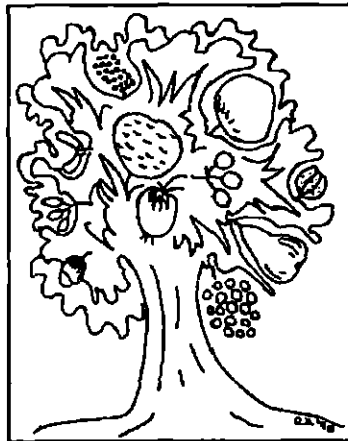




Lifestart Newtowncunningham Annual Report 2003



*“The good teacher does not bid you
enter the house of his wisdom, but rather
leads you to the threshold of your own
mind.”*

Kahlil Gibran ‘The Prophet’



**North Western Health Board
Bórd Sláinte an Iar-Thuaiscirt**

This project is also supported by the Inishowen
Partnership Company and FAS through the
Jobs Initiative Scheme

Lifestart Newtowncunningham

*"Don't limit a child to your own learning, for he
was born in another time"*

Management Committee

- **Chairperson** - *Pauline Bonner*
- **Secretary** - *Deirdre Cody*
- **Treasurer** - *Catriona Clay*
- **Members** - *Catherine Clark*
Dymphna Whorisky
Myra Johnston
Colleen Tourish
Majella McGrath
Darina Friel

Staff

- **Co - ordinator** - *Mary Walker Callaghan*
- **Administrator** - *Geraldine Holmes*
- **Family Visitors** - *Christine Crossan*
Carol Frize
Helga Neeson
Ita Toland

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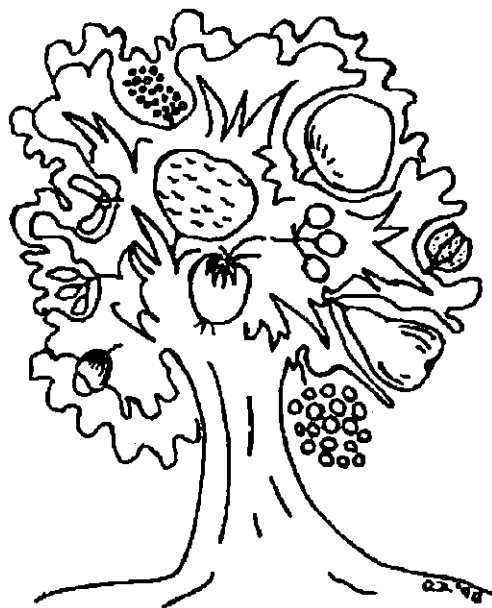
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LIFESTART
MISSION STATEMENT

Educating and empowering parents of children from Birth to the age of five so that these children are enabled to reach their full potential.

The Ethos of Lifestart is one in which, children, parents, staff and committees are encouraged to grow and develop in an open, respectful, accountable and holistic way which is sensitive to the uniqueness of each person.



OVERVIEW OF THE LIFESTART PROGRAMME

Lifestart is a home visitation, educational programme which was first established simultaneously in the Connemara Gaeltacht and in an urban housing estate in Derry City in 1989.

The Lifestart programme operates in 20 localities in Ireland and 2 in Europe. The programme concentrates on the Birth to five years of age-group and their parents in each community. Presently there are 2,042 families and 2,765 Children receiving the programme.

Parents voluntarily participate in the programme, it is open to all parents with a young child in the project area, regardless of parental income, family structure or level of education.

The programme is facilitated by Family Visitors, who on a monthly basis, deliver age-appropriate child development materials to the participating families. These materials are an American text, "*Growing Child*", which each project area has carefully adapted to fit the vernacular and culture of its own local area. Sufficient time is given to meet the individual needs of each parent to discuss the materials and the child's development. All materials are left with the family as a resource.

Family Visitors working on the programme are predominantly local people and many parents themselves.

Family Visitors also facilitate parent group sessions, which provide a forum for discussions of issues relating to:

1. Child education
2. Community development activities
3. Opportunities for parents to come together

This can assist in breaking down any barriers of isolation that may exist.

The overall aim of the Lifestart programme is:

“to enable parents to make informed relevant decisions about the upbringing of their own children and to empower them to give effect to these decisions”.

The Lifestart programme through its delivery:

- encourages, supports and empowers parents:
- focuses on the physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of children from birth to five years of age;
- shows the primacy of the home in early childhood;
- Makes available relevant knowledge to parents.

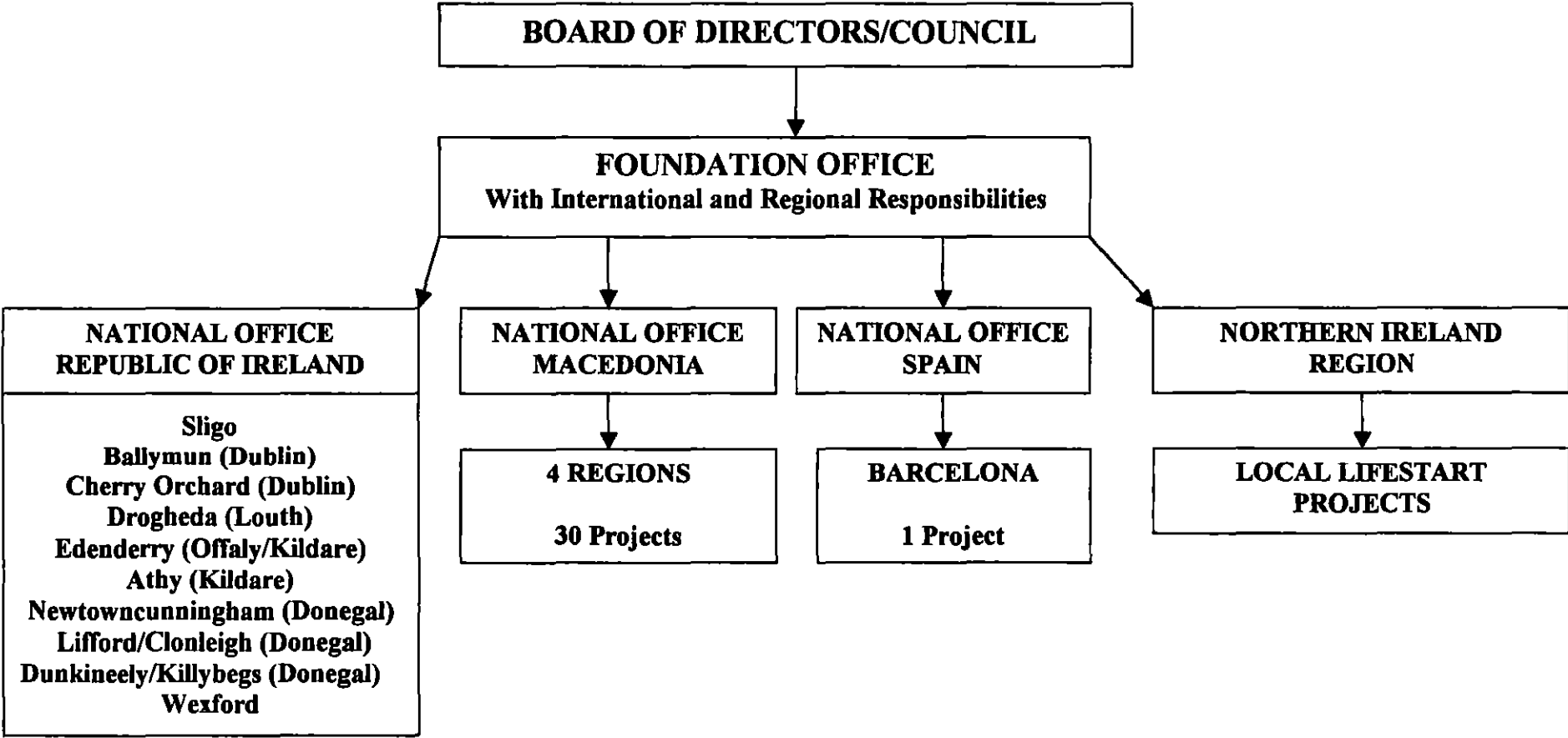
The programme then promotes the following:

A knowledge of child development and an awareness and confidence in their parenting skills

Parents are empowered and children are enabled to reach their full potential through:

- positive infant/child-parent relationships, which is at the core of learning and development.
- the foundation for basic learning skills (social, emotional and intellectual)
- intellectual development;
- Social interaction;
- Learning abilities.

LIFESTART FOUNDATION ORGANISATIONAL CHART



This Chart shows the Relationship between The Foundation Office and the National Offices in Ireland, Macedonia and Spain and between the Foundation Office and the Projects in the Northern Ireland Region.

LIFESTART FOUNDATION ORGANISATIONAL CHART

BOARD OF DIRECTORS/COUNCIL



FOUNDATION OFFICE
With Responsibilities for Projects throughout Ireland



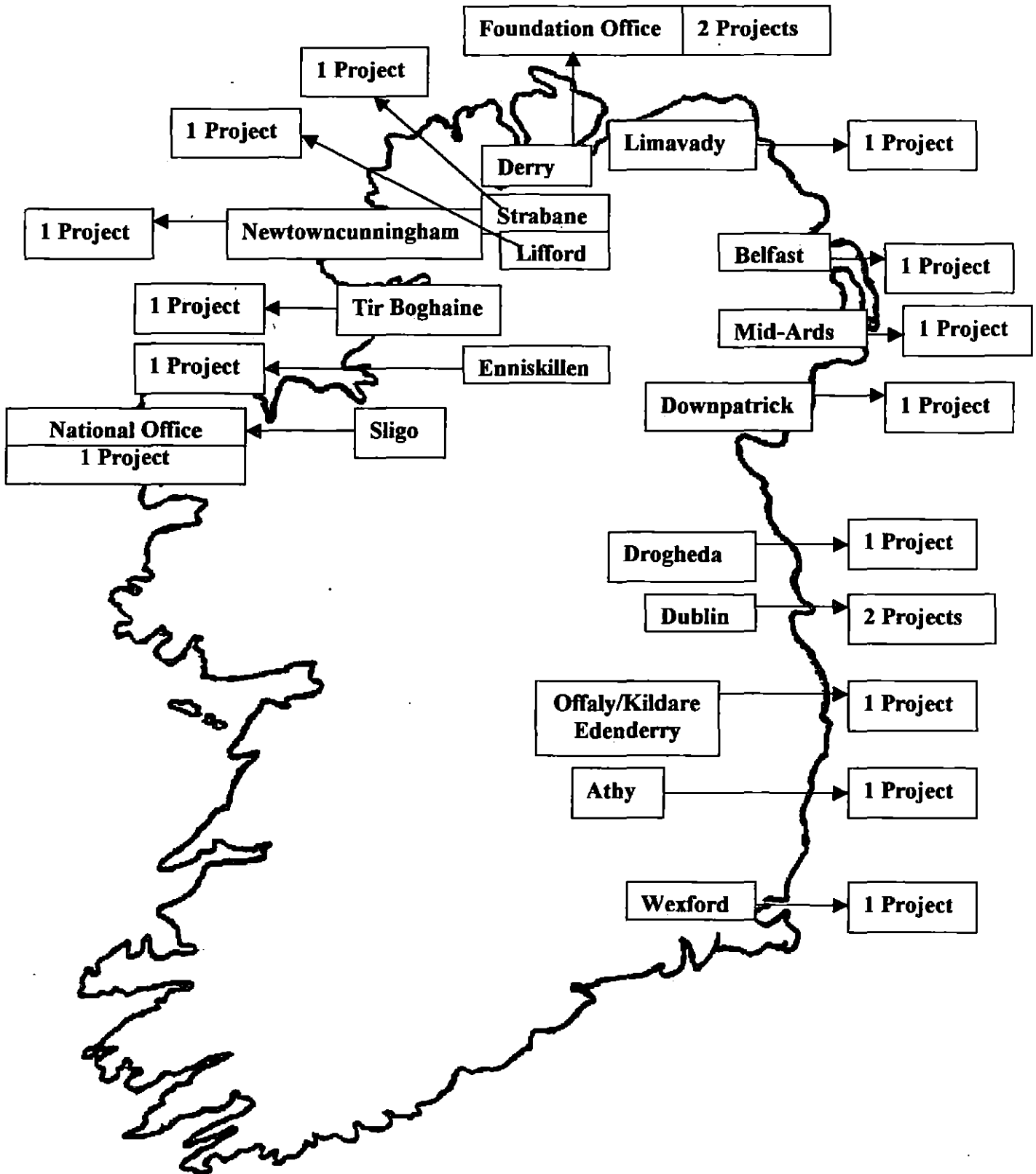
NATIONAL OFFICE
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Sligo
Athy (Kildare)
Ballymun (Dublin)
Cherry Orchard (Dublin)
Drogheda (Louth)
Dunkineely/Killybegs (Donegal)
Edenderry (Offaly/Kildare)
Lifford/Clonleigh (Donegal)
Newtowncunningham (Donegal)
Wexford

Each Local Project is affiliated to the Lifestart Foundation Office through the National Office

**This Chart shows the Relationship between the Foundation Office, the National Office and the Local Projects .
Each local Lifestart Project has its own Board of Directors/Management Committee**

**THE LOCATION OF THE LIFESTART FOUNDATION OFFICE,
NATIONAL OFFICE AND PROJECTS THROUGHOUT IRELAND**



CHAIRPERSON'S ADDRESS

Since its tentative beginnings in 1998 Lifestart Newtowncunningham has grown considerably over the years and last year was no exception. The project has gone from strength to strength and we are now delivering the Lifestart programme to approximately 110 parents and 140 children Birth to five years throughout our catchment area.

After the financial uncertainty of 2001, we are delighted with the continued and valuable support from the Dept. of Health & Children through the North Western Health Board. At this point I would like to thank Mr. Pat Dolan – Ass. CEO, Ms. Val-O' Kelly and Ms. Maria MacInnes for their belief in Lifestart and their commitment to the programme without which Lifestart Newtowncunningham would not have survived.

Lifestart Newtowncunningham, Lifestart Lifford/Clonleigh , Tir Boghaine Lifestart and Lifestart Sligo in association with the Health Promotions Office of the NWHB, plan to pilot a Child Accident Prevention Programme in the near future. I would also like to acknowledge the help and support the project has received from the Inishowen Partnership Company through the provision of a Family Visitor under the Jobs Initiative Scheme, through this we hope to extend further into the Inishowen area.

I would like to congratulate Mary and Helga on the birth of their babies and welcome them both back to work. I would like to thank Mary,Christine, Carol, Helga and Ita for all their hard work and dedication over the past year. I would like to thank Geraldine Holmes for taking on the role of Acting Co-ordinator during Mary's maternity leave.

Having been involved with Lifestart Newtowncunningham from the beginning both as a committee member and more recently as Chairperson, I feel it is time for me to step down. I would like to wish my successor as Chairperson, the Committee Members past and present and the staff, all the best for the years to come. I will look back on my time with Lifestart Newtowncunningham with satisfaction at what was achieved.

Pauline Bonner

Touch

*Mothers, touch your children,
Fathers, hug them tight,
Let them know you love them,
morning, noon, and night.*

*Put your arms around them,
hold them near to you,
Feel the beating of their hearts,
the life that you made new.*

*Roll around the floor with them,
tease and laugh and play,
Listen to what they'll tell you,
they have so much to say.*

*Take time to get to know them,
See the colours in their eyes,
Appreciate that person
That deep inside them lies.*

*Let them run their fingers through your hair
And down your face,
Fill their hearts with words of praise,
Make home their favourite place.*

*Cuddle them on the couch
And watch a t.v. show,
Sing with them or share a book
And help their world to grow.*

*Take a walk into the park,
Hold each other's hand,
Smell the flowers, feed the ducks,
Build castles in the sand.*

*Mothers, touch your children,
Fathers, hug them tight,
Show them what a gift they are,
To love them feels so right.*

Kathie Davis

CO-ORDINATOR'S REPORT



Mary Walker Callaghan
Co-ordinator

Reflection

This time last year when I was writing my report for the Annual General Meeting I was preparing to go off on maternity leave. It has been yet another year filled with challenges and changes for the staff of Lifestart Newtowncunningham.

In January 2002, we saw the end of funding under the Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation. The North Western Health Board came to our aid by providing funding on a month to month basis. This period of insecurity with regards to funding was a stressful time for all involved with the project. It is due to the dedication, commitment and hard work of the Staff and the Management Committee that we have had such a fulfilling year.

Through the Inishowen Partnership Company and FAS, we were able to employ a fourth Family Visitor under the Jobs Initiative Programme. This enables the project to further develop and offer the programme to more families, thus empowering more parents to make informed and relevant decisions about their children, while ensuring that more children get a good start in life.

Lifestart Donegal

Due to funders constantly requesting that the three Lifestart Projects in Donegal rationalise, Lifestart Donegal came into being.

Lifestart Donegal comprises of three Lifestart Projects - Tir Boghaine Lifestart, Lifestart Lifford/Clonleigh and Lifestart Newtowncunningham. An Executive Committee was formed involving two representatives from the Management Committees of each project with the three Co-ordinators and the National Office in attendance. The aim of this Committee was to look at how best to lobby and secure funding to sustain the projects.

As part of this work a funding proposal was drawn up. This document, which was printed in three parts – the Funding Proposal, the Executive Summary and the Budget – has been used to lobby funders and Government Departments.

In March 2002, a delegation from Lifestart Donegal, The Lifestart National Office and The Lifestart Foundation went to Leinster House and had meetings with relevant Ministers.

Negotiations with the North Western Health Board were ongoing and it was very evident that the Health

Board valued the Lifestart Programme but were concerned about the amount of funding required to sustain all three projects.

It was therefore a huge commitment and a wonderful acknowledgement of home-based provision when the announcement came in May 2002 from Mr. Pat Dolan – Assistant Chief Executive Officer, NWHB – that the 3 projects in Donegal would receive funding from the North Western Health Board from January 2003.

As part of this agreement, Lifestart Newtowncunningham, Lifestart Lifford/Clonleigh, Tir Boghaine Lifestart and Lifestart Sligo, in association with the North Western health Board are piloting an Accident Prevention Programme. This programme will be reviewed in June 2003.

The staff from the four projects received training in order to facilitate this programme in November and December last year. The information, which will be circulated under this programme is very important and substantiates the safety information within the Lifestart Programme.

Evaluation

Lifestart Newtowncunningham is in existence four years and it was felt by all involved with the Project that we needed to carry out an internal evaluation.

The reasons behind this decision is so that we can ensure that the project is doing what it set out to do in the beginning, that the programme is beneficial and valued by the families that participate in it and that the programme is important to the development of the community in which we work.

At present I am in negotiations with a number of people, who have looked at our terms of reference so that we can choose the person we feel would be most suitable to carry out this work.

Curriculum Development

Phase 2

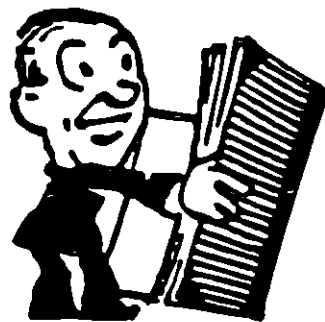
This time last year Carleen Doherty, the Evaluation Manager with the Lifestart Foundation and a working group were putting the finishing touches to the re-adaptation of the Lifestart “Growing Child” Developmental Materials. I am delighted to say that this work has now been complete and the materials were presented to Co-ordinators in September 2002.

It is now our intention to further adapt the materials to suit the culture and vernacular of the Project area, starting with the first two years. This work will be carried out over July and August and will be submitted to the Lifestart Foundation for approval.

On December 7th 2002, we held our Christmas Party in Manorcunningham Resource Centre. It was a wonderful day and a great success. I would like to thank all those who helped to make it a great day for our children.

Lifestart Newtowncunningham has produced it's first Newsletter, which is being launched at this years AGM.

A lot of valuable information and topics of interest pass through this office. Producing a Newsletter gave us a medium in which to pass this information on to families.



We would also like to encourage participation from families in future productions of the Newsletter i.e. a poem, a letter, words of advice or anything that is relevant to the job we are doing with our children.

We were very pleased with the end result and hope it will become another valuable resource to the families on our programme

Phase 3

Over the past couple of years Lifestart Newtowncunningham was forced to postpone any plans for Phase 3 events due to our funding difficulties.

With the announcement of funding from the North Western Health Board, we can once again concentrate on the development of Phase 3 events for parents.

We have an exciting calendar of events planned for 2003. They are as follows:

- May 12th – Pauline Hunter, Neuro Development Therapist.
Manorcunningham Resource Centre – 8 pm sharp
- Self-Esteem for parents – Time and Venue TBA
- First Aid – facilitated by P. Gallen – Newtowncunningham – beginning 10th September for 7 weeks.
- September 15th – Pauline Hunter, Neuro Development Therapist – Newtowncunningham Day Centre – 8 pm sharp
- Art for Parents – October 22nd – Lifestart Office – Facilitated by Family Visitors
- Lifestart Christmas Party – 6th December – Venue Burt Hall

Cross-Border

Lifestart Newtowncunningham have valued the links set up between our project and the Dunluce Family Centre in Ballymagroarty, Derry.

Unfortunately due to the lack of funding we have not been in a position to organise cross-Border events.

Again with the confirmation of funding from the North Western Health Board, it is our intention to re-build these links. We would like to see the families of the two projects brought together and see our cross-border work continue and develop.

I would like to thank the Staff and Management Committee of the Dunluce Family Centre for their continued support. I would like to pay special tribute to Margaret McCann who has always been an inspiration and my most valued mentor – thanks Margaret!

Staff

Firstly I would like to welcome Ita Toland who joined the Lifestart Newtowncunningham Project in May 2002, while I was on maternity leave. Ita is employed by the Inishowen Partnership and FÁS through the Jobs Initiative Scheme as a Family Visitor.

Initially Ita took over from Helga Tinneney, while Helga was on Maternity Leave. This was quite a challenge for Ita as it is never easy to step into another persons shoes, however Ita carried out her duties in a respectful and professional manner which gained her the respect of the families on the programme.

I would also like to welcome Helga back to work and congratulate her on the birth of her little boy.

Due to Ita being employed on the Jobs Initiative Scheme, she is compelled to work within the Inishowen Partnership Area. On Helga's return to work, both Family Visitors and I discussed the geographical delivery of the programme. It was decided that Ita would remain visiting families in the Newtowncunningham area while Helga will begin to deliver the programme in the Manorcunningham region, to meet the growing demand there.

Carol Frize, Family Visitor in the Manorcunningham region and Christine Crossan, Family Visitor in the Newtowncunningham, Killea, Burt and Bridgend regions, both maintain their quotas although quite a number of our parents and children completed the programme during the past twelve months.

I would like to thank the staff for their commitment, dedication and hard work. Although this project has faced some difficult and stressful times, mainly due to the lack of funding, their enthusiasm has never dampened. Each staff member works within their role while observing Lifestart's code of boundaries, confidentiality and respectfulness.

So to **Carol, Christine, Helga, Ita and Geraldine** my sincerest thanks and I look forward to the coming year to continue on our journey of growth and development for ourselves, the project and our families and children.



Aims for 2003

Project & Curriculum Development

- To adapt the first 24 issues of the Growing Child Materials.
- To organise and run 5 Phase 3 events during 2003
- To re-establish cross-border links with Dunluce Family Centre, Derry
- To secure funding to extend Family Visitors contract when the Jobs Initiative Scheme ends in August 2003.
- To produce the Lifestart Newtowncunningham Newsletter.
- To carry out an internal evaluation.

Staff & Committee Development

- Co-ordinator and Family Visitors to attend accredited training course for the next 2 years. Certificates awarded through The Institute of Leadership and Management.
- To provide relevant training for the Management Committee which will assist them in their role and responsibilities.

Geographical Development

- To further develop the programme in Manorcunningham area by re-deploying a second Family Visitor to the area.

Thank You

Dolores McGuinness – Director The Lifestart Foundation

Dolores and the Staff in the Foundation Office – Matt, Carleen, and Loreto – as always you have all been a tremendous inspiration and support. Many thanks for all that you do on our behalf and for the Lifestart Newtowncunningham Project.

Therese O' Rourke The Lifestart National Officer

Once again Therese has worked tirelessly on our behalf. She has been an excellent support and is always ready to offer advice or assistance when needed.

The North Western Health Board

It was an exciting time for the three projects in Donegal when Mr. Pat Dolan, Assistant CEO, announced in May 2002 that the projects would receive funding from the North Western Health Board from January 2003.

I would like to thank Mr. Pat Dolan, Mrs. Val O' Kelly, Childcare Quality Assurance Manager and Ms. Maria MacInnes, Childcare Manager, for their ongoing support and hard work on our behalf and for believing in Lifestart. Our sincerest thanks and we look forward to a long and healthy working relationship.

Liam McMenamin

Many thanks to our landlord, Liam McMenamin for all your help and hard work over the past twelve months. Liam undertook to lay new wooden floors in our entrance hall, the hallway on the second floor and the Administrators office. This was a big undertaking for Liam however it has made a vast improvement to the appearance of our offices.

Inishowen Partnership Company

I would like to thank the Inishowen Partnership company for their ongoing support.

In conjunction with FÁS, the Partnership enabled Lifestart Newtowncunningham to employ a fourth Family Visitor through the Jobs Initiative Scheme.

We also received money through their Small Grants Programme, which enabled us to upgrade our computer system.

Public Health Nurses

I would like to acknowledge the relationship we have with the Public Health Nurses in this area. They have worked hard on our behalf, informing families of our existence, circulating our information leaflet. I would like to thank them for their support and look forward to enhancing our working relationship over the next twelve months.

Management Committee

The Lifestart Newtowncunningham Management Committee are a voluntary group who have come on board with Lifestart because of their strong belief in the good of this programme.

They suddenly find themselves in a position of being employers, lobbyists, mediators and decision makers. This is an enormous amount to ask of any group.

The Lifestart Newtowncunningham Management Committee have taken on their roles and responsibilities with dedication and determination. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for everything they have given to Lifestart over the past twelve months and for the ongoing support both the Staff and I receive from them.

Darina Friel has decided to retire from the Committee this year. Darina has been on the Management Committee for three years and has been a great help and always supportive. I would like to thank Darina for all of her hard work, dedication and commitment and wish her our very best wishes for the future.

Pauline Bonner has been involved with Lifestart Newtowncunningham since the beginning. Pauline worked tirelessly over the years and especially in the tentative stages when a lot of hard work had to be done to justify having the programme in this area and subsequently to secure funding in order to staff and equip the project.

During my four years as Co-ordinator of Lifestart Newtowncunningham I have found Pauline to be a great support and a good friend, always willing to offer assistance and advice.

Pauline has decided that the time has come for her to step down from the Management Committee of Lifestart Newtowncunningham. She will be sadly missed by everyone and I would like to offer her every success and happiness for the future.

On the 15th March Pauline is taking flight on a well deserved holiday to visit family in Australia.

On that note I say **Bon Voyage**, have a wonderful trip and our sincerest thanks for all you have given to Lifestart Newtowncunningham and myself over the years.



Finally I would like to thank the Parents and Children who participate in the Lifestart Newtowncunningham Growing Child Programme. Your participation and feedback is invaluable to the success of this project. You have welcomed Lifestart into your homes and I am very aware through the Family Visitors how dedicated you are to the programme and how much you value what it can offer you and your child.

Sadly we have said goodbye to quite a few families and children over the past year however we wish them the very best as they continue on their journey of development and exploration.

We look forward to the next twelve months in the hope that we can all continue to grow and develop together.

Mary Walker Callaghan

Co-ordinator



Parents Comments on the Lifestart Newtowncunningham Programme

"My Children have benefited enormously from Lifestart. They are confident, inquisitive and eager to learn. Lifestart has given them a great foundation for starting school, developing their personalities, abilities, creativity and imagination, which will stand them in good stead as they grow and mature.

The resources, be it games, tasks, books or paints, have helped to encourage and develop relationships, communication & organisation skills, word recognition and given them a great sense of participation and achievement – in short a great "Start in Life"

Thank you Lifestart.

Joy – Manorcunningham

" I would highly recommend Lifestart to any parent. It gives me a good guide on what to expect from my children at each stage and ways to help their development, therefore giving them an excellent base for their futures. As a first time mother, it was so helpful to have someone to talk and discuss my child's development with. I found it reassuring that things that were happening to my children were also happening to others.

Karen – Newtowncunningham

I find Lifestart an excellent way of bonding with my child through play and knowing what my child should be doing at the different stages of development. Being a mother of a child with special needs, I find the information I receive through the Lifestart Programme very helpful. As we all know children get bored easily, the resources i.e. books, toys, art, music etc., we receive every month through the programme are very good. I wish Lifestart continued success>

Mary - Carrigans

I joined the Lifestart Programme when Abbie was 2 years old. Abbie looks forward to the day when Helga or Ita comes to visit, She stands at the window waiting. It is the element of surprise as to what is going to be in her goodie bag. She loves the jigsaws and books and especially the little workbooks. They are very educational and not something that is easily found in any shop. That's one of the great things about Lifestart, if you want something unusual that you feel will benefit your child, they usually have it.

The monthly development literature is very interesting reading. It gives a great insight into what to expect at each age and indeed the best way to deal with it. I think the Lifestart Programme is great for every parent and child. I know we get a lot out of it and will certainly miss it when the time comes.

Elaine - Mannorcunningham

"I find Lifestart a very enlightening and enjoyable programme. It really helps me to see life through the eyes of my three youngest children. The different tasks each month are both fun and rewarding. Actually seeing your child get to grips with a problem and then solving it, is very satisfying. The look of joy on their face when the task is complete is wonderful and I'm not sure who has more pride, them or me.

The ability to express themselves through Art is also a great idea. The many different materials Lifestart provide are fabulous. Art is a wonderful medium for relieving their frustration and boredom, Lifestart has taught me this very valuable lesson.

Being a parent is very hard work but Lifestart have brilliant ideas on each and every aspect of parenting, from behavioural problems to just enjoying the unique miracle that your child is.

The people from Lifestart who visit me are professional, friendly, courteous, punctual and most importantly non-judgemental. They know that there is no such thing as the perfect parent but they do help and encourage me to be as good a parent as possible.

When my children are expecting a visit from Lifestart they behave impeccably all that day. I think this is wonderful as I get at least one day of peace each month.

Long may you continue to visit.

Valerie – Manorcunningham

"Lifestart is definitely one of the best services that has come into the Manor Community. As a parent of three children I have received so much information about the development of children, since I joined Lifestart. Lifestart was not in operation when I had my first two children however when my third child was born we got involved with the programme.

My child and myself benefit greatly from this service. The development issues that we receive each month gives you so much information about what stage your child should be at in their little lives. The books, puzzles, paints and all the other resources are great and the children really enjoy them. Not every parent can afford to buy these items however being able to avail of them through the Lifestart programme and having them renewed each month is great for the children.

Both myself and my child enjoy our visit with Carol each month, she is great to talk to for advice and guidance about your child.

A programme that is given to you without costing you a penny is invaluable.

Thanks to everyone at Lifestart for giving my child and myself such a wonderful service.

Mabel - Manorcunningham

And more needs. . . .

Don't spoil me. I know quite well I ought not to have all that I ask for.

I'm only testing you.

Don't be afraid to be firm with me. I prefer it. It makes me feel more secure.

Don't let me form bad habits. I have to rely on you to detect them at early stages.

Don't make me feel smaller than I am. It only makes me behave stupidly 'big'.

Don't correct me in front of people if you can help it. I'll take much more notice if you talk quietly with me in private.

Don't make me feel my mistakes are sins. It upsets my sense of values.

Don't protect me from consequences. I need to learn the painful way sometimes.

Don't be upset when I say 'I hate you', it isn't that I hate you but your power to thwart me.

Don't take much notice of my small ailments. Sometimes they get the attention I need.

Don't nag. If you do, I shall have to protect myself by appearing to be deaf.

Don't forget that I cannot explain myself as well as I would like. That is why I'm not always accurate.

Don't make rash promises. Remember that I feel badly let down when promises are broken.

Don't tax my honesty to much. I am easily frightened into telling lies.

Don't be inconsistent. That confuses me and makes me lose faith in you.

Don't tell me my fears are silly. They are terribly real and you can do much to reassure me if you try to understand.

Don't put me off when I ask questions. If you do, you will find that I stop asking and will find information elsewhere.

Don't ever think it is beneath your dignity to apologise to me. An honest apology makes me feel surprisingly warm towards you.

Don't ever suggest that you are perfect or invaluable. It gives me to great a shock when I find out you are neither.

Don't forget how quickly I am growing up. It must be very difficult to keep pace with me. But please try.

Don't forget I love experimenting. I couldn't get on without it. So please put up with it.

Don't forget that I cannot thrive without lots of understanding and love.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT



**Geraldine Holmes
Administrator**

Overview

Since our last AGM, I have continued to carry out the day to day administration of the office.

This includes:

- Preparing the accounts for our end of year audit and liaising with Mr. Noel Crossan, our Accountant.
- Preparing and keeping up to date records of the projects income and expenditure.
- Liaising with the bank and the Revenue Commissioners as necessary.
- Representing Lifestart Newtowncunningham at several meetings and conferences.
- Joined with my colleagues to organise and run our very successful Christmas party.
- I am presently a member of an Evaluation Committee for Lifestart Donegal



Training

I am at present participating in a training programme organised by the Inishowen Partnership Company – The Inishowen Community Sustainability Programme.

I have also attended several team building days for both the staff and the staff and Management Committee. I found these days to be informative and worthwhile.

Challenges

I took over as Acting Co-ordinator from March 2002 until September 2002, while Mary Walker Callaghan was on maternity leave. I found this to be a time filled with challenges, excitement and sometimes a lot of juggling.



It was a valuable learning experience, as there was a lot happening within the project during this period –

- *Meetings of Lifestart Donegal*
- *Meetings with the North Western Health Board*

- *The recruitment of a fourth Family Visitor through the Jobs Initiative programme*
- *Training of the new Family Visitor*
- *Day to day management of project and staff.*

I look forward to the continued growth of Lifestart Newtowncunningham and the challenges which lie ahead.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Management Committee and my colleagues for their continued support and assistance throughout the year.

Geraldine **H**olmes
Administrator

"Lifestart is a monthly reminder to stay on track with each child's development. The experiments and games suggested are good guidelines to know if each child is developing appropriately"

FAMILY VISITOR'S REPORT



Christine Crossan
Family Visitor – Burt, Killea, Bridgend

Overview

I have been a Family Visitor with Lifestart Newtowncunningham for the past three years.

At present I have 40 families and 51 children participating on the programme. A large majority of my families I originally recruited in 2000 when I joined the project.

In the area I visit – Newtowncunningham, Burt, Bridgend, Carrigans, and Killea – I find that there is a keen interest and big demand for the programme from a broad spectrum of parents. The parents look for to getting their monthly issue of the child development materials and the educational resources which will assist them in the task of developing their child's ability.

Training

During the past year I have attended the following training events:

- **Facilitation Level 3**
- **Team Building**
- **Boundaries and Confidentiality**
- **Adult Literacy**
- **Accident Prevention – N.W.H.B.**
- **Paediatric First Aid**
- **Art**
- **Training Day – Resource & Resource Manual**

At the request of my Co-ordinator, I organised and ran a day on Art for my colleagues.



Goals

In the coming year I would like –

- To continue delivering the programme to the best of my ability and support and assist the parents I visit with the development of their children and themselves.
- To continue to attend training which will enable me to carry out my role as Family Visitor competently and professionally.
- To build on the relationships we have built other local agencies who work with children. To promote and represent Lifestarts ethos, principles and values at all times.

Finally ...

I would like to thank the Management Committee and my colleagues for their support and friendship and I look forward to a long working relationship with them.

I would especially like to thank all the families I visit for their commitment and dedication to the programme. Also for their warm welcome, which makes the work I do so rewarding and enjoyable.

Christine Crossan

Family Visitor



FAMILY VISITORS REPORT



Carol Frize
Family Visitor - Manorcunningham

Overview

I am now working with Lifestart Newtowncunningham three years. I am currently visiting families in the Manorcunningham area.

During the past twelve months, quite a number of my families have completed the programme. Recruiting new parents on the programme has not been an issue as I have had a waiting list for some time. I find recruiting new families challenging and exciting and look forward to having many new parents and children participating in the programme over the next twelve months.

An important part of my work with Lifestart is networking within the community. This includes keeping in touch with the Public Health Nurse, schools, playgroup and crèche within the area distributing information leaflets and ensuring Lifestart is well represented in the Manorcunningham area.

In recent months, my Co-ordinator and I have met with the new Public Health Nurse for the area, Maureen McGettigan.

Maureen has shown a great interest in our programme and has viewed the materials, books and resources we work with. She has made many referrals to the project, for parents who have expressed an interest in the Lifestart Programme.

While delivering the programme I have encountered problem areas where parents are seeking a lot of support and advice. I have found this very frustrating as I felt I had little or no power to help. I aired my concerns with the National Officer of Lifestart, Therese O'Rourke.

She informed me that with the parents permission I could discuss such problems with my Co-ordinator and that she may be able to make enquiries to the relevant bodies on behalf of the parent. I feel this enables the Lifestart project to be a better support to families and allows me to carry out my role as Family Visitor with more confidence.

There were times during the past year which have been difficult for everyone involved with Lifestart Newtowncunningham. Thankfully with confirmation of funding from the North Western Health Board and through the support and encouragement of the Lifestart Foundation, the Lifestart National Office, our Management Committee and the staff, these times have passed and I feel we are now a stronger team who will strive to give the very best our families deserve.



Resources

As well as visiting my families I have also been involved with my colleagues, identifying, researching and obtaining books, resources, workbooks and information which will benefit the families. We have all been actively involved in evaluating our work practices and procedures.



Training

I have attended quite a number of courses and events throughout the year, these are:

- **Facilitation Course ONC – Level 2 & 3**
- **Boundaries and Confidentiality**
- **Neuro Development Therapy Information session**
- **Children First – N.W.H.B**
- **Adult Literacy – Donegal V.E.C.**
- **Who cares about Parents – NWHB**
- **Training for Transformation**
- **Accident and Prevention – N.W.H.B**
- **Paediatric First Aid**

These training days gave me an opportunity to meet with colleagues from other Lifestart Projects, which I always find is a learning and stimulating experience.

In conclusion

I find my work both challenging and rewarding, I am continually growing as a Family Visitor and a person. I would like to thank my colleagues Helga, Christine, Ita, Geraldine and Mary, who like to challenge me on a daily basis and are a tremendous support to me in my role.

I would also like to thank my Management Committee for their ongoing support.

And last but certainly not least, I would like to pay special tribute to the many families and children in the Manorcunningham area whom I visit for their ongoing commitment, dedication and hard work and for making me so welcome and valued in their homes.

Carol Frize
Family Visitor



Family Visitor's Report



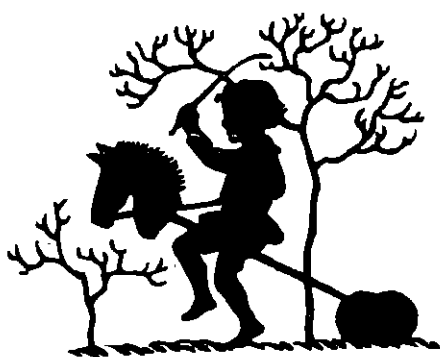
Helga Tinneney

Family Visitor – Newtowncunningham/Manorcunningham

Overview

I have been with Lifestart for 21/2 years and enjoy my role as a Family Visitor immensely. I have recently returned from Maternity Leave and I am eager to re-establish contact with families and also to recruit new parents and children onto the programme.

To meet the demand for the Lifestart programme, I will be moving to work mainly in the Manorcunningham area. This will be a new challenge for me and one I welcome greatly.



Families

From my experience with Family Visiting in the local area, I feel that the programme is appreciated, enjoyed and welcomed by those participating, which in turn makes my job enjoyable and rewarding.

I currently have re-established contact with 18 families/26 children and my aim is to double this within the next few months. I firmly believe that this is an achievable goal as the interest in the programme is clearly evident.

Training

In February of this year I began an accredited course – Level 2 in Team Leadership. I welcome this opportunity, which has been offered to Family Visitors by the Lifestart Foundation and will be achieved over the next two years.

Training such as this, is fundamental to my own personal development, which can only have a positive effect and impact on my everyday work with Lifestart Newtowncunningham.

Final Word

I am delighted that funding has been secured through the North Western Health Board for 2003, this will make a great difference to the project as a whole and myself as an individual.

I am looking forward to the coming year, to promoting Lifestart's already established positive image and to enhance its perception within the community.

I would like to thank my colleagues and Management Committee and all those involved with Lifestart, especially the parents and children. These people have welcomed me into their homes and through their participation and feedback have made my job very enjoyable.

Helga Tinneny

Family Visitor



Family Visitor's Report



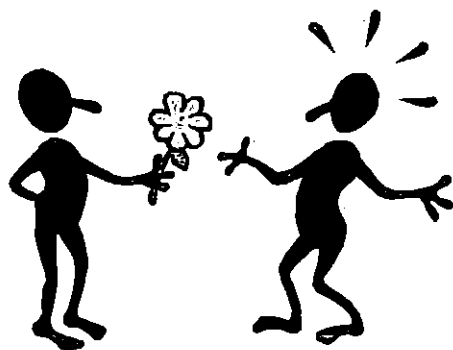
Ita Toland

Family Visitor – Newtowncunningham, Burt, Carrigans, Bridgend

I took up my post as Family Visitor in may 2002, under the Jobs Initiative Scheme programme which is funded by the Inishowen Partnership and FÁS.

I was initially office based during my induction training, where I became familiar with the Lifestart "Growing Child" Materials and received excellent training which enabled me to carry out my work with confidence and competence.

I initially took over from Helga Tinneney who was going off on maternity leave. This was a challenging time for me and a wonderful learning experience. I would like to thank Helga for introducing me to the families and to all the parents for making me so welcome and having patience while I found my feet.



Under my contract with the Jobs Initiative programme I am compelled to work within the Inishowen partnership area. Therefore when Helga returned to work, we met with our Co-ordinator to discuss the delivery of the programme. Because of my geographical restrictions and the fact that there was a demand for the programme in Manorcunningham, our Co-ordinator requested that we divide the families we had and that I would continue to recruit in the Newtowncunningham area while Helga would begin to visit in the Manorcunningham region.

I enjoy meeting the families and delivering the Lifestart Programme.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Management Committee, my colleagues, and the Inishowen Partnership for their support and help. I would especially like to thank the families who have made me so welcome in their homes and made my job so enjoyable and worthwhile.

Training

In House

- Family Systems
- Art
- Dance and Movement
- Storytelling
- Profile of Newtowncunningham

Lifestart Policies

- History, Ethos and Mission Statement
- Principles and Practices
- Phase 1
- Phase 2
- Observation and Reporting
- Language, Boundaries and Confidentiality
- Child Protection
- Educational Objectives
- Shadow Visits
- Accountability

Core Training Days held by The Lifestart Foundation

Day on Resources

Facilitated by Carleen Doherty and Therese O' Rourke

External

- Team Building Day for staff – facilitated by Toni Doherty
- Paediatric First Aid – facilitated by the Red Cross
- Basic Computers – organised through Jobs Initiative
- Personal Development - organised through Jobs Initiative

Core Training Days held by The Lifestart Foundation

Day on Resources

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External

- Team Building Day for staff – facilitated by Toni Doherty
- Paediatric First Aid – facilitated by the Red Cross
- Basic Computers – organised through Jobs Initiative
- Personal Development - organised through Jobs Initiative

To conclude

I find this programme exciting and invaluable and feel very privileged to be a part of it.

I am looking forward to the coming year, to recruiting more families onto the programme and to my own personal development as a Family Visitor.

Ita Toland

Family Visitor.

Childhood Doesn't Wait

***I was sitting on a bench while in a nearby mall
When I noticed a young mother with two children who were small.***

***The youngest one was whining, "Pick me up," I heard him beg
But the mother's face grew angry as the child clung to her leg.***

***"Don't hang on to me," she shouted as she pushed his hands away,
I wish I'd had the courage to go up to her and say...***

***"The time will come too quickly when those little arms that tug,
Won't ask for you to hold them or won't freely give a hug.***

***"The day will sneak up subtly just as it did with me,
When you can't recall the last time that your child sat on your knee.***

***"Like those sacred, pre-dawn feedings when we cherished time alone
Our babies grow and leave behind those special times we've known.***

***"So when your child comes to you with a book that you can share,
Or asks that you would tuck him in and help him say a prayer.. .***

***"When he comes to sit and chat or would like to take a walk,
Before you answer that you can't 'cause there's no time to talk.***

***"Remember that all parents learn so many times too late,
That years go by too quickly and that childhood doesn't wait.***

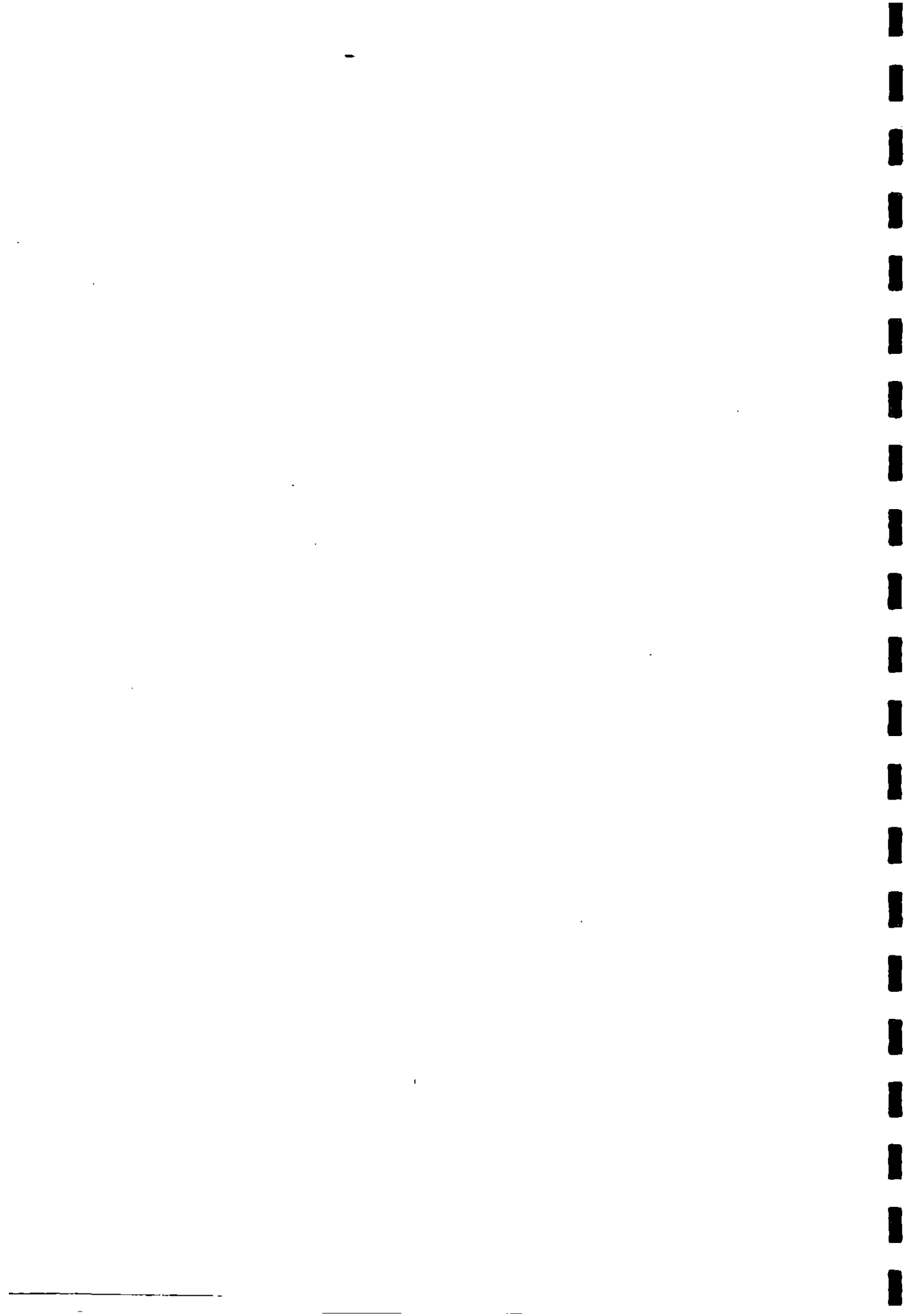
***"Take every opportunity, if one should slip away
Reach hard to get it back again, don't wait another day."***

***I watched that mother walk away her children followed near,
I hope she'll pick them up before her chances disappear.***

Author Unknown

**LIFESTART
NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM
FINANCIAL REPORT**

**Audited Accounts
for the period ending
31st December 2002**



**REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF
LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**

We have audited the financial statements on pages 5 to 10.

Respective responsibilities of members of executive committee and auditors

As described on pages 2 and 3 the members of executive committee are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. It is our responsibility to form an independent opinion, based on our audit, on those statements and to report our opinion to you.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the members of executive committee in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the centre's affairs at 31 December 2002 and of its net income and net movement in funds for the year then ended.

**Bradley McDaid
Chartered Accountants
and Registered Auditors
DERRY**

DATE:

LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2002**

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds 2002 €	Restricted Funds 2002 €	Total Funds 2002 €	Total Funds 2001 €
Incoming Resources					
Grants		-	133687	133687	119217
Interest received		13	-	13	5
Donations		-	718	718	4513
Miscellaneous income		-	<u>450</u>	<u>450</u>	<u>2528</u>
Total incoming Resources	3	13	134855	134868	126263
Total resources Expended	4	-	<u>130990</u>	<u>130990</u>	<u>132586</u>
Net incoming resources for the year		<u>13</u>	<u>3865</u>	<u>3878</u>	<u>(6323)</u>
Net movement in funds		13	3865	3878	(6323)
Balances brought forward at 31 December 2001		<u>18</u>	<u>8043</u>	<u>8061</u>	<u>14384</u>
Balances carried forward At 31 December 2002		<u>31</u>	<u>11908</u>	<u>11939</u>	<u>8061</u>

All amounts in the statement of financial activities relate to continuing operations of the centre.

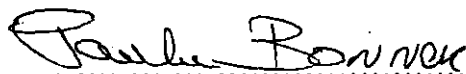
The centre has no recognised gains and losses other than the net incoming resources above and therefore no separate statement of total recognised gains and losses has been presented.

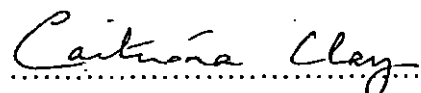
There is no difference between the net incoming resources and net movement in funds, and their historical cost equivalents.

LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**BALANCE SHEET AT 31 DECEMBER 2002**

	NOTE	2002 €	2001 €
Fixed Assets			
Tangible fixed assets	5	<u>7452</u>	<u>8373</u>
Current Assets			
Debtors		-	7650
Prepayments		189	-
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>6943</u>	<u>540</u>
		7132	8190
Liabilities:			
Amounts falling due within One year	6	<u>2645</u>	<u>8502</u>
Net Current Assets		<u>4487</u>	<u>(312)</u>
Net Assets		<u>11939</u>	<u>8061</u>
Funds			
Unrestricted funds	7	31	18
Restricted funds	8	<u>11908</u>	<u>8043</u>
		<u>11939</u>	<u>8061</u>

The financial statements on pages 5 to 10 were approved by the members of the executive committee on 27/2/03. and were signed on its behalf by:


.....
Chairperson


.....
Treasurer

LIFESTART NETOWNCUNNINGHAM**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2002****1 NATURE OF THE CENTRE**

The centre is an unincorporated organisation with charitable status.

2 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards. A summary of the more important accounting policies, which have been applied consistently, is set out below.

Basis of accounting

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the historical cost convention.

Tangible fixed assets

The cost of fixed assets is their purchase cost together with any incidental expenses of acquisition.

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of office equipment on the straight line basis over the expected useful economic life of the asset concerned. The annual rate for this purpose is 20%.

Grants

Grants that relate to specific capital expenditure are treated as restricted income which is credited to the statement of financial activities and released to the company's general funds. Revenue grants are credited to the statement of financial activities in the same year as the related expenditure is incurred.

Fund accounting

The company has different types of funds for which it is responsible, and which require separate disclosure. These are as follows:

Restricted funds

Donations received which are earmarked by the donor for specific purposes. Such purposes are within the overall aims of the charity.

LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2002****2 PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTING POLICIES contd.*****Unrestricted funds***

Funds which are expendable at the discretion of the board of members of executive committee in furtherance of the objects of the charity. In addition funds may be held in order to finance capital investment and working capital.

3 INCOMING RESOURCES

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds 2002 €	Total Funds 2001 €
	€	€		
<u>Grants Received</u>				
Programme for Peace and Reconciliation	-	3197	3197	119217
North Western Health Board	-	<u>130490</u>	<u>130490</u>	-
	-	133687	133687	119217
Income deferred in current year	-	-	-	-
Deferred income Released in year	-	-	-	-
	-	133687	133687	119217
<u>Donations</u>				
Donations	-	718	718	4513
<u>Other Income</u>				
Miscellaneous Income	-	450	450	2528
<u>Investment Income</u>				
Interest	<u>13</u>	-	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>
	<u>13</u>	<u>134855</u>	<u>134868</u>	<u>126263</u>

LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2002****4 RESOURCES EXPENDED**

	Unrestricted Funds 2002 €	Restricted funds 2002 €	Total 2002 €	Total 2001 €
Salaries	-	93406	93406	98322
Motor & Travel	-	5738	5738	6294
Audit & Accountancy	-	1079	1079	1079
Repairs & Renewals	-	406	406	354
Telephone & fax	-	1862	1862	1696
Postage, stationery & advertising	-	3305	3305	3474
Course & training	-	3198	3198	2387
General expenses	-	1300	1300	974
Programme costs	-	7104	7104	4416
Insurance	-	989	989	710
Rent	-	6057	6057	5942
Bank fees	-	326	326	1022
Heat & Light	-	1863	1863	1953
Fees & Subscriptions	-	381	381	278
Depreciation	-	4376	4376	3685
Deferred income released	-	(400)	(400)	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>130990</u>	<u>130990</u>	<u>132586</u>

5 TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Office Equipment €
Cost	
At 01 January 2002	18424
Additions	<u>3455</u>
At 31 December 2002	<u>21879</u>
Depreciation	
At 01 January 2002	10051
Charge for year	<u>4376</u>
At 31 December 2002	<u>14427</u>
Net Book value	
At 31 December 2002	<u>7452</u>
At 31 December 2001	<u>8373</u>

LIFESTART NEWTOWNCUNNINGHAM**NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2002****6 LIABILITIES: Amounts falling due within one year**

	2002	2001
	€	€
Bank overdraft	-	7486
Accruals	1045	1016
Deferred Credits – Capital Grant	<u>1600</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>2645</u>	<u>8502</u>

7 UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

	2002	2001
	€	€
At 01 January 2002	18	13
Net movements in funds	<u>13</u>	<u>5</u>
At 31 December 2002	<u>31</u>	<u>18</u>

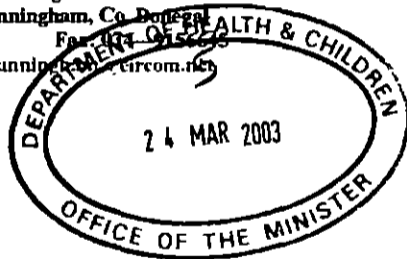
8 RESTRICTED FUNDS

The income funds of the charity include restricted funds comprising the following unexpended balances of grants to be applied for specific purposes.

	PFPR Donations		Misc. Income	NWHB	Total Restricted Funds
	€	€	€	€	€
At 01.01.02	8043	-	-	-	8043
Income	3197	718	450	130490	134855
Expenditure	<u>(3197)</u>	<u>(718)</u>	<u>(450)</u>	<u>(126625)</u>	<u>(130990)</u>
At 31.12.02	<u>8043</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>3865</u>	<u>11908</u>



Lifestart Newtowncunningham Office
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With Compliments

Co-ordinator: Mary Walker Callaghan

This Project is supported by the Inshoven Partnership company & FAS through the Jobs Initiative Programme



North Western Health Board
Bórd Sláinte an Iar-Thuaiscirt