



# The Tharie Times



Newsletter of National Traveller MABS

Issue 13, Spring 2012

## Introduction

Welcome to the first issue of **The Tharie Times** for 2012.

While the current recession continues to impact on all our lives, we are pleased to bring you some positive news stories.

In this issue we profile a Traveller woman as she strives to achieve her dream of starting her own business. We also bring news of our most recent publication edited by Dr Stuart Stamp and news of the new MABSndI education resource, "A way of Life".

We report on the Traveller Pride award of 2011 and highlight the impact of the closure of Senior Traveller Training Centres.

We hope you enjoy this issue of The Tharie Times and look forward to receiving your opinions and comments

Nancy Power  
Nuala Ní Ghabhann  
Coordinators



## Traveller woman embarks on her dream

In January Margaret Mc Donagh, a Traveller mother of 7 with 7 grandchildren, completed a Start Your Own Business Course. Margaret and ten other participants from Dublin and Wexford shared a dream of starting their own businesses. However until now they had been unable to access the financial supports needed to secure their dream.



Trainers and Entrepreneurs with Ron Shultz

National Traveller MABS partnered with The Dublin Simon Community, South Inner City Community Development Network (SICCCA) and South West Wexford CDP (SWWCDDP) to bring the US based entrepreneur programme, Entrepreneurs4change, to Ireland.

The programme was piloted with clients from all 4 organisations. The programme provides enterprise training, mentoring and potentially access to credit to people on the margins of society who for various reasons have been unable to access credit to start their own business.

Margaret, a talented dressmaker, plans to start a dress design and dress making business creating fairytale occasion wear for weddings, communions and christenings. Margaret has many years experience in enterprise, selling in markets with her father and later as an adult on The Hill in Dublin's North Inner City.



Margaret believes that selling comes naturally to Travellers. Speaking following the Entrepreneur4Change training, Margaret noted that while such a move into self employment “will take a lot of Travellers out of their comfort zone, it will, in the long run move Travellers forward”.

For more information on the Lending4Change programme, please contact Nuala by email on [nuala\\_nighabhann@mabs.ie](mailto:nuala_nighabhann@mabs.ie)



Nuala Ní Ghabhann, Margaret McDonagh and Margaret Scully (formally of Dun Laoghaire Traveller Enterprise Support)

[www.ntmabs.org](http://www.ntmabs.org)

[www.lending4change.com](http://www.lending4change.com)

## Issues of Personal Finance within the Traveller Community

National Traveller MABS is pleased to announce the completion of our latest research report ‘**Issues of Personal Finance within the Traveller Community**’. The report was edited by Dr. Stuart Stamp.

The report explores the findings of 37 Local Area meetings (LAD) and 4 Traveller specific focus groups facilitated by National Traveller MABS from 2007 to 2011. The local meetings were a way of building relationship between local MABS and the local Traveller Community, support organisations, including the Local Authority, Family Resource Centres and the Citizen’s Information Services.

### Issues of Personal Finance within the Traveller Community

A study exploring the findings of the Local Area Development work undertaken by National Traveller MABS 2007 – 2011



The report details the main financial concerns for Travellers identified at the LAD meetings and highlights suggestions on how local and national services can work together to promote financial capability within the Traveller community and ensure equal access for Travellers to MABS and the financial services. The findings of this report will direct the work of National Traveller MABS over the coming years and we thank everyone who participated in the local meetings and focus groups.

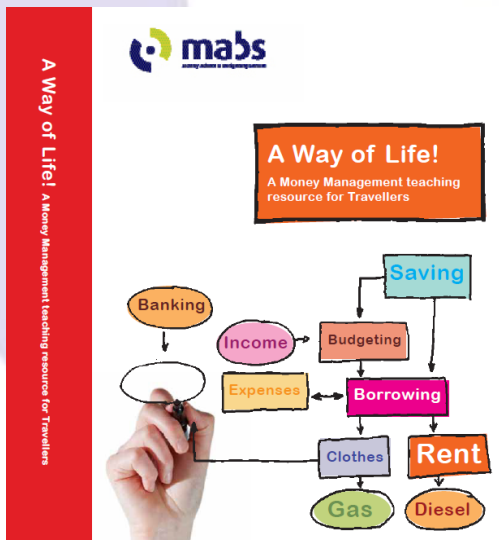


A copy of the report has been sent to every MABS office in the country – if your office has yet to receive one or you would like additional copies, please contact **Margaret Collins at 07610 72230, through email at [margaret\\_collins@mabs.ie](mailto:margaret_collins@mabs.ie)** or download a copy from our website – **[www.ntmabs.org](http://www.ntmabs.org)**

## A Way of Life – Published and distributed

At the beginning of the year you might've noticed a bright new folder, 'A Way of Life', arriving at your office. The resource was developed originally by Belinda in North Galway MABS with the assistance of Travellers locally and Carol Dunne from MABSndI.

Following its wide use in many local Traveller groups, the material was reviewed and revised at the end of 2010. Carol Dunne, Belinda Mc Greal-Flaherty, Margaret Deegan and our own Dermot Sreenan were part of the review group.



The resource is comprehensive manual dealing with money management topics with everything from bank accounts to budgeting and borrowing. It can be delivered in units or as a complete money management course.

We would ask that you give special consideration to planning Community Education with your local Traveller community given the level of cuts in education, services and supports the community has received in the last couple of years.

Please contact Dermot on 087-9435895 to discuss further.

## Training Centres due to Close in July 2012



As part of Budget 2011, all Senior Traveller Training Centre's (STTC) are to close by July 2012. This process has already started and a number of centres did not re-open for business this year.

The Department of Education has not allowed new enrolments in STTC since January 2011. To counteract the impact of this decision there has been an increase in the provision of the following extra places.

- 3000 extra places in Back to Education Initiatives – BTEI's
- 1000 extra Post Leaving Cert. Courses

There is no mechanism to ensure that Travellers losing their place in a STTC will get one of the aforementioned places. At a time of 14.5% unemployment and with a further €19.2 cut due to Trainee & Apprenticeship schemes, demand for such places is increasing. The Senior Traveller Training Centres were set up in 1974 to "provide Travellers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully make the transition to work and adult life, and to participate fully in their communities."





Local Traveller organisations are now the focal point for the delivery of services to the community. NTMABS works closely with national and local Traveller organisations such as, the Irish Traveller Movement, Exchange House, Pavee Point, and the National Traveller Women’s Forum. We encourage all MABS to use NTMABS to ensure Travellers locally are engaged in MABS.

## Traveller Pride Awards 2011

The third annual Traveller Pride Awards took place on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2011, in the new Wood Quay Venue. The newly inaugurated President Michael D. Higgins honoured the winners and acknowledged the contribution that Travellers make to both their own community and to Irish society across the island.

The occasion was once again hosted by RTE presenter Anne Cassin and there were many well known personalities on hand to give out the awards across a host of categories.



RTE Presenter Anne Cassin with Vincent Browne.

Michael McDonagh from Navan won the Community Award while Broadcaster and journalist Vincent Browne presented John Mc Carthy with the Award for Enterprise and Employment. Spring Lane Young Traveller Women’s Group from Cork won the Youth Award and Mary Stokes from Tipperary was honoured with the Education Award, Well know singer Mary Coughlan presented Tommy Doran with an award for his contribution to Music and renowned sports pundit Marty Morrissey presented Andy O’Brien from Wicklow with the Sports Award.

Following her acceptance of the Overall Pride Award for 2011, Mary Connors from Wexford said *“I have 13 grandchildren and my hope for their future is that we can achieve inclusion, equality and ethnic status for Travellers in Ireland with recognition of our culture which is based on respect for our values and our customs. I would hope that my grandchildren will not have to spend their lives fighting for the things that are basic human needs....”*



Mary Connors receiving her award from Anne Cassin

Michael Collins – Actor and Playwright was presented with the Overall Achievement Award by President Michael D. Higgins. The actor is most famous for his portrayal of Johnny Connors in Glenroe, but has been in a host of films including Trojan Eddie, and Man about Dog. He’s also written several plays, the latest of which ‘Magpies on the Pylon’ addresses the issue of suicide among young Travellers. President Higgins said *“Michael is a true example of how we can use our particular gifts and talents to challenge society’s perceptions and expectations.”*

Actor Michael Collins receiving his award from President Higgins



The Traveller Pride awards have firmly established the extraordinary achievements and vibrant contributions that Travellers make to Irish society whilst maintaining their Traveller identity intact. NTMABS is delighted to be part of this process.