

# dTalk



## Celebrating The Arts

Inside:

Local Artists John Devoy, John Farrell & Pat Curran

Ballyfermot Services – Participants' Artwork

Familibase Music - Owning The Space

Ballyfermot Star - Celebrating Women

'Balloons' Advice & More...

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Many thanks to Thomas O'Mahony, Matthew Murphy and Teegan Bracken O'Reilly of the Ballyfermot College of Further Education for their hard work in putting this edition of dTalk together.

# Introduction

## Cllr. Vincent Jackson

### ***Chair of the Ballyfermot Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force***

BLDATF is one of 12 LDATF around Dublin, which were set up in the late 1990s to address the drug crisis of the time. As a locally based multi-agency committee we support a number of organisations within the community to provide a range of services and activities.

The BLDATF recognises that the impact of substance misuse extends beyond the individual to communities and families, and as such we work closely with the wealth of networks within Ballyfermot to ensure that we do our best to address the wide ranging impact of substance use. If you or someone around you is experiencing problems with drug and alcohol use, you can contact any of the BLDATF services details are provided in this magazine.

### ***In this edition...***

This edition of Dtalk explores the value of art in the community. We partnered up with Ballyfermot College of Further Education Journalism and Media students for this edition. Students were invited to the projects to learn about what they do and to showcase the art they produce, and some interviews were conducted with local people. Ballyfermot is a vibrant community and art is very much alive at a local level.

### ***Celebrating the Arts***

This edition has interviews with people connected to local projects who are using art as a means to express themselves. Art has great power and this edition explores how art can be used to bring people together and to help people move away from difficulties in their lives.



The value of art for young people in the community is explored through some interviews with local youth and art projects. Covid-19 has hit all our lives; we have felt its impact across all aspects of our lives from school, to work, to shopping, to seeing our family and friends. It's been challenging, but there has been some very positive work to have come from it, there has been a big community effort to reach out to each other and for the services in the community to do what they can to help people during these challenging times. Ballyfermot LDATF works hard to stay connected to the community, by listening to what is happening and responding as best it can. Perhaps now more than ever, we have all learned the value of listening and connecting to one another.

### ***Community engagement with the Task Force***

We encourage and welcome your input, and you can do this via our website [www.BallyfermotLDATF.ie](http://www.BallyfermotLDATF.ie), please check it out. You can also contact us directly on [info@ballyfermotldatf.ie](mailto:info@ballyfermotldatf.ie). We want to ensure that we respond to the needs in this community, and we use Dtalk to highlight issues which are emerging in the community.

# "JUST A FEW HOURS EVERY DAY, IT'S LIKE MY MEDITATION"

***Artist Pat Curran tells his story of a new beginning working with Ballyfermot Star, Matt Talbot, and other community services***

***By Matthew Murphy***

**P**at Curran makes his way to his studio in Inchicore every morning and paints until the thick smell of turpentine becomes too heavy for his head to handle - and then he stops. "Just a few hours every day. It's like my meditation," he tells me. In his studio paint brushes, white spirits, and jars of murky water litter his work table. To add to the chaos pallets lay scattered across the table, each with a colourful mixture of different paints. Directly above this madness rests a canvas. Beside it, a photograph that will become his newest painting.

"You see what I'm doing is...I have a great subject - I have people. I don't have to overthink. Someone drops me in a photograph, I'll either do it or I won't." Pointing towards his newest photograph supplied by Core Youth Club in Inchicore, he says, "look at the joy in that young fella's face, you don't see that nowadays." All of Pat's paintings are recreations

of photographs that have been given to him by communities he holds close to his heart. As a child, Pat grew up in Dolphin House and moved to Pimlico at age 13 - but the flat complexes around Dublin city remained his stomping ground for many years after.

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***I have a great subject  
- I have people***

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When I first saw Pat's paintings I was in Studio 468 in St. Andrew's community centre in Rialto. Dotted around the walls were impressive paintings that all told a unique yet interconnected story. A melding of street photography and painting I remember thinking. It was gritty, profound and had character. An old woman standing on her porch, wearily gazing out, her redbrick house standing





behind her. A crowd of young people hanging around the corner, one with his top off and hands outstretched. Another one of a young lad, after a dip in the canal, glancing over his shoulder and drying himself off with a towel. These were the images hanging around the walls, captured and recreated in paint from what Pat calls, “a disappearing world.”

Growing up in Dolphin House, Pat has always had a deep rooted connection with life in the flats - a life he sees fading before his eyes. “When I grew up in Dolphin House it was at a time where people left their keys in their doors, it wasn’t as it is nowadays. We were sort of sheltered because we were in a block.” Pat remembers always having “someone to play with” and kicking around a football till “morning noon and night. “They were the days,” he recalls, but like everything, he says, “times change. You don’t see many kids out on the roads now playing football

“**We were sort of sheltered because we were in a block**”

or whatever.” Pat’s art is centralised around the idea of childhood, people’s relationship to a working-class Dublin, and a changing Dublin city. “It’s about growing up in the city, growing up in a working-class area. In the beginning it was all about childhood memories. The narrative that runs through my paintings is about growing up in the city and people’s relationship to the city.”

But, he says, “it’s really about a disappearing world. All the flat complexes, they’re all getting regenerated. Dolphin House is getting regenerated, Fatima’s no longer there, Micheal’s estate is no longer there - so it’s a disappearing world.”



In 2005 Pat had his back against the wall. Unemployed and a strain being put on his marriage from the arrival of his youngest son, he sought help. "I was going through a rough time. I wasn't working, me and the wife weren't getting on too well so I decided I needed to do something to change my life." Through FÁS, Pat was introduced to **Job Plan**, a community based service that focuses on getting people back into work, training, or education.

"I don't want to be too dramatic, but it probably changed my life," he recalls. After doing a 6 month course with Job Plan he was directed to another community project called **Ballyfermot Star**. It was at Star where Pat got his first introduction to art. Encouraged by one of the art teachers there, he applied for Ballyfermot College of Further Education. "She encouraged me to put a portfolio into Ballyfermot [BCFE]. I put in a portfolio, which was just a few drawings, but I didn't hold much hope.

***All the flat complexes,  
they're all getting  
regenerated***

I was accepted - and that's where it all started then."

During the year in BCFE, Pat worked on a portfolio for NCAD. Applying through their access scheme, which provides an alternative route for applicants coming from a socio economically disadvantaged background, he was accepted on the condition that he completed a 1 year matriculation course in UCD. "They thought I couldn't read or write, so they sent me to UCD for a year," he tells me laughingly. While in UCD he completed a CE scheme in **Matt Talbot Community Trust**, a training centre for people on the margins. "I enrolled in Matt Talbot to finish my CE Scheme but also to get help with my essays and my English. Matt Talbot was a godsend.

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go with painting***

I still go back to Matt Talbot because it's a great service for the people in Ballyfermot, especially people who have been through rough times in their lives or people on the margins of society. They cater for all kinds."

From UCD Pat enrolled into NCAD and in 2014 he graduated from the college with an MFA in painting. All in all, Pat spent 8 years of his life in education to become a painter. Leaving school at the early age of 15, he struggled for many years in education but his desire to paint kept him there. "I wanted to paint. The only reason I went to college was not to learn but to see how far I could go with painting," he says.

"I found it very difficult the first couple of years of college. But third year, that's when it took off. "I remember we got this exercise for six weeks where we had to bring in something that interested you. It could be a found object, a photograph, whatever. They said, 'don't do anymore artwork for 6 weeks and just bring in stuff and stick it up on the wall'. By the end of that six weeks something subliminal started to happen, you start bringing in more and more of the same thing, the same image - and for me it was all about growing up in the city."





***I found it very difficult the first couple of years of college. But third year - that's when it took off...***

Leaving NCAD left “a big void” in Pat’s life but he was determined to keep painting. “I never stopped painting when I left college. I never gave it up. I was sort of afraid to give it up because I didn’t want to let it go. I had a passion to paint, so I set up shop in my bedroom, which lasted for about a year.” After being awarded 2 years of studio space in Clancy Quay, in 2017 he was selected for **CITIZEN ARTIST**, an art initiative curated by arts organisation Common Ground. CITIZEN ARTIST tasked participants to explore the diverse realities of citizenship. Using his own photographs from childhood, Pat began to paint vivid recreations of these images. “I started off with a photograph of my brothers and sisters

growing up in Dolphin’s Barn. I started to get very interested in photographs of people’s memories.” Asking local residents from Rialto and Fatima to supply photographs, he began to recreate their memories in paint too. *Piddler On The Roof* depicts an image of a child peeing on top of a car. As Pat says, “It sounds very comical, but there’s a serious side behind that photo.” The original photograph was taken in Dolphin House in the 1980’s during a Concerned Parents Against Drugs meeting - which was a trying time for inner city Dublin as parents took to the streets to tackle a growing drug problem. Another painting depicts a group of young lads hanging around the corner and a man named Georgie, with his top off, approaching the group in an almost confrontational way. “By looking at that painting, you’d think that Georgie was going to have a knock, like a fight. But Georgie wasn’t like that, he was a type of fella that was always out for fun. It’s amazing what ways painting tells a story, but not always the true story,” he says. In 2019 Pat was given



Photograph: Aislinn Delaney





Photograph: Aislinn Delaney

a residency with **Common Ground** in their new art studio The Lodge. The building in Inchicore acts as an office base for Common Ground while also providing workspaces for three artists. Siobhan Geoghegan, Director of Artistic Programme, says "His work is very interesting because he's making more tangible images of a changing city and

***He's had a very specific journey in his life and he has these stunning paintings which tell all sorts about Dublin life***

a changing Dublin, and we wanted to support his practice in the studio. He has an analysis. He doesn't talk about it in-depth but he's had a very specific journey in his life and he has these stunning paintings which tell all sorts of

stories about Dublin life, about poverty, about loss, about change, about hope - it's all mixed up in there." Pat has been preparing for his first solo exhibition in Pallas Studios. "It's great," he says, "I'm going to hold my first exhibition in the area I grew up in." Unfortunately due to Covid- 19, Pat's exhibition has been postponed until further notice, but he remains painting in Studio 468, courtesy of Common Ground. Success can be a very arbitrary term. But to Pat, the ability to paint on a daily basis and present his work in exhibitions is a personal success he has achieved. "I'm happy as it is, that's straight up. Success for me is being asked would you be available to put a piece into this exhibition here, and that's happened. That was one of my goals." Painting is something that Pat refuses to live without and believes that the process is "healing in itself." "If everybody had something they were interested in, a job they were interested in, that they were happy doing, the world would be a better place."

***Check Out Pat's work on Instagram: patcurranartist4***



# "IT'S A BIT ZEN"

## MAINTAINING THE CREATIVE FLOW

*Job Plan teaches printmaking art to it's participants to provide therapeutic benefit from the craft*

**By Matthew Murphy**

**P**eople practice art for a variety of reasons. For some it's simply a hobby to pass the time. Others make it a personal

challenge to overcome. You might view it as a skill to develop, a craft to refine,

or a trade to make a living. You might look at art as a fundamental method of expression, a medium to challenge not just your own ideas, thoughts, and

reducing levels of stress, increasing self-esteem, improving attention to detail levels, and providing a sense of accomplishment, it's hard to see why we all shouldn't practice art in our daily lives. At Job Plan, a job readiness programme

based in the **Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership**, art has become a valuable tool that has the capacity to bring about that change.

**“The Programme facilitates the building of confidence and self-belief”**

emotions - but societies. Whatever your view is on art and why to pursue it, I think most people can generally agree that art can help us heal. From changing a person's outlook on life, to

Through courses, activities, and various personal development modules, the aim of Job Plan programme is to support individuals with a history of substance use and to equip them



with the necessary skills to move closer to education, training, and employment. Programme Coordinator Wayne Martin, says, "Job Plan is viewed as that initial step to start thinking or re-thinking about the next steps in terms of education or employment. The programme facilitates the building of confidence and self-belief for one to access whatever's next for them." Wayne says, here at the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership



***Its very successful  
because it's a  
different approach***

they run two 20 week "intensive" programmes each year, that are packed with "meaningful activities that aim to increase skills development across a range of areas."

The programme offers a quiet and safe space to find structure and routine and allows students to develop key personal development skills, communication skills and computer literacy skills. On successful completion of Job

Plan, graduates walk away with three QQI level 3 certificates and will exit with a wider perspective on themselves and substance use, says Wayne. Craft and printmaking is a module which is delivered across the 20 weeks, which Wayne says is "the module that's best attended. "It's very successful because it's a different approach. Art is more creative and the science would say that when we are being creative we engage a different part of our brain. It's therapeutic, can be relaxing, and evidence has shown that art can reduce feelings of stress and can exercise the muscles that we use for concentration."







"The students get a lot out of it. It's done at their own pace, it's a process. They start off with nothing, just materials at the start, and at the end they get to see the rewards or they get to see a finished piece of work", he says. Roisín McGuigan, teacher of printmaking at Job Plan, says "There's a reward from making something for the first time that you never thought you could do before." In the craft and printmaking module students go through the different types of printmaking from mono-printing to calligraphy and lino printing. On the process of printmaking,

***It opens up another kind of world***

Roisín says, "It's quite therapeutic - it's a bit zen. You use this little goading tool and you're digging away areas of the lino." From Mindfulness to Health and Safety, the technical process of printmaking and discussions about the value of art, "It teaches them lots of things", she says.

She hopes the course will show the students that art is for everyone and that anyone can gain some positive benefits from practicing art.

"There's no worry, there's no drama, and it's a very healthy experience. It's very healthy mentally and physically," she says. "There is an escapism in the making of art. It opens up another kind of world, particularly for people who may need a different kind of escapism. "I think everybody should get a chance to make some art in their week. Not to be put under pressure to do it, but to benefit from that point of just no stress - there's no stress. It will give your head a little bit of space from the worries of your everyday life."





# "DROP THE EGO, ASK FOR HELP"

***Artist John Farrell teaches copper craft in communities and services across Dublin***

By Matthew Murphy

**O**ut of all the many pieces of copper art John Farrell has made, celtic knotwork is still his favourite to create. When he looks at a celtic knotwork piece he sees the complexity of life, his own life, laying in the thin copper sheet before him. From up close the spiraling lines and detailed patterns depict a scene of mayhem and confusion. But as John says, "It's not until you step back and take a full look of the picture that you actually see it and understand it. The overall picture." From a young age John was interested in his Dad's ability to work with his hands.

When he was around 8 years old he looked up to his Dad to pass on the skill. "My Dad was very talented with his hands. He would put his hands to anything - drawing, blowing glass, making swan ashtrays, it was a little hobby he had to keep himself busy so he taught me". As the years passed on John's interest in art faded. "When you start growing up and try to find your own way stuff gets left behind. You go through your things - drugs and alcohol... and then chaos and mayhem ensue and all the likes of that disappear.

***It's not until  
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9 years ago John became fully clean from drugs. "I came off heroin, methadone and the usual drugs that come along with it." While in rehabilitation he rekindled his love for copper art and began practicing again. Through the **Matt Talbot Community Trust** he was given a space and even encouraged to work on his copper art on the condition that he completed a start your own business course. From there he completed a number of other courses in group facilitation and training. Today he teaches his copper art to other service users and gives free addiction recovery talks in hostels,

all while running a small art enterprise from his office at the centre. "They gave me the opportunities and encouraged me in a way that suited how I learned. It's a drug free centre but they're more inclined to work on your future. If you want to get outside help for drug issues they will help gladly, that's no problem. Their main priority is to see you succeed and achieve more than what you'd settle for."

John's at ease when he's carving engravings onto copper sheets. Through his own experience he knows this form of art can be a therapeutic experience for anyone struggling through hardship. "It's the sort of art where you have to concentrate. You can't slip off in your mind. It's like you just get lost in it. This is my mindfulness, this is my escapism, this is my sanity." But his classes aren't all about teaching students how to work with copper and create art they can feel proud of. "Part of my class is the work and the other part of the class is interacting with people. They're probably having the first normal conversation that they've had in a long time."









***“This is my  
mindfulness,  
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is my sanity*”**

**”**

"I had one student come in for a year and never made one piece but it was the interaction that he came in for. It was to have a little laugh, a bit of jokes, a bit of banter, not talk about crime or drugs or homelessness. It's just to give people the opportunity and the space to be normal and when you're caught up in crime and addiction and that's hard. "I love what I do because I love interacting with people. It's just about treating someone as a human because



I remember being in their situation and not being treated like a human." Today John sells his artwork on Instagram, Facebook, and through word of mouth. John realises that he needs support to reach a wider audience and through setting up a bespoke website he is both able to showcase his work and raise awareness. John is also thinking of his next steps and is looking forward to the rebuilding of the centre in Matt Talbot. They have incorporated the setting up of a bespoke studio space where John can work from and encourage the wider community to join him in learning the craft of copper engraving. Looking back at his own journey he

***“Staying in pain and  
misery and  
hurt, that’s easy. It’s  
harder to walk into  
somewhere and ask  
for help*”**

**”**

urges others to not be ashamed to seek help. "Getting clean is the scariest thing you'll ever do. Staying in pain and misery and hurt and all of that...that's easy. It's harder to walk into somewhere and ask for help. Ask for help, give yourself the opportunity, listen to that little small voice that every so often screams at you "you're not meant for this". Drop the ego, drop the bullshit, and ask for help."

*Check out John's work on Instagram:  
Juniorscelticcopperrevival*



# OWNING THE SPACE

## *Young people find their voice at local music group in Familibase*

*By Thomas O'Mahony*

**O**ften when it comes to local services there simply isn't enough for kids and young people to do. Luckily for those in the Ballyfermot community there are a lot of brilliant services on offer for everyone to enjoy and one of those services is Familibase. Familibase is a centre for children, young people and families based in the Ballyfermot Area just opposite the Ballyfermot Leisure Centre that offers lots for young people to do. From Art Groups, Theatre and Film Making and a dedicated drop-in music group that is hosted every weekend, there's always a good buzz in Familibase. I tagged along one Saturday to see all the brilliant work

that Familibase was doing with their Music afternoon. The first thing you'll notice when you arrive at Familibase is every volunteer and member of staff is friendly and welcoming. I was offered a

**“ Everyone who comes in here gets a chance to own the space ”**

coffee or tea if I wanted it and a quick introduction to all of the team. I was first greeted by Familibase music and film lead, Alan Tully, and when asked

what makes Familibase special he tells me that simply “everyone who comes in here gets a chance to own the space”. Familibase is run by a small crew of full time employees and a larger group of volunteers, most of which have been involved with the service from a young age. Many of the volunteers first started as teenagers and eventually trained to take on leadership roles to help anybody who has come after them. Having all attended Familibase and now become the backbone of the space all the volunteers show a sense of pride in running the music workshop which can be clearly seen when I stepped into a



large practice space by the front door. Normally a small theatre space that can be used by any members of the Ballyfermot Community today its rows of seats are rolled back and it's a practice space where a circle of volunteers, staff and young people all are jamming out their own take on Darude's hit Sandstorm. What is immediately clear when I start watching the group is that nobody is telling anybody what to do, everyone is listening to each other and working together to get it right. There's impromptu guitar solos, people are swapping instruments to try something new and every person there is smiling.



This is clearly what Alan was talking about when he said every Familibase member gets to own the space. Wandering down the hallway I hear a voice hitting every note of Billie Eilish's song Ocean Eyes perfectly. Following the sounds of the singing I find a fully kitted

***“Familibase is a safe place where you can express yourself and grow”***

out karaoke room and meet volunteers Sarah Dunne and Craig Madden who are trying to one up each other with their impressive singing skills. Both of them have been regulars at Familibase for years. Craig is very quick to point out that Familibase is a safe place where you can express yourself and grow your talents. They take turns singing and both are so talented that

I can't decide who's best. Next up is a tour of the project's state of the art recording studio. The studio is nothing short of impressive, it's fully stocked with guitars, drums and keyboards, and a separate recording room that can fit a whole band. Inside I meet James Peppard and Chris McMahon who coordinate Familibase's music programmes which includes the Saturday music group. When James and Chris were teenagers they attended 'The Base' in 2006, which was an early form of Familibase.

Through their experiences with The Base they grew their knowledge of music and production, eventually going on to pursue music at third

**“Around every corner there's someone trying out a new instrument”**

level education and they are now full time employees at Familibase. While I'm in the studio a young girl named Aoife braves the vocal booth to try her hand at covering Kacey Musgraves hit 'Rainbow'. Although nervous at the beginning, through friendly reassurance and a confident helping hand from Chris she very quickly starts to nail take after take and walks out of the studio with her own song that would rival any professional studio in quality. This sort of ethos runs all the way through Familibase. Around every corner there's someone trying out a new instrument

or exploring a new song and all along the way they are encouraged by people like James, Chris and Alan, or any of the number of volunteers. It's clear that everyone at Familibase is dedicated to a holistic and inclusive approach to make sure that every young person that steps into the space is made feel like they

**“Familibase offers a unique experience to all it's attendees”**

can do anything they set their mind to. When I ran into Sarah Dunne again by the coffee machine she tells me about her own experience at Familibase. She started attending the service at 14 and mainly was attracted to the music programmes as she has been singing since she was 4 years of age.

Over the years she has taken part in projects like 'Unsung Youth' which was a collaborative project between Familibase and Kylesmore College to put on a musical showcase back in 2018. Now at 19 Sarah has completed the volunteer summer programme which allows her to volunteer at Familibase and has gone on to study youth work in Liberties College. 'There's always plenty to do here' says Jake Moran the resident Familibase photographer. Jake started in Familibase while on work experience in transition year and originally just helped out around the place but one day picked up a camera that had been laying around and never put it down. He eventually went on to



do the volunteer training programme where over the course of 5 weeks participants learn the basics of therapeutic intervention and eventually earn their 'Children First' certificate and take part in an overnight trip in Wicklow where volunteers undertake practical training and overnight intervention.

Now 2 years after his initial work experience ended Jake can still be found moving room to room and documenting all the fun in Familibase as a fully fledged volunteer. When I was about to leave I popped back into the practice space I was in earlier. Alan was behind the drum kit, James Peppard was on a set of bongos and there was a young man sitting down beatboxing. Over the course of only 10 minutes I saw each of them set the pace for their improvisation with each turn they found more and more ways for the young man to beatbox along with the beat. It's examples like this that combine the truly

great talent and enthusiasm of the staff and the creativity of the young people that go to Familibase that make it truly unique.

Throughout Familibase the stories are almost all the same, every new face I meet tells me that the reason they came here was for something to do, a fun way to spend a Saturday afternoon or a weekday evening, a way to stay out of trouble, or to find out how to express themselves in voice that is truly their own. Familibase offers a unique experience to all its attendees, instead of being given a prescribed schedule every young person is asked what they want to do and how would they like to do it? Like Alan Tully said when I first arrived in the door, everybody who comes here really does get a chance to own the space.

Call into Familibase on Blackditch Road or phone 01 654 6800





# Familibase Early Years Programme

*Providing a safe and secure environment for learning*

**By Teegan Bracken**

**G**ina is a Staff member at the Familibase Early Years Centre in Ballyfermot. She spoke to me about children attending the Early Years Programme. Familibase Early Years provides quality, affordable early childhood care and education in the local community. They believe that providing a nurturing and age appropriate environment to the children allows them to develop and learn in a safe and secure place. "Within Familibase Early Years we cater for 31 children per day both full and part-time".

There are 12 staff members. While enrolled in the Early years each child will learn by doing things for themselves, by exploring and investigating, watching and listening, talking and discussing, creating and communicating – in other words, playing. Play is children's work. Each child will be learning both indoors and outdoors. While here, each child receives 3 meals and two snacks per day. This is based on a 3 week healthy eating menu. This supports early healthy eating habits. Familibase take on children to the Early

Years Programme from as early as 6 months old up to 3 years old. While also being involved in the Early Years Programme, children and families are included in the organisation's Family Fun Days and Christmas celebrations and other events throughout the the year. Familibase run a wide range of programmes from music to art and also drop-ins for children as young as 5 years old for those recently coming out of the Early Years Programme.

If any members of the Ballyfermot community would like any further information about the Early Years or would like to apply, you can apply directly to FamiliBase who are located on Blackditch Road.

Familibase are highly responsive on Facebook and can also be contacted on 01 654 6800







# BALLYFERMOT STAR HOST SWAAT EVENT

***Ballyfermot women come together to  
celebrate Women's Day event***

***By Teegan Bracken***

**D**enise Joy is the **SWAAT** coordinator in Ballyfermot/ Tallaght Areas. SWAAT stands for **Supporting Women to Access Appropriate Treatment**. The aim of her job is to highlight the importance of primary care for women, to support screening and brief intervention within primary care, and to strengthen referral between primary care settings and community based drug and alcohol treatment services. Denise was recently the coordinator of an incredible Women's Day Event which took place in **Ballyfermot STAR**.

"The reason for the event was to bring the women of the Ballyfermot area together and celebrate each other," Denise explained.

The day started out with everyone gathering in the facility. A lot of people seemed a bit nervous when they first came in but many came bearing cakes, scones and treats for everyone to enjoy. The event consisted of little tasks and speeches and lots of laughing and joking. While the event was happening there was an opportunity for women at the event

## ***The event consisted of little tasks and speeches and lots of laughing and joking***

to have massages done in another room. Denise said she could see how much more relaxed and at ease people were after having them. They could slip out at any point of the event for a short massage. Denise also explains the event really brought the local women together. The atmosphere in the room was incredible and to see everyone smiling, laughing and enjoying themselves was very fulfilling. The space was decorated beautifully and was full of amazing women for the duration of the event.

**Ballyfermot Star** run women's and men's groups on a 6 week and 12 week periods, they usually get the numbers for their groups through word of mouth in the community and once they have enough people to run a programme

they go ahead. The women's programme consists of Personal Development, Creative Writing, Christmas craft workshops and *Healthy Food Made Easy* are just a few of the things they cover in their programmes, along with loads of other opportunities such as youth groups and education classes from Childcare to Communication Skills ranging from Levels 3 to level 7.

Denise Joy can be contacted through  
Ballyfermot Star or  
directly on 086 056 1973





# Stepping Into The Unknown

***Local Artist and Community Worker John Devoy speaks on how Art can help you find your inner voice***

***By Thomas O'Mahony***

**M**any people use art as a form of personal expression and a way to deal with negativity that may come their way during life. Local artist John Devoy is a prime example of how art can help everyone find their own voice. Having had a keen interest in art as a child John was unable to pursue his

passion due to lack of services within the community during the 70s and 80s. After dealing with addiction and bouts of homelessness he enrolled in several art courses provided by services in the local community. After achieving a distinction in drawing during his studies, John shifted his focus and his talents towards helping others.



## ***Art should not be underestimated as a useful form of expression***



After he successfully completing his studies John went on to teach art to people dealing with addiction through services such as **RADE** (Recovery, Art, Drama, Education) and the Macro Centre on King Street in Dublin's inner city. John said that during this time he aimed to use art to help people deal with the negative talk in their heads. According to John by the end you could see the creativity coming through when participants began "stepping into the unknown" of discovering their own creative voice and way of expressing themselves.

From there John went on to work with **UISCE** contributing to the *Brass Munkie* magazine which aimed to spread information about drug and alcohol addiction to both users and the general public.

John work has been displayed in several local exhibitions and in 2016 he exhibited a collection of charcoal and pencil drawings of the 11 signatories of the Irish Proclamation of Independence. Now John spends his time helping local people in the Ballyfermot community

learn about art and its therapeutic benefits as an instructor in services such as **Fusion CPL** and **Ballyfermot Advance**. Most of these classes are drop-in and newcomers are encouraged. Aside from his artistic work, John, in conjunction with **Ballyfermot Advance**, helps run a **community outreach programme** where he and fellow community worker **James Gonzales** walk around the local area and engage with those who might be dealing with homelessness or addiction issues in order to get them any help they may need.



## ***Art can be a powerful way to promote the healing process and recovery***



Art should not be underestimated as a useful form of expression during recovery and John said it best: "Art can be a powerful way to promote the healing process and recovery. It is not necessary to have a background in arts or a talent to participate; individuals only need to engage in order to reap the benefits. Upon learning some techniques, activities such as painting or drawing can be used throughout one's life as a way to express thoughts and feelings, explore creativity and minimise stress resulting in increased wellbeing."

***Interested in John's work? Contact Ballyfermot Advance on 01 6238001***



# Minding Mental Health

Mental health is important all the time. In Dtalk we often have a section around mental health and how to look after it as it's only normal for us all to have ups and downs. The last few months however have been particularly challenging for us all, we have all been faced with something many of us did not expect. Coronavirus has made such a huge impact on all our lives, it is important that we recognise this impact, but do not overwhelm ourselves. It is important to stay connected as best we can and mind our own mental health as well as that of the people around us, our children and our friends and family. There are many great resources available for everyone to keep them informed about Covid-19 and how to stay safe. Covid-19 Government guidelines change and evolve, so please stay informed about updates. To remain informed, please take a moment to look at the wealth of resources for everyone on the HSE ([hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie)) and Túsla ([Tusla.ie](https://www.tusla.ie)) websites. Or you can use [www.Ballyfermotldatf.ie](https://www.Ballyfermotldatf.ie), where links are provided to relevant sites. It is important to keep in mind some of the following advice about minding your mental health during Covid-19 and we've shared some tips from the HSE website here:

## ***Stay informed but set limits for news and social media***

The constant stream of social media updates and news reports about coronavirus could cause you to feel worried. Sometimes it can be difficult to separate facts from rumours. Use trustworthy and reliable sources to get your news.

## ***Stay connected to others***

During times of stress, friends and families can be a good source of support. It is important to keep in touch with them and other people in your life. Remember that talking things through with someone can help lessen worry or anxiety. You don't have to appear to be strong or to try to cope with things by yourself.

## ***Smoking, drinking and eating for comfort***

If you smoke or drink, try to avoid doing this any more than usual. It won't help in the long-term. Eating habits can often be linked to your emotions. You may turn to food for comfort during this pandemic. Long-term comfort eating can lead to weight gain and affect your health. It's important to be able to recognise and separate out your emotions from your eating.

## ***Older people's mental health***

Develop a regular structure to your day. Routines can reassure you and they can make the world feel more predictable and safer. Stay active in and around your home. Exercise within the current guidelines. Exercise is a mood enhancer. Eat and drink healthily - lots of fruit, vegetables and water to help boost your immune system and energy levels. Keep a good sleep routine each night as this will help you feel better the following day. Contact any groups that you are involved with and see what new ways they are organising things. Develop new interests. Creative activities or reading are particularly beneficial. There are many events available live online, including concerts and religious services. Keep contacts details close by - friends, family and services.

## ***How you can mind younger people's mental health***

Keep younger people informed about what is going on. Use words and language they can understand. Continue to talk about what is going on but remember you might feel anxious at this time too. Children and teenagers will often take a lead from adults. So try to stay calm and manage your own anxieties first. Explain that it's normal to feel anxious about coronavirus. But reassure younger people that it is less common and severe in children.

## **Young people enjoying the new Skate Park in Le Fanu Park**



**Photos kindly provided by Ballyfermot Youth Service**

BYS provides a range of services to the young people of Ballyfermot from Outdoor Education programmes, Drop in Information centres, Music and Arts programmes, access to the Erasmus + programme and a comprehensive Drug Peer Education Programme.

For more information on BYS contact 01 623 1431 or email [admin@ballyfermotys.ie](mailto:admin@ballyfermotys.ie)

## Nitrous Oxide

**Ballyfermot LDATF** is aware of the concerns around the use of Nitrous Oxide (NO) - also known as Whippets, Balloons, NOS, Bulbs - around the community. The use of NO brings on nausea, dizziness, tiredness and numbness and its effects are short lived. Due to the risk of loss of oxygen in the blood, there is a **risk of sudden death when using this substance**. People are reminded that it is **illegal** to consume this substance.



It is important to be **aware of the facts and risks associated with drug and alcohol use**. There are many websites and supports available where information can be found. **Remember that all drug or alcohol use carries risk**.

For young people who may be using drugs or alcohol, you are reminded to **speak with a parent, a family member you trust**, about what is going on for you and to be honest about their drug and alcohol use. **It is important to stay safe and to stay informed**. If you are with a friend and you are worried about your health or their health after taking drugs or alcohol, **please call an ambulance, and stay with your a friend until medical help comes**. Always tell medical

professionals what drugs or alcohol have been taken.

**"Start a discussion... be sure to take in the young person's perspective. Be open, don't get angry. Come from a place of care."**

(Alcohol and Drugs: A Parent's Guide, Page 9).

**Parents play a key role in their child's life**. By keeping the lines of communication with your child open, regardless of the actual drug being used, a young person will often talk about what is going on for them. If you are a **parent and concerned about your child's drug or alcohol use**, there is a helpful parenting resource available for download from the

Ballyfermot LDATF website, or make contact directly with any of the services listed on the Ballyfermot LDATF website for guidance as to where to go for help.

**For more information please visit:** [www.drugs.ie](http://www.drugs.ie) [www.Ballyfermotldatf.ie](http://www.Ballyfermotldatf.ie)



Well done to our **Community Addiction Studies** graduates in Ballyfermot!

This course enables people living or working in the community to become more effective when they encounter drug/alcohol abuse or addiction. Participants learn about drugs and their effects, develop an understanding of addiction, examine their own attitudes, become more effective in their personal responses and develop the skills and knowledge to become more effective in responding to drug misuse in their own communities.

### **Areas covered include:**

- Information on drugs and their effects
- The process of addiction
- How addiction effects individuals, families and communities
- How individuals and communities can respond
- Agency visits & individual course work

Accreditation: QQI Award (Minor) Level 5 – Further Education and Training  
Accreditation is through URRÚS (registered body with QQI). The programme is accredited as Community Addiction Studies - 5N1834.

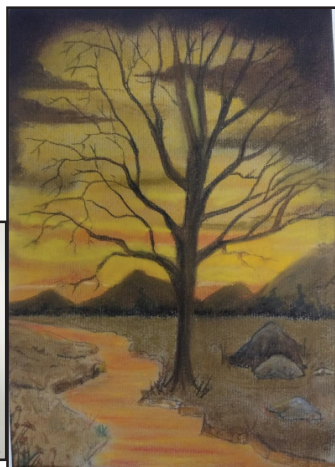
If this is something you might be interested in please contact Gary on:

**087 148 6080** or email **[groche@bcpartnership.ie](mailto:groche@bcpartnership.ie)**





Art from participants  
working with  
**Ballyfermot Advance.**





**Sculptures by  
participants in Fusion  
CPL in Cherry Orchard**

**Phone: 01 6231499**

**The beautiful mosaic  
below was made by a  
Fusion participant in  
Mountjoy**







A small sample of some really lovely copper work from Matt Talbot Community Trust participants.

Participants are instructed and encouraged by John Farrell (see article pg .12)

Interested in the work of the **Matt Talbot Community Trust**? Contact Gráinne on 0857650019 for information.





## **International Overdose Awareness Day**

Nalaxone training was held in the Ballyfermot Civic Centre in honour of International Overdose Awareness Day. The socially distanced training was provided by Uisce – an advocacy group for substance users. Organisation of the event was facilitated by Wayne Martin of Job Plan and Úna Rafferty, Community Development Officer with the Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership. Job Plan is a service for people working on personal development and job readiness while coping with substance misuse issues. This valuable training was kindly provided to local service users by Lynne and Marie of UISCE and was also attended by staff from Ballyfermot Advance. Denis O'Driscoll, a key figure in promoting Naloxone and pharmacologist with the HSE, also kindly attended the event. Contact UISCE on **01 5554693**

### **Covid Pandemic:**

## **Ballyfermot Local Drug & Alcohol Task Force Support**

Ballyfermot LDATF, throughout the pandemic, have done their best to support projects and the community through a very challenging time. In recognition of the particularly difficult impact of Covid 19 on families and young people, the Ballyfermot LDATF offered additional funding towards a range of summer programmes throughout July and August. The programmes were offered by Advance, the Ballyfermot Youth Service, Ballyfermot Star and FamiliBase and activities ranged from outings, art and sporting activities to family outings. The Ballyfermot LDATF also offered additional funding towards the community efforts being coordinated through Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership. The BLDATF would like to thank the projects for their hard work and dedication during this very difficult time.



## Local Services Contact List

<b><u>Ballyfermot Advance</u></b> Drop in   Key Working & Case Management   5-Step Family Support   Outreach & Exchange Programme	01 6238001 <a href="mailto:info@ballyfermotadvance.ie">info@ballyfermotadvance.ie</a>
<b><u>Ballyfermot Star</u></b> Key Working & Case Management   Family Support   Day Programme   Education Programmes   Childcare Youth Substance Misuse Support   Group Work	01 6238002 <a href="mailto:info@ballyfermotstar.ie">info@ballyfermotstar.ie</a>
<b><u>Ballyfermot Social Intervention Initiative</u></b> Court Support   Housing Advice   One to One Support Group Support   Woman's Group (WISE)   Advocacy	01 6267041 <a href="mailto:info@bsii.ie">info@bsii.ie</a>
<b><u>Fusion CPL</u></b> Prison Links   Key Working & Case Management   Group Support   Education & Training Support   Reach Out Programme	01 6231499 087 961 3272 <a href="mailto:info@fusioncpl.com">info@fusioncpl.com</a>
<b><u>Familibase</u></b> Child & Family Support   Youth Substance Misuse Service   Early Years Programme   Youth & Community Supports   Youth Arts Programme	01 654 6800 <a href="mailto:info@familibase.ie">info@familibase.ie</a>
<b><u>Job Plan</u></b> Ballyfermot Chapelizod Partnership Key Working   Group Support   Counselling Educational & Training Support   Employment Guidance   Art	01 6235612 087 702 1515 <a href="mailto:wmartin@bcpartnership.ie">wmartin@bcpartnership.ie</a>
<b><u>The Matt Talbot Community Trust</u></b> Keyworking   Group Support   Smart Recovery Project Based Learning   CE Scheme   Prison In-Reach   Education, Training & Employment Support	01 626 4899 085 765 0019 <a href="mailto:grainne.jennings@matttalbot.org">grainne.jennings@matttalbot.org</a>
<b><u>HSE Supports</u></b> Primary Healthcare Services   Addiction Services GP   Public Health Nurses   Adolescent Addiction Service - 01 795 5693	01 795 6002 HSE.ie Drugs.ie Spunout.ie
<b><u>Ballyfermot Local Drug &amp; Alcohol Task Force</u></b> Clara Geaney   Coordinator 087 330 9024 Gary Roche   Project Officer 087 148 6080	<a href="mailto:clara.geaney@hse.ie">clara.geaney@hse.ie</a> <a href="mailto:groche@bcpartnership.ie">groche@bcpartnership.ie</a>