Bellaghy Women’s Group – Annual Report 2017-2018

Summary of achievements & performance during 2017/18
(Including funding received and events organised)

This was a very good year for Bellaghy Women’s group, our first year completed in the Heaney Homeplace, with all our events being really well attended. We are grateful for any funding we received, firstly, the lead funder, John Moore’s Foundation, who has given us the financial boost which kept our group running over the past three years. Many of our projects did not include funding for rent or overheads so it was really beneficial to have John Moore’s Fund to help continue our work within the community.

We were also extremely grateful to have contact with the Recovery College from Antrim. Their courses provide opportunities which encourage individual progress, recovery, wellness and empowerment, along with life-long learning. They provided quite a few classes for us, some fun-filled classes which were extremely popular and very well attended.

Courses held during 2017/2018

1. Heaney from the heart (part 1) February 2017
2. Stress Control - March/April 2017
3. Community Dialogue – May/ June 2017
4. Heaney from the heart (part 2) June 2017
6. Understanding Alzheimer’s --October 2017
7. Yoga--- Nov 2017
8. Christmas Celebration
9. BCB cancer awareness-- Jan/Feb2018
10. Motivational day with Billy Dixon – Mar 2018

Heaney from the Heart (1&2)-----Both of these projects were funded through the Small Grants programme in Mid Ulster District Council, one from 2016 and the second part from the 2017 programme. Due to the fact we were now having all our meetings and functions in the Heaney Homeplace and we had previously received funding for facilitated poetry readings, we really wanted to learn more about the poet himself. We had two facilitated events with the brothers and close relatives of Seamus Heaney, finding out about his home life and his role as the oldest brother. These were closed events only for committee members, in order to protect the very private Heaney family.
Stress Control ------This course, facilitated and funded by The Recovery College, ran for four weeks teaching skills and techniques for assertiveness, positive self-talk and building resilience. It was a very popular and well attended course, women who came along at the beginning were all eager to finish, so we had a full attendance of 25+ attendees throughout the course.

Community Dialogue-----We had 5 weeks of facilitated discussion with Community Dialogue who also funded our course. This organisation, are committed to a dialogue process which helps transform understanding and build trust amongst people who often hold opposing social and political views. The participants (approx.14) had interesting discussions over the 5 weeks with the facilitator and we would hope to continue similar work with this organisation in the future.

*Summer break during July and August, we started back in September when a trip to Mount Stewart was organised.*

Mindfulness....... We were fortunate to have an offer of this course which was supplied and facilitated by the Recovery College. This much requested course gave practical ideas about how we could learn to make more informed choices and decisions about how we live by listening to ourselves more effectively. It proved to be a very popular course for the 25 participants over the duration of 6 weeks.

Understanding Alzheimer’s......This three week course covered all aspects of Alzheimer’s disease from the initial diagnosis, the trauma for families, the treatment and support plus other useful information and resources available.

Yoga course......This was a five week course organised through funding which we received from the NI Housing Executive. With extra funding which we had over, we invited the motivational speaker Billy Dixon to come along to Bellaghy to sort out our wardrobes, our correct colours and our lives.

BCB Cancer Awareness Course...... Another three week course, facilitated by Thomasina Birt, which was really informative and thoroughly enjoyed by all the women who attended, in fact there are requests to have it repeated in the autumn, funding permitting.

Billy Dixon..... This event was held in the Helicon Theatre within the Heaney Homeplace and everyone who attended got a personalised lesson on the colours which they would suit best to bring out their natural beauty. With our small admittance fee we are able to give a small donation to Marie Curie Cancer Care

Our group would like to thank the staff of Heaney Homeplace for their help with arranging meeting rooms etc. Thanks to the Recovery College for their cooperation in supplying and arranging appropriate courses for our groups needs. Many thanks also to John Moore’s Foundation, Mid Ulster District Council, NI Housing Executive, CWSAN and Community Dialogue for the funding and the expert advice which we received, we are extremely grateful and appreciative as a group.

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On a personal note thanks to everyone within the committee who helped in any way throughout the past year 2017/18 and I hope we will all continue to strengthen our work as a group in future years.

Maureen Doyle  Chairperson 15.05.2018