Camphill celebrates seventy years

This March the UK and Irish Camphill Communities held a celebration in Aberdeen to mark the 70th Anniversary of the Camphill movement. This occasion was a chance to celebrate the achievements of this extraordinary social endeavour.

The Beginning

The innovative communities that make up the Camphill Movement have, for 70 years, been creating new ways of supporting people with learning disabilities and other special needs so that their full potential can find expression. The first community was founded at Camphill House just outside Aberdeen, Scotland in 1940, to educate what were then called mentally handicapped children. At that time, such children did not usually receive an education; they either stayed at home or were placed in a hospital.

Camphill Founders

Refugees from Nazi oppression in Austria, Dr. Karl König and his group, which included doctors, medical students, and creative young people had come together in pre-war Vienna to explore Anthroposophy. After fleeing Austria, they came together near Aberdeen, where the first two children with disabilities joined them that May.

Holistic Approach

The group chose to do their work not as a job or career, but as a way of life with social rather than personal values taking priority. Through Curative Education they aimed to stimulate each child’s developing individuality, giving them the freedom to grow to their full potential. Such a task could not be achieved in the classroom alone.

By living with the children in a community 24 hours a day, what today is called a holistic approach could be followed, educating the children in all aspects of life. The community soon established a good reputation with parents and local authorities, who began seeking places for children. By 1945 the Camphill Schools occupied large properties with 250 acres of land and by 1949, 180 children were being cared for and there was a long waiting list.

A Worldwide Movement

By the 1950s, Camphill was ready to create communities away from its base in Aberdeen. Parents in England wanted opportunities for their children with disabilities and Camphill schools opened near Bristol and in Hampshire in 1951. In Northern Ireland its first community opened at Glencraig near Belfast in 1953. In 1955 a working community for adults was established at Botton, North Yorkshire, which would grow to become the largest Camphill Community in the world.

1960s and beyond

Camphill’s innovative approach began to be adopted overseas and communities were established in South Africa, Germany, Holland and the USA. In the 1960s Switzerland and Norway joined the Camphill family and urban as well as rural communities were established. Through the 1970s and 1980s Camphill came to Finland, the Irish Republic, Wales, Botswana, Austria, France, Brazil, Sweden and Canada. During the 1990s, liberalisation in Eastern Europe allowed Camphill to begin work in Poland, Estonia, and Russia.

The New Millennium

Today, Camphill consists of a world wide network of more than 100 communities in over 20 countries. Here people of all abilities including some 3,000 children and adults with learning disabilities, mental health problems and other special needs, live, learn and work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
Co-worker Memories

Finding the new in the old
My name is Loretta Power and I come from Canberra in Australia. I grew up mostly in Canberra with my parents, two sisters and brother. I had a mainstream education, and not having any strong inclining towards any particular career, completed a Degree in Economics and fell into work in the Australian Public Service in Canberra.

However, in my late 20s I began to wonder: “Is this it for the rest of my life?” I had a definite career path I could follow but a strong sense that I should go and try something I would really like to have a go at and see what would happen. I had toyed with the idea of doing some kind of voluntary work in the third world when I was at university. Having travelled in some developing countries on my holidays, I had realised that decent plumbing and water pressure are essential for me.

In a travel bookshop near my workplace I came across a book called ‘The International Directory of Voluntary Work’. That book changed the course of my life. The entries for Camphill caught my eye, and as it is not a regularly used word in the English language, I looked it up on the internet. I found the UK website with its listing of communities. If I was to go to Camphill I was most interested in living rurally in a community with a good number of people in it. I wrote to many different communities. I was undecided between Camphill Blair Drummond and Camphill Devon. My sister urged me to consider Ireland, because of its beauty and of course, “It’s where we come from.” After a couple more weeks deliberating I decided to spend one year in Ireland at Camphill Duffcarrig.

So it was 202 years after Morgan Power from Derrellossery near Roundwood was convicted of being in possession of stolen sheep and transported to Australia, that I arrived back in the ‘old country’ to try something completely new. My time in Duffcarrig was rich, challenging, amazing and fun, and by the time I was due to go home I had been well and truly bitten by the Camphill bug. I went home to Australia for a little over 2 years to fulfil my commitment to my workplace there and spend time with my last grandparent before she passed away.

On an overcast but not rainy day in March 2004 I flew for the second time into Ireland knowing I was on my way to live in Duffcarrig. This time I was greeted by a bunch of friends from the community who came up in one of the community’s buses to drive me - home. Here I am still 6 years later.

Villager Focus / My life in 2009 by Siobhan Humphreys

My name is Siobhán Humphreys and I am from Camphill Community Greenacres in Dublin. I live in a house on Hazel Avenue, Kilmacud. The people I live with are Shane Nolan, Siobhán McCallion, Jumi & Valerie (co-workers). We are living semi - independent lives which is amazing. Drama is a big part of my life. Drama is fun for me and also the other people in the community. Every year Nicola, our drama teacher, instructs us in a new play. We go to her studio in Dublin city to learn our lines. The play is usually produced in September. In 2009 we did a play called A Midsummer’s night dream.

In Hazel House I live with a lovely man who I am engaged to, Shane Nolan. We have been engaged now for four years, and plan to get married in 2011. In November 2009 a group of us from Camphill Greenacres went on holiday to Lanzarote. The group consisted of eight people who were: Siobhán McCallion, Andrew, Young, Song, Rebecca, Noel, Shane and myself. Lanzarote is a volcanic island with black beaches. The weather there was extremely hot and windy. A few of us went on a camel ride which was very exciting.
Since becoming established in the city, Camphill has realised that there is a need to provide a public centre for culture, the arts and training activities to a broad spectrum of people.

**Activities**

We envisage a number of potential activities happening in the Centre. These include:

- **Arts and crafts workshops**: this could include traditional day programmes like we already run, public lessons and the possibility to have an open-access, drop-in type space.
- **Exhibitions**: affording the opportunity for people to display their creations.
- **Seminars, workshops and talks**: expanding the activities that already take place in Greenacres and making the facility available to other groups.
- **Movement workshops**: such as yoga, creative dance and eurythmy.
- **Performance space**: for drama and music.
- **Cafe/Shop**: as a meeting place, an income generator and a source of healthy, organic, local, Fairtrade produce.
- **Meeting place**: for our own use, for Camphill in Ireland and for like-minded groups.

The photo shows a mock-up of how these activities might be combined in a Centre. All of these activities have in common, an aim to promote participation and inclusion, through community empowerment. The Culture Centre will be a genuine social enterprise, providing work and social activities for people and a 'shop front' for Camphill in Ireland.

**Camphill’s success in Ireland**

Camphill communities in Ireland and elsewhere have successfully created enterprises and centres that combine these same kind of aims. There are community halls in most Camphill communities and these are often available for use by local groups. Perhaps best known is Castalia Hall in Ballytobin Community, Co Kilkenny, and the nearby KCAT Art and Study centre in Callan which is an exciting venture in promoting inclusive cultural activities. Also of relevance are the cafes run by various communities. In Thomastown, for instance, The Watergarden is a famous culinary and cultural hotspot, and in Kilkullen, Co Kildare, An Tearmann is a very successful Camphill-run shop and cafe. Information on all these facilities is available on [www.camphill.ie](http://www.camphill.ie).

**Realising the dream**

We propose to create an 'Initiative Group' to oversee all aspects of the project. An initial step will be to find a suitable premises or piece of land and to convert this or build new to suit our purposes. The location for the centre should ideally be within the Stillorgan/Dundrum locality, so that it remains integrated with the lifesharing homes in the same neighbourhood. There is no doubt that a fundraising drive will be needed to bring this vision into reality. However, given the current state of the property market, finding a suitable premises might be as much about imaginative ideas as about purchasing on the open market. We would be very glad to hear from any of you who have ideas that we can pursue.

*Noel Bruder - March, 2010.*
The Bridge is a Camphill Community based in a small but busy town called Kilcullen which is about 30 miles southwest of Dublin.

An essential for the overall vision of the Bridge was the provision of integrated Community life for adults with special needs and co-workers, with a view to integration into the local environment.

**Our Coffee Shop - an Tearmann**

A door from the Main Street leads into An Tearmann (an Irish word meaning refuge or sanctuary), which is a three-story building housing coffee shop, restaurant and a bookshop all in one. This has developed into a busy and meaningful meeting point between Camphill and the local community, between able and disabled, where such labels lose their significance. Serving the public in a Coffee Shop can be an interesting experience whether someone works as a waitress, at the till or in the bakery and catering kitchen which supplies all the food. Everybody is part of the team. The Bakery/Catering Kitchen produces cakes, scones, lunches, and other goodies for our Coffee Shop using mainly organic and home-grown ingredients. There are as many as eight people working there in what is a spacious setting allowing people to receive training, and develop their skills at their own pace. Our scones are famous and many people come from far away to taste them.

**Integration**

Integration implies respect and recognition of the self and the other, along with a wish to create a society where both can belong as equal members. The Bridge Community has had a vision of integration from the beginning. The involvement of Camphill in the town began in 1990 when a small group of trainees from Dunshane Training College began as independent volunteers to clear a public footpath along the river Liffey that had become badly overrun and littered. Now 20 years later, Camphill is a warmly accepted part of Kilcullen with a Coffee Shop and Organic Vegetable Garden and 3 house communities.

Integration remains a strong theme not in the sense of trying to fit in to conventional society, but involving a weaving in and out, inviting people into our world as well as stepping into theirs. This has over time led to many personal connections and created a network of friends who stand around us.

**Home Life in the Bridge Community**

House communities form the heart and life of our community. This is where people create a home and can be with friends. We have currently three community houses in Kilcullen. Two of the houses are overlooking the organic vegetable garden on 7 acres of land in the centre of the town bordering the Liffey. One is called ‘Isserin’ (the biggest), which is home to 16 people, with a large dining room table stretching to encompass many visitors over the years. The second, called ‘Brighcen’ is clad with timber on the outside and looks like a log cabin surrounded by trees. The third is called ‘Annamaes’ and is located in the nearby housing estate called Riverside.

**The Garden**

The garden lies at the back of An Tearmann - so beautiful as you walk across The Bridge. The garden is the culmination of 20 years' work, the result of many lives who have
contributed to what you now see, the rich vegetable beds and orchard, the hens and their cathedral, the pigs and the goats. Such industry! Manna our fruit and vegetable shop came into being to meet a number of needs; firstly there was a surplus of produce from the garden, then there was a wish to share the bounty, and there was also the question of how best to put Shiodhna’s many talents to good use. Manna rose to answer these twin concerns and then the process provided a further opportunity to meet the wider world.

At this time of year students and co-workers are preparing the vegetable beds for the sowing season by digging them over (so that the frost can kill off whatever is left of the weeds) and working the compost and well rotted manure through the soil to ensure that the vegetables will have the nutrients they need for a good crop. The gardeners are also sowing beans and sweet pea under glass and pruning the apple trees and fruit bushes. A busy time indeed. Gardening is a very nurturing experience - to grow the food we eat reconnects us to the earth and its natural cycles.

‘Many reasons to shop in Kilcullen’

The Bridge Community in Kilcullen are happy to relaunch Manna, their organic fruit and vegetable shop. Manna (food from heaven) is open Tuesday to Friday from 10.00am until 5.00pm and on Saturdays from 10.00am until 2.00pm and is situated behind An Tearmann, Main Street, Kilcullen. The shop has had a facelift, a little power and paint, but Shiodhna Kavanagh, in her new 6-wheeler and Pauline Fagan are still there to extend a welcome. In these days of supermarkets and farmers’ markets, the locals flock to Manna. One can walk, push the pram or drive, with plenty of parking. The fruit and vegetables taste good the way fruit and vegetables should and it is always the home to wonderful eggs - such golden yolks. They are experts on their produce and can even give you recipes. Cross the threshold and you are having an experience supporting (by your very presence) the ideal that people of all abilities, gifts, talents and skills have something of value to contribute.

We source our organic fruit and vegetables as locally as we can, which in April means potatoes and free range organic eggs from our own gardens and our sister community in Grangebeg. At this time of year some of our products are supplied by Dominic and Hilda at Castleruddery Organic Farm at Donard.
Over the last week of February and the first two weeks of March, the full-time and the part-time students in KCAT did sculptures with facilitator Jean Conroy. The material was hay that was cut from the Abbey Meadow in July. The students found it a difficult material to work with at first, but after a day handling it they figured out how to manipulate the hay with stitching. They mostly used cotton thread, strips of fabric and rushes to stitch the hay together, using large needles. Those that suffered from hay fever used other material or wool instead to make their sculptures. The brief for the project was “body parts” so in the final display of work there were all sorts, from an almost lifelike perfect hand created by Kevin in the full-time course to a pair of feet by Sarah Jane. A head by Fergus from Camphill Carrick on Suir and a beautiful heart by Betty Lahart. Catherine from the part-time course produced a wonderful cheery face incorporating willow from the riverbank beside KCAT as hair.

The students really enjoyed this new method of working which Jean learned from artists in DADAA arts organisation in Western Australia while she was on an exchange there. There was something very special working with a natural material found on our doorstep; that the material was free was, of course, also a great bonus.

Scary Hay by Amy McHardy

My name is Amy and I have been a student at KCAT for two years. This February I got to work with hay and let me tell you it was hard. I had never worked hay before and had no idea what I was going to make so I went on the internet to get some ideas, I decided I would like to make a torso after I found a nice black and white picture on the internet. I got started and Jean showed me what to do, but I could not get my head around it so I decided to turn the torso into a doll and made some clothes for it. It was rapidly turning into what looked like a voodoo doll... scary!!! I put fancier clothes on and sewed buttons on the top for eyes and sewed on strips of plaited black material for hair, with another button for a belly button. I hope other people either like it or find it funny or scary and I hope it helps me in my exams.
RUN FOR YOUR LOCAL CAMPHILL COMMUNITY

2010 Flora Women’s Mini Marathon 10K

**DATE:** Bank Holiday Monday 7th June at 3 PM

**START:** Fitzwilliam Square Dublin 2 ——— **FINISH:** St. Stephen’s Green Dublin 2

**HOW TO ENTER:** Either on the official Entry Form which will appear in the Evening Herald every Wednesday and Saturday from 3rd March 2010, or online (www.womansminimarathon.ie) from 3rd March 2010.

(On-line entries will incur an extra 1 euro Bank processing charge)

**CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES:** 27th April 2010 or when numbers are full.

If you run or know someone who does please support your local Camphill Community

You can get your official Entry Form and Sponsorship Card from your local Camphill Community or from Camphill Community Greenacres, 1a Farmhill Park, Goatstown, Dublin 14.

CAMPHILL will provide 1/ Sponsorship Cards 2/ Camphill T-Shirts 3/ Refreshments and changing/showering facilities afterwards at nearby Hotel/Club

For further information contact MICHAEL HILARY at 087 2568810 or email: mhilary@esatclear.ie or visit www.camphill.ie

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**Camphill Community Contacts for Marathon 2010**

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<thead>
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<th>Telephone</th>
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<td>Ballytobin</td>
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PHOTO COMPETITION
WIN €100 or WEEKEND FOR TWO
IN THE MOUNT HERBERT HOTEL LANSDOWNE ROAD DUBLIN 4

The above pictures depict life in Camphill’s “Lifesharing Communities”
We are looking for a “New” Camphill image showing community life at its best.
The Competition is open to everyone: Family, Friends, Co-Workers, Residents, Visitors etc.
The Winning Picture(s) will feature on the front page of the Summer edition of our Newsletter
We are also producing a Camphill Calendar for 2011 and would welcome pictures representing
the different communities.
Please submit your pictures before the end of May to Camphill Greenacres in Dublin or email to nickvanv@iol.ie

Invitation
National Families Day/AGM of the Camphill Family & Friends Association

It is now a year since many of you joined us in Dunshane for our last meeting. There was a very large attendance
and great participation in the various discussions. We are now delighted to invite you to the next Annual General
meeting of the Camphill Family & Friends Association on Sunday April 25th 2010, once again in the ideal
setting of Dunshane, Co Kildare. Registration is at 10.00am the day will finish at 4.00pm. Where possible we
would like all residents of Camphill to be represented at the meeting whether by parent(s), sibling or guardian.

Our theme this year is “Renewal and Change in Camphill”.

As last year, we will have a full agenda. Of special interest to many on our agenda are the following topics:

- The use of the Disability Allowance to fund Camphill
- Funding Challenges facing Camphill
- The future direction and policy of HSE with regard to people with special needs

We will also have updates on your committee's activities. As before we will have an interactive format and this is
your opportunity to have your say at national level about what you want for your loved ones who are part of Camphill.

Looking forward to meeting you all again,

John Hughes Committee Chairman Camphill Family and Friends' Association

Stop Press: John Maloney TD Minister for Disability and Mental Health will be in attendance.

If you would like to be kept informed about our work and would like to receive subsequent issues of Camphill Spirit in
electronic form (pdf), please send your email address to: Michael Hilary (087-256 8810), Camphill Spirit,
c/o Camphill Communities, 1a Farmhill Park,Goatstown, Dublin 14, or email to: fundraising@camphill.ie