National Carers Week Newsletter

Valuing Carers

Full-time Family Carers provide an average of 110 hours of care per week and this work often is carried out without recognition. National Carers Week is an opportunity to recognise the valuable contribution to society made by thousands of Family Carers.

The aim of the week was to deliver a vibrant week of celebration and the promotion of Family Carers from 18th – 24th June 2012, leading to a fuller appreciation of the value and contribution of Family Carers.

Its objectives were:

- To raise awareness of Family Carers in our community.
- To deliver events for Family Carers throughout the country.
- To engage with Family Carers not yet availing of carer support services.
June 18th – 24th saw the 6th annual National Carers Week. Over 30 organisations were directly involved in organising events during the week. There were over 140 events for Family Carers in the Republic of Ireland. We estimate that in the region of 3,500 Family Carers took part directly in events such as pamper mornings, evenings out and day trips. Local media supported National Carers Week with nearly 70 articles and photos and 17 radio interviews. Awareness of the week was also increased with national media coverage from the Irish Times, RTE Radio 1 (Pat Kenny), Newstalk, Today FM, TV3 News and Ireland AM.

New developments this year included an expansion of the schools competition to become nationwide with a national and regional winner; a collaborative survey of carers with the Neurological Alliance of Ireland; development of a social media campaign with a Facebook page; contact with over 50 hospitals; engagement with the National Gallery (tours for carers, lunch in gallery); and a high level political event in Leinster House where a presentation was made on the challenges facing Family Carers.
Events from the Week

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland

Acquired Brain Injury Ireland organised a free event for family members caring for and supporting someone with a brain injury on Friday June 22nd at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire to celebrate National Carers Week. The aim of the event was to celebrate the role and contribution of Family Carers, in particular those caring for an individual with an acquired brain injury in Ireland.

Aoife Prendergast, Acquired Brain Injury Ireland.

“The was a great, positive experience that successfully highlighted the work and dedication of Family Carers.”

The Carers Association

The Carers Association has been organising events for Carers Week for the last number of years and this year was no different with a week full of recreational events, information days, training courses, health checks and overall fun. I believe that 2012 was possibly one of the most successful Carers Weeks so far for carers in the Cork region. It’s great to have the opportunity to celebrate the huge work that Family Carers do on a daily basis and at the same time promoting awareness around their caring role.

Carers Week certainly raises awareness around the role of carers, it helps people to identify themselves as carers, while at the same time provides opportunities for carers to come together to share experiences, information and support each other. It can help people who sometimes feel isolated to know that they are not alone and that someone does care.

Through various events, media, etc Carers Week can help educate the members of our government, communities and those responsible for making decision which affect carers’ lives. It can help to influence policies, highlight and identify the needs of Family Carers and the people they care for.

Peter Cox, The Carers Association Cork.

“Carers Week is a very special week for Carers including the attraction of extensive media coverage. It is a terrific way to enhance the work of Carers and give it recognition.”

“We had a fantastic group of people who willingly gave of their time and skills.”
Events from the Week

The Carers Association

Carers Week provides The Carers Association in Mayo an opportunity to highlight what Family Carers do for their loved ones and for society in general. It is also a time to show carers how much they are appreciated and to keep them informed about supports available to them. In Mayo, we plan several events throughout the county throughout the week to allow as many carers as possible to avail of the events. This past June we held a patient handling course, a carers exercise session which introduced carers to an in-home exercise programme to help keep themselves fit for their caring roles, and two information/pamper sessions. All events were well attended and feedback very positive. Carers Week is also a time in which the media can assist us in highlighting the work that Family Carers do and informing the general public that this work is invaluable to all of us.

Eileen McNamara, The Carers Association Mayo.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is delighted to be part of National Carers Week as it is an opportunity for us to celebrate and recognise the important role of Family Carers in the lives of people living with dementia. Events led by The Alzheimer Society of Ireland took place all across Ireland and included a comic adaptation of James Joyce’s Ulysses by Gerry Farrell entitled “Blooming Ulysses”, an information evening and social event for Family Carers in Monaghan, the official launch of the Alzheimer Café in Donnybrook, a pamper day in Mayo and the launch of a new social club in Bloomfield Care Centre amongst many other events.

As part of National Carers Week politicians from all parties were encouraged to sign a pledge supporting the swift publication of the long awaited National Carers’ Strategy and a timeframe for its implementation. National Carers Week has become a very important calendar week in the diary here and we look forward to celebrating in 2013! Congratulations to all involved!

Events from the Week

Crosscare

Our monthly coffee morning in June was the beginning of our celebrations for Carers Week. It began with the arrival of the Sam Maguire Cup carried in by Ger Brennan from the Dublin team and David Hickey, selector. We welcomed Amanda Norris the joint winner of the Young Carer of the Year Award. Entertainment began with singing by the 6th class pupils from St. Columba’s School on Iona Road and we concluded with a play performed by our Carers Creative Writing Group and written by their tutor Susan Knight; “Sonny Goes Speed Dating”.

Nora Kirrane, Crosscare.

Irish Hospice Foundation

The Irish Hospice Foundation (IHF) was very pleased to be part of the Care Alliance which marked Carers Week 2012. The vision of the IHF is that no-one should have to face death or bereavement without the care and support they need. Our participation in the presentation to the Members of the Oireachtas allowed the IHF to highlight the support needs of those carers who are caring for people at end of life. Caring for someone with a life-limiting illness can be a gradual process or it can happen suddenly. The availability of timely and relevant information and support can help to make the experience less stressful for all concerned. Information available on the IHF-supported website www.carers.ie seeks to support and provide practical advice and guidance to family carers in this situation.

Above all, we were privileged to hear from a range of Family Carers about their experiences – not least from Geraldine Buckley who cared for her 31-year old husband who died less than a year after they were married. Geraldine considered herself fortunate to be supported in her role by specialist palliative care teams. She highlighted the fact that many Family Carers may not be able to access this support. Carers play a vital role in caring for their loved ones through their illness, and it is important to remember that care for carers of people with a terminal illness needs to extend beyond death.

Kirana Bhagwan, The Irish Hospice Foundation
2012 marked the first year that National Carers Week included a high level political event.

Thanks to the wonderful support from Senator Jillian van Turnhout, Family Carers and Carers Week partner organisations made compelling and powerful presentations to over 50 members of the Oireachtas and/or their staff.

Feedback was positive and we look forward to continuing this engagement with our legislators over the coming year.
Images from the Week

We support the timely publication of the National Carers Strategy in 2012 and a specific timeframe for its implementation.
A Special Thank You

Well known weather presenter and celebrity Nuala Carey has been a wonderful support to the week and we wish to thank her for her time she gave in the run up to and during the week itself. Family Carers were delighted to meet Nuala at the launch of the week in The Mansion House. We wish her well in her blossoming career.

We must also thank our voluntary Chair Aidan Power for his massive contribution to National Carers Week. He brought strengthened focus and leadership to the project and facilitated the development of a more professional communication strategy, specifically in the area of sponsorship proposals, press releases and media training, as well as facilitating introductions to a number of media contacts. He was very generous with his time and was constantly available to provide guidance, support and advice. His wealth of knowledge and guidance in relation to media and PR helped us secure additional media coverage which helped raise awareness of National Carers Week 2012.

EBS to Sponsor National Carers Week 2013

We are delighted to announce that EBS will be sponsoring National Carers Week in 2013. Speaking about their support of Carers Week 2013, Emma Hunt-Duffy, Marketing and CSR Manager, EBS said: “Carers Week is an important event in the year, as it shines a light on the selfless work being done by Family Carers all over the country. Family is a core part of EBS and has been since our inception. Every day, Family Carers help families to make it through the day and it’s important that they continue to receive the support they need to fulfil their tasks. EBS is delighted to be supporting the week through sponsorship and we are looking forward to working with the team to promote and engage with Family Carers throughout Ireland to ensure that the work they do doesn’t go unnoticed.”

www.ebs.ie
National Carers Week Partners 2012

The Alzheimer Society – the leading dementia-specific service provider in Ireland.

Caring for Carers Ireland – supporting Family Carers throughout Ireland.

The Irish Hospice Foundation – dedicated to all matters relating to dying, death and bereavement in Ireland.

Brí – providing support, information and advocating for people with brain injury.

The Carers Association – Ireland’s national voluntary organisation for and of family carers in the home.

The Disability Federation advocating for the voluntary disability sector – supporting organisations to enable people with disabilities.

Headway – providing support and services to people affected by brain injury.

MS Ireland – enabling and empowering people affected by Multiple Sclerosis to live the life of their choice to their fullest potential.