**Camphill - A reason for being**

Camphill Communities offer one of the largest support networks for children, young people and adults with learning disabilities. There are 16 Camphill centres in the Republic of Ireland and 4 in Northern Ireland. Each one has a distinct character determined by the particular need that it strives to meet.

**Camphill Cares**
- About individuals
- About the environment
- About social, ethical and spiritual values
- About community

Camphill supports sustainable communities where volunteers share their lives with individuals who have learning difficulties or other mental health problems. It aims to provide richly fulfilling lives for community members, with everyone able to make their own contribution and develop their potential.

It is a simple and powerful philosophy, and it is translated into actions which bring huge benefits to the individuals in the community. It is underpinned by tolerance, mutual respect, sharing and acceptance of people for what they are.

**Camphill and Inclusion**

In these days of expected integration, inclusion and innovation, Camphill has many initiatives to enable people with learning disabilities to be more involved and accepted by local communities.

Take a stroll through the towns of Kilcullen, Thomastown, Carrick-on-Suir or Callan and see how the Camphill communities are interwoven into the fabric of the areas. The Watergarden Cafe/Garden Centre and Crafts Shop, which was redeveloped in 2007, has been a non-residential initiative for adults with special needs since 1993.

An Tearmann in Kilcullen is a busy and popular Coffee Shop and Café, making fresh breads and lunches each day and selling books and crafts. What is more, this presence is not just through living in the towns, but Camphill has become a key partner with the wider community in developing social and cultural initiatives. For example, the KCAT Arts Centre in Callan, has had a vital role in the regeneration of the town. (See more inside this edition).
Villager Focus

James’ story

My name is James. I live on a farm now and have lived on a farm all my life. When I was young I often left the gates open and the cows escaped. I am now a farmer and I am responsible to lead them from the fields to the barn. In the mornings I help to look after the vegetables, which we grow. Digging, composting and sometimes planting. I work hard and enjoy putting on my overalls, jacket and boots to go to work.

People call me ‘James the Farmer’ and I enjoy this. I spend a lot of free time reading farm magazines. One day I would like to drive tractors. I do it sometimes in low gear with help when I am in the field. This is the only way to learn ‘to practise’.

The life of a farmer changes from season to season but I just carry on being a farmer, just like the other farmers I see at the Mart or in the local pubs. I enjoy doing new important jobs and meeting other farmers. I always watch out for cattle when I am away from the farm. I suppose you can take me out of the farm but you cannot take the farm out of me.

‘Once a farmer always a farmer’. For James (by John O’Connor) Camphill Community Jerpoint Co. Kilkenny

Designing Castalia Hall

by John Clark

A few years after Camphill Ballytobin was established we knew we would have to build a Hall.

In the early eighties parents, friends and neighbours would gather for the various festivals that mark the Camphill year in a converted outbuilding. And this served us well for many years, enabling us to be the kind of community we wanted to be - integrated and open to the wider community.

As Ballytobin grew and more children arrived, we began to think seriously of a larger Hall. We all agreed that it should have free-standing pillars of some form or another, and a large central space surrounded by an ambulatory and balcony.

Taking shape

At regular meetings of the community we tried to find the building’s ideal shape. This would have to be able to sustain the building of extensions in the coming years as the need arose, and yet preserve the integrity of its form.

We imagined and drew buildings with four sides or twelve sides and every other number in between.

Finally, I realised that the octagon was the form we were looking for. So it came time to contact Aidan Lavelle, the brilliant architect who had already worked on a number of other projects with us, to synthesize our many and varied ideas into the workable and beautiful design of the building you see today.

As I write, further plans have been drawn up to extend the foyer for additional bathrooms, better kitchen and storage, as well as much needed dressing rooms, and a small tower to house an external fire escape and wheelchair lift for the balcony.

While Castalia is not yet a finished building - it is just getting started – it is an integral part of the broader Ballytobin community and a focus for the

Performance in Castalia Hall

The Hall seen from Ballytobin Garden

Photograph courtesy of Cyril Byrne, Irish Times
History of Camphill in Ireland

by Susanne Elsboltz (founding co-worker)

The first Camphill Community in the Republic of Ireland was founded at Duffcarrig, near Gorey in Co. Wexford, in 1972, but Ireland has a much older place in the history of the Camphill Movement.

In 1938, when Dr. Karl König and his young colleagues were still in Vienna and the dark shadow of Nazism was beginning to loom over Austria, Dr. König sent a “Detailed Plan for a Curative Institute” to the Irish government. In this imaginary model for inclusive and therapeutic communities, Dr. König set out his vision for the respect and dignity of people with special needs, and how they could be involved in a productive and idealistic community. No reply was received and the group found their way to rural Scotland and then to Camphill, a small estate near Aberdeen.

There Dr. König’s initiative took root. After the trials of World War II, the Camphill Movement began to spread out and in 1954, after a request by parents of special children, a children’s community was established at Glencraig, on the shores of the Belfast Lough in Co. Down.

Thirty years after Dr. König’s first imagining of a community in Ireland, the first seeds were sown for a community in the Republic. There were a number of children from the south, particularly in the autistic spectrum, in the school in Glencraig.

As Anne O’Reilly, one of the Dublin parents recalls: “Dr. Engel, the late and much loved Principal of Glencraig, called a meeting of the Irish parents who had children in the school there. He wanted to warn us that the Village Community in Glencraig was now full and there would be no place for our children when they left school. He told us that if we could find a suitable place for a village community in Southern Ireland, Camphill would be prepared to staff it.”

The parents began to organise themselves. They formed a company, the Camphill Village Community of Ireland, with Gay Brennan as the first Chairman and Joe O’Reilly the first Secretary. Through Joe’s estate agent brother, Herbert, they heard that Duffcarrig, a large house on a small farm just north of Courtown, was for sale.

Sale to Camphill was agreed in December 1971, and the first group moved in on St. Brigid’s Day, February 1st, 1972.

The house had a welcoming atmosphere and the warm support of the Harvey family was always an encouragement.

As winter turned toward spring, there was action on all sides: re-wiring, new plumbing, and renovations in the house; sheds turned into craft workshops; vegetable gardens dug and cultivated. What had begun as an independent initiative of families with special children gained the support of Minister for Health, Erskine Childers, later to become President, and the community was recognised and funded by the Department of Health.

Dr. Engel, who had immersed himself in the social and cultural history of Ireland, felt that communities in the Republic should be smaller and more locally involved with families and neighbours than was the tradition of Camphill in Britain. And so, Duffcarrig grew slowly and with an eye to a future – today – that would see 16 communities in 7
Memories of a Co-worker

By Zoe Brennan-Krohn

My memories of my first days at Camphill Ballytobin are vague and muddled due to a combination of unfamiliar customs, the constant use of sign language, the occasional German thrown in, and the veil of exhaustion that my eyes cast over everything.

The community at Ballytobin was divided into six houses where we shared meals and lived with other co-workers and people in care, including one free spirit called Liam. I lived in Sweeney’s, a small house with three adults in care - Darren, Monica and Maggie - none of whom spoke, and other co-workers from across Europe.

I’m still not sure how the transformation from outsider to insider took place; perhaps, with each time Liam spoke to me or each time I learned a new sign from Darren, or each morning I took care of Maggie.

**Respect for all**

There’s a fundamental, usually unexamined, assumption that people with special needs are damaged, as though there’s another Liam or Maggie or Monica – the people they would be, without their special needs. I became part of Ballytobin when I began to understand the intense respect and humanity that presides over everything there.

Ballytobin does not try to ‘cure’ people of their differences. It provides them with as much independence as possible, but above all gives them the unwavering and natural respect that humans deserve, the kind that is completely natural and unspoken, and which comes from a community where all members depend entirely on those around them.

I know without question, that Liam, Maggie, Darren, and Monica, in moments that I hardly noticed at the time, showed me more beauty than I have ever seen before.

With each small encounter, the extent of my attachment to and membership of Ballytobin grew, so that I could barely remember what it had been like at the beginning. I had come so far.
KCAT Art & Study Centre is a Camphill Project that concentrates on art and learning. KCAT stands for Kilkenny Collective for Arts Talent. The Camphill Communities of Ireland founded KCAT in 1996.

The inspiration came directly from one person, George McCutcheon. Out of his own initiative he, over a number of years, gradually developed his work as an artist.

Under the European HORIZON Project, a programme was devised to help George to become a professional artist. When this successful project finished with a travelling exhibition, George got his own studio in Camphill Ballytobin where he lived. In 1999 KCAT Art & Study centre was set up in the town of Callan. The two main objectives were to start a studio space for people with special needs and provide an inclusive art course. The KCAT Studio aims to facilitate the artists with special needs in their professional development. They decide which themes and materials they want to work with/in and can work towards solo and group exhibitions, commissions and other projects.

The KCAT Studio started with three artists and over time many others have found their vocation in the arts. The visual art courses started with the aim of personal and artistic development and are now a FETAC Level 5 accredited Visual Art Course. This is a two year full time course for people with and without disabilities for anybody over 16 years of age. It is taught in such a way that every participant can work at his or her own level.

Three years ago a new impulse came out of a few participants: theatre. The Equinox theatre performance course was set up and last month some of the students have developed so far that they are now ready to start a theatre company. Over the years there have been fantastic activities in KCAT. From starting with 20 students and 3 studio artists there are now 14 studio artists, 60 visual art and theatre students and eight actors with special needs! Staff has grown from three volunteers to nine permanent staff, four session employees and 10 part time volunteers. The cooperation with street theatre company Macnas in Galway produced a wonderful parade that amazed audiences in Galway, Kilkenny and Callan in 2006. National and international contacts have been the drive of many exhibitions and even an International Festival of Inclusive Theatre called Trasna in 2007.

Next summer KCAT Art & Study Centre will be 10 years old, with more funds we would be able to let more people enjoy and participate in our activities and initiate more projects and exhibitions.
Journeyman puts down roots

by Heather Lynch (Programme co-ordinator)

The Journeyman Programme is a Camphill training initiative for young people who have a disability.

New €2M Centre

Work is to start on a new eco friendly centre at Carrick-on-Suir in Co. Tipperary that will include training workshops, an exhibition space, meeting rooms, dining area, communications room and administration offices. The new centre will also allow the Journeyman Programme to expand in new directions with two self contained apartments for trainees.

Training Programme and Curriculum

The Journeyman has developed as a 3 to 5 year programme for young people with learning and physical disabilities between the ages of 18 and 25yrs. It provides a varied and practical curriculum in an environment in which young people can interact with their own peer group, mature and gain confidence before moving on to an adult working environment or further training.

Lifeskills

While practical training includes horticulture, cooking, painting, and crafts such as rug making, pottery, candle making and woodwork, it is the social skills that make up the core of the programme. The aim is to help students develop life skills in communicating, socialising with others, forming friendships and interacting with the everyday world - searching for the next step in life, can be seen as a common goal.

Centre of Excellence

The Journeyman Programme has been recognised by the HSE, as a centre of excellence and is also partly funded by the Department of the Environment, with 50% of the cost being raised by local and national fund raising efforts. It is forging a training model which can be passed on to other such centres for young people and replicated countrywide. The new centre is the culmination of a 10 year dream for Heather Lynch, Programme Director.
Camphill and Renewable Energy

by Mark Dwan

Since the early nineties the clarion call for Renewable Energy- Recycling of Waste- and Sustainable Living have been ringing in our ears, with a realisation that if we are not moving forward achieving these ideals, then we are in for serious trouble.
That clarion call already sounded in Camphill in the 1940s when the idea of Camphill was being conceived. Right from the first day, Camphill has been pioneering organic farming, care for the environment and sustainable living.

Some of the ways that Camphill uses alternative and renewable sources are outlined here:

**BIOGAS**

When the technological breakthrough of Biogas appeared in 1994, the Camphill Community in Ballytobin, Callan, Co. Kilkenny seized the opportunity. Biogas is a technology where you produce methane gas from food waste and cow slurry. Waste companies come with their food waste each week and the methane gas which is produced gets used for heating and electricity production and the broken down digested waste is recycled for fertilizer.
The houses, workshops and school buildings of Ballytobin are all heated by the Biogas plant, a population of 85 people all snug as bugs in a rug.
The Biogas plant is the first and only one of its kind in Ireland. She is visited by interest groups from all over the country and has been the subject of 3 TV documentaries.

**BIOMASS**

In 2004 and 2005 the Camphill communities in Kyle and Jerpoint, installed district heating systems replacing their expensive oil burners with woodchip burners for the entire community. These communities have been getting their woodchip as waste from local sawmills and joinery manufacturers. Among a number of heating systems in Camphill houses in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, the community at KCAT is sourcing its heat from a woodchip boiler in conjunction with solar panels which are installed there.
An interesting bit of networking exists in Callan also, where a neighbourhood farmer is growing willow for fuel and Camphill are in an arrangement with him to buy this willow for woodchip and he in turn receives liquid manure from the BIOGAS plant in Ballytobin.
Fundraising

Fundraising is a vital ingredient in the Camphill success story. Fundraising is essential to get new communities and initiatives up and running, and to help provide the extra capacity and create the opportunities to support people with special needs. Demand for places always exceeds supply and waiting lists are long. Funds for land, new buildings, workshops, halls, therapy units and a continuous need for modernisation and maintenance is ever present (see below). Government does come in with some of the day to day money, but as we speak arrears are building-up and causing severe hardship and cash flow problems to most communities.

Camphill has a vision of what has to be done. Voluntary support does have a big say in what Camphill will be able to do, and what has been spectacularly achieved so far.

RECENT FUNDRAISING EVENTS

Communities do their own fundraising through local sponsored events, from local businesses, Open Days, etc. The Journeymen Programme in Carrick-on-Suir through a highly motivated local friends group chaired by Martin O’Sullivan, organised a highly successful golf outing this year raising €15,000 and a Dinner Dance in the Minella Hotel in Clonmel in November which raised €20,000.

The Dublin Fundraising Group held its Annual Race Evening in June. 300 people attended this popular and enjoyable with live racing and music which raised €30,000. The annual Flag-day collection organised by the Dublin Parents and Friends Group at supermarkets raises upwards of €20,000. The marathons are also a useful fund raising vehicle and Camphill are always looking for volunteers to run on their behalf. Camphill has been the beneficiary of some very generous donations and bequests in the past and much excellent work has been done on the donors’ behalf.

LAUNCH OF PROMOTIONAL DVD

Camphill’s new PR Group has just launched an exciting and interesting Promotional and Fundraising DVD, depicting the Camphill way of life. Anyone interested in viewing the DVD or supporting Camphill in any way, please contact:

fundraising@camphill.ie or Michael Hilary at 087-2568810

CAMPCHILD PROJECTS NEEDING FUNDING SUPPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DETAIL</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ballybay</td>
<td>Biomas Energy System</td>
<td>€150K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duffcarrig</td>
<td>Coffee Shop in Ballymoney</td>
<td>€250K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dingle</td>
<td>Farm Buildings</td>
<td>€60K</td>
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<td>Callan</td>
<td>Vehicle/ Wheelchair lift</td>
<td>€15K</td>
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<td>Dunshane</td>
<td>Upgrade ‘listed’ conservatory</td>
<td>€30K</td>
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<td>Ballytobin</td>
<td>Castalia Hall Extension</td>
<td>€150K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journeymen</td>
<td>Building Training Centre</td>
<td>€200K</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kyle</td>
<td>Upgrading Daly’s House for Independent</td>
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<td>KCAT</td>
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<td>Greenacres</td>
<td>Need to find suitable workshop accomodation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jerpoint</td>
<td>Catering Equipment for residential facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kilcullen</td>
<td>Need a community hall for 45 people</td>
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Charity Joke

A fierce hurricane blew across the Caribbean. Dr. O’Brien’s yacht was swamped by huge waves, sinking without a trace. There were only two survivors: the boat’s owner Dr. O’Brien and its steward Paddy. Both managed to swim to a nearby island.

After reaching land, the steward was crying that they would never be found. The other man was quite calm, relaxing against a tree.

“Dr. O’Brien, how can you be so calm?” cried Paddy.

“Well, it’s time for their annual fund drive and you can bet anything that they will find me”, smiled Dr.O’Brien.