

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

“Croí na Gaillimhe: At the Heart of the City”

New radio documentary captures the spirit of friendship thriving in Galway

“Its red door is always open to the street” That is how independent radio producer Mary Owens describes Croí na Gaillimhe, as she begins the narration of a new radio documentary to be broadcast on Galway Bay FM on St Stephen’s Day Thursday the 26th of December at 9.00 a.m.

Croí na Gaillimhe based in The Maureen O’Connell House, 1 Mill Street is a St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Resource Centre that has a huge impact on the lives of almost 400 residents of Galway every week.

Mary Owens spent time with various groups who benefit from the centre as they wrote, painted, danced and talked. As a result she has captured the friendly atmosphere and the range of social interactions that is the essence of Croí na Gaillimhe.

The fact that the centre’s work has a strong intergenerational and inter cultural dimension lends the programme plenty of character and diversity and perhaps will surprise the listener with its range of voices, accents, stories and points of view.

“What distinguishes Croí na Gaillimhe, in my view, is its success in bringing together people of very different ages as well as social and cultural backgrounds so naturally and enjoyably in an ever changing and growing city”, says Mary Owens.

Loretta Needham, Centre Manager referred to the centre’s 70 volunteers, ‘as the lifeblood of the organisation’.

One of the weekly activities featured in the documentary is the Young Hearts Intergenerational Project. Every Tuesday transition year pupils from Galway Community College come to Croí na Gaillimhe to work with older adults. One of the adult participants tells Mary in the documentary, “I love the whole atmosphere of the place. The people I have met I would never have met them except coming to Croí na Gaillimhe. They are happy, they may have different languages but they are able to show their friendship in their own way. So friendship, a cup of tea and the whole group together working and laughing, is really what makes it for me.”

On any given day in Croí na Gaillimhe there will be older adults enjoying a dinner and social club, migrants taking part in english conversation classes, young parents engaging in group activities and workshops, school children working alongside older people on the intergenerational programme and various classes and clubs in progress. The clubs and groups in Croí na Gaillimhe are: the Parents Network and workshops relating to parenting, Men’s Group, Lunch and Social Club, Knitting Club, Tea Dances and Creative Writers Group. There are classes in Movement and Relaxation, Drawing, Painting,

More Money in your pocket including guides on healthy shopping, Beginner Computer Classes and Computer Workshops.

Mary Owen's documentary will be broadcast on Galway Bay FM on St Stephen's Day, Thursday 26th December at 9.00 a.m.

While the main running costs of Croí na Gaillimhe are currently being funded by SVP from the Maureen O'Connell Fund additional financial support is needed to continue to develop programmes to meet the centre's objectives.

If you'd like to financially support the work of Croí na Gaillimhe, or volunteer, log on to www.croinagaillimhe.ie or croinagaillimhe.blogspot.com. Ring (091) 895203. You can also find the centre on Facebook and Twitter.

The documentary was presented and produced by Mary Owens. The sound editor was Grainne O'Malley.

ENDS

For further information contact:

Note for editors

Croí na Gaillimhe, is one of the many St Vincent De Paul Resources Centres around the country. The Centres are a focal point in the community for Adult Education, Parents' Groups, Mens' Groups, classes or just a place where one can meet a friendly face or find a listening ear.