well as local political representatives Derek Keating and Guss O'Connell, attended the launch in Neilstown, Clondalkin.

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**The Clondalkin Community Health Initiative** (CCHI) was set up in 2001 by the Clondalkin Partnership. The aim of the initiative is to address health inequalities in Clondalkin by the use of Community Development approaches and principles.

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