

# Traveller Visibility Group CLG 2016 Annual Report





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# 1. Chair Person's Statement



*Celebrating Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity, 1st March 2017*

It brings me great pleasure to be writing this statement in the midst of Traveller ethnicity recognition by the Irish Government on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. For over 50 years, and since the Commission on Itinerancy Report (1963), which was the first formal recognition by the government and started from the perspective that Travellers were a problem, and mainstream thinking at the time was that rehabilitation, settlement and assimilation into the wider population was the solution, government policy told people that there was something fundamentally wrong with Travellers. It told them that Travellers had to be someone else and that being a Traveller had no worth. Furthermore, it led to years of oppression for the Traveller community and a real struggle in working with the State to reverse such assimilation policies. The TVG and Traveller projects have been advocating for this recognition for decades.

This is a significant moment for the Traveller community and everyone in our society because by acknowledging that Travellers are people in their own right with their own value system, language, customs and traditions; who share a lifestyle and culture, based on nomadism, which sets them apart from the general population; the Irish government have taken a big step in building equality.

I was one of the Travellers who attended the Dáil to witness the historic occasion of national recognition of our Traveller ethnicity by the Irish government. We saw politician after politician stand up and say our culture and way of life, our ethnicity was recognised and valuable, so much so that there was a standing ovation from Travellers in the gallery and the politicians in the Dáil. I am delighted this has finally happened, sad that it took so long, yet hopeful that it will have a good impact on Travellers health.



As an organisation the TVG will continue to call on the government to review policy that is having a disproportionate effect on Travellers. It will continue to urge the government to look more thoroughly at, and explore workable solutions to, the areas in a Traveller's life whereby they are experiencing most disadvantage. The well-rehearsed situation of lack of Traveller accommodation is one particular area that has continued to have devastating consequences for Travellers. This has to change and can only be reversed if there is adequate partnerships between Travellers, local councils and government. I look forward to building on this and other key areas

Our work throughout 2016 continued to be challenging. We ensured that Travellers have been included and consulted with in all committees that are relevant to Traveller policy, and have worked hard to highlight difficulties that Travellers continue to experience in their access to services. Despite our ongoing efforts and commitment to bringing about change for the Traveller community on a number of levels, we would like to emphasize that the balance of power within society structures is something that is a struggle and can block us from having meaningful influence with decision-making at committee level.

Traveller accommodation is still in particular crisis and we worked as part of the Regional Traveller Accommodation sub-group of the Traveller Health Unit to raise the profile of this in a variety of ways, including the coordination of the National Traveller Accommodation Conference which took place as part of the 2016 Cork Lifelong Learning Week. On a local level we also formed part of a small working group chaired by former Minister of State for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability. This group

is made up of representatives from the Traveller projects, Cork City Council and the HSE, and the aim is to put together a much needed response to the Spring Lane Halting Site development on the north side of the city.

TVG continued to work closely with the HSE through the Traveller health unit and Social Inclusion. This work continued to be a very positive working relationship and has seen us identify further responses for the community in improving their health and well-being through a number of projects depicted throughout this report. We furthered our partnerships with the voluntary and community sector across Cork city through our involvement in Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance (CESCA). We also continued to build relationships with local councillors and politicians in our quarterly meetings with them held at City Hall to inform them, and work closely with them, around progressing local and national Traveller matters. TVG recognises that it is through the partnerships that we have formed along the way that have enabled us to be where we are today.

I would like to acknowledge Chrissie O'Sullivan, TVG Project Coordinator 1992 to 2015. She could not be with us in 2016 but her determination, commitment and hard work in progressing Traveller rights down through the years has contributed to the ongoing success of the TVG. We hope to see her back with us in 2017.

This report only gives a flavour of our work in 2016. It can be difficult to capture the volume of work of such a vast project in a short report. Hopefully you will enjoy reading it and continue to support our work in 2017.

*Breda O'Donoghue*  
*TVG Chairperson*



## 2. Project Coordinator's Statement

The year 2016 was a particularly challenging year for the TVG in that the project experienced a number of internal staffing changes whilst having to continue to respond to the day to day volume of work undertaken by the project. I was promoted to the role of Project Coordinator on an interim basis and worked through various challenges with the staff team to ensure our continued ability of providing adequate support to the Traveller community locally. Caroline Vasseur took on the role of TVG Traveller Health Coordinator for an interim basis in May 2016 and worked to provide ongoing support to the development of health initiatives for the Traveller community facilitated by the health team.

Despite the significant challenges mentioned, we took on a new project in hosting the Community Development Worker based at the new community centre in St Anthony's Park group housing scheme in Knocknaheeny; we facilitated 4 new Community Employment Scheme workers; we coordinated the National Traveller Accommodation Conference during the Cork Lifelong Learning Week; we re-designed and launched our new website ([www.tvcork.ie](http://www.tvcork.ie)); we attended and participated in planning meetings of the National Traveller Roma and Integration Strategy with the Department of Justice; we attended and participated in the Traveller projects regional, week long summer school (across colleges in Cork and Kerry) to review how

we practice community development and reflect on progressing our work as Traveller projects; and we supported the Southern Traveller Health Network in putting together their DVD animation project of the 'Rings of Hope' which tells the story of the cycle of domestic violence within a Traveller family, and which has 3 of the TVG Traveller male workers as voice-overs on it; and is hoped to be a resource for health centres both locally and nationally. Furthermore, we continued to develop the first Traveller horse grazing project for Cork city through partners on the Cork City Horse Initiative Steering group and also secured funding from the Department of Agriculture to roll out a number of equine courses for young Travellers across Cork city.

I echo the statement that Breda O'Donoghue has made above in relation to the Traveller ethnicity recognition on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017. I think this is a significant step by the Irish government in building equality. Travellers have fought for this recognition for decades and it is reassuring for Travellers and our community as a whole to now have a government committed to this and who value the contribution Travellers can make to Irish society. I look forward to working with the project in 2017 to progress supports required for the Traveller community following this recognition.

*Ciara Ridge*  
TVG Project Coordinator



*Celebrating Recognition of Traveller Ethnicity, 1st March 2017)*

### 3. History and Background of the Traveller Visibility Group

#### History & Background

The TVG is a Traveller-led Cork based organisation, which works within the philosophy and ethos of the National Community Development Programme. The TVG brings together Travellers and settled people in solidarity, to facilitate community development work within the Travelling Community. The Traveller Visibility Group recognises Travellers as a nomadic ethnic group with its own distinct culture and lifestyle. We were formed in 1992 by a group of Traveller women concerned with the issues facing Travellers in Cork. The absence at that time of any community development work to facilitate Travellers in identifying and addressing these issues was one of concern. Our work is based on the findings of research we commissioned in 1993, which was carried out by the Social Policy and Research Unit of the University College Cork (UCC). This research was published and entitled "Making Travellers Visible, an account of the lived experience of Travellers in Cork; an examination of the services and unmet needs in Cork". Our catchment area is Cork City and the suburban areas near the city.

#### Mission Statement of the Traveller Visibility Group

To work with Travellers in Cork towards achieving real change and improvement in their lives

#### Principles of the TVG

- Anti-racist and anti-sexist work practices be implemented in all programmes
- Participation, partnership and empowerment – the core elements of community development
- Starting from where Travellers are at and passing on skills
- Seeing the value of working through a development process with people being as important as completing the task.

#### Aims of the TVG:

- Continue to promote Travellers as a nomadic ethnic group, with its own distinctive culture and lifestyle.
- Continue to promote Traveller self-determination and empowerment (enabling Travellers to make decisions and work in a collective way to bring about real change in their lives).
- Continue to work for real change and improvement in Travellers' lives including the areas of education, accommodation, health, and employment / work and rights.
- To challenge discrimination and racism against Travellers.
- Continue to ensure the inclusion of Traveller issues and resource the real participation of Travellers in policy decisions and practices that affect their lives.
- Develop a suitable, well-resourced Travellers' Centre and Crèche.
- Develop the TVG's management, administrative and staff structures and procedures.
- Promote mutual understanding, acceptance and support between Travellers and others in Irish Society.
- Develop network links locally, regionally and nationally.
- Carry out research on the circumstances of Travellers in Cork and contribute to national research, which will inform the TVG's work.

## 4. Administration

As the work of TVG has grown so too has the administration of the Project. Although administration by its nature is repetitive, for example, the paying of salaries, bills, Collector General etc., it was an exceptionally busy year with many new projects & pieces of work. Periodic Returns to the Pobal, HSE and other funders were completed as was the Audit at the end of the year which confirmed that the administration of grants was carried out in a correct, honest and efficient manner. As there have been so many changes to payroll & employment law I began a 12 month course with IPASS in Cork Institute of Technology. It is an excellent course and I am finding it very useful in my work.

Margaret McCarthy was working part-time in administration but left the post at the end of June as she got married in July. Margaret had been on a CE scheme learning how the administration of TVG is carried out since 2012. When her CE scheme finished in July 2015 she took up the post of part-time Assistant Administrator. TVG advertised and subsequently employed Sarah McCarthy in Margaret's post during 2016. Sarah is proving to be a great worker and a valuable member of the TVG staff team.

### **Sarah McCarthy (Part Time Assistant Administrator)**

I started working as a part time Assistant Administrator in the TVG on the 20th of September 2016. I work 10 hours a week alongside Mary the Administrator on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. My duties include entering invoices/payments up on the Big Red Cloud and My Money, wages, attending weekly staff meetings, filing, and photocopying, scanning, answering the phone and other administrative duties. Since working in the TVG I have completed a manual handling course and also participated in a 6 hour conflict awareness training programme. My goals for the future are to get more involved in upcoming events in TVG and to become more knowledgeable in all aspects of my work.



## 5. Community Employment Scheme (CE)

We continued to provide 10 CE placements to people in the Traveller community in 2016. CE workers are an excellent addition to the team as they are strategically placed within each section of the organisation so they can support the day to day running of the overall project and also take up training opportunities in their personal interest areas. These have included Administration Assistants, Receptionist, Care Taker, Community Development Worker and House Keeping.

CE placements can have duration of 3 years per participant which can be very beneficial to the participant as well as the organisation. This can give adequate time to building of skill sets and preparation for the workplace. Criteria for CE places in Childcare changed in 2015. In order to take up a CE place in Childcare a person must:

- Be over 18 years
- Attend classes and gain Fetac level 5 or 6 in childcare study
- The person, when finished their CE scheme will have a recognised qualification and 3 years' experience in an Early Years setting and will meet the minimum requirements for any job in Childcare
- The person will automatically get their CE place for 3 years with full support with college work from the TVG Crèche Manager.

### **In 2016 the following CE participants included:**

Margaret McCarthy	Reception
Oliver McCarthy	Caretaker/Maintenance
Priscilla McCarthy	Housekeeping
Rachel Coffey	Community Development Worker
Tom O Sullivan	Community Development Worker
Paige O Sullivan	Childcare
Lillian Ossenegar	Childcare

### Margaret McCarthy (Reception)

I have been working in TVG for the last 3 years. During that time I have had many roles in different parts of TVG. I started off on reception for the first few months of my job while waiting for my place in the crèche. I then started as a part time child care assistant in our community crèche downstairs. I was working at that for the first year. I then moved back upstairs to do cleaning & housekeeping. After 6 months of doing that I returned to my original post of Receptionist. It is now 2 years on.

During my time in TVG I took part in many groups and voluntary work. I played a part in the Springlane site campaign; I went to Dublin and accepted the Traveller Pride Award on behalf of the residents. I also took our Project Co-ordinator and Senator Collette Kelleher to meet the residents. I am coming to the end of my journey here at TVG as my time is up in March 2017. TVG will be a huge loss to me as I have gained so many friends. It also gave me confidence and I can very proudly say that I would not be the person I am today without the TVG. It was a very warm welcoming place to work in and people were very kind to me. There is a lovely bond and loyalty between all staff. I will miss working there but hope to stay involved in any way I can.

### Oliver McCarthy (Caretaker/Maintenance)

I started in October as part of the CE Scheme. I am working as a part of maintenance in TVG. Part of my job is:

- Sweeping/power washing the yard
- Emptying all the bins around the building
- Looking for any hazards or other maintenance issues
- Keeping the place tidy
- Keeping the library tidy
- Putting the back room in order before and after meetings
- Painting if required
- Fixing locks and hinges
- Replacing broken tiles



*At an event with the Drugs and Alcohol Project*

- Any other jobs required by TVG
- I will be involved with TJ in the gym/swim class in Churchfield in the next few weeks. I am up for taking on any maintenance issues that need to be done in TVG. I am looking forward to seeing what 2017 brings.

## Priscilla McCarthy (Housekeeping)

My name is Priscilla and I started my CE placement in October 2016. I am the housekeeper here at TVG and I work mostly afternoons. My role consists of cleaning the whole building and keeping up the standards here at the building. Some days I do receptionist too and I enjoy having the time to try new things.

The staff here at TVG are very friendly and helpful. I am hoping to gain experience from my job role so that when I leave TVG I will have a qualification to work in other areas outside the project. It is a big building with lots going on but I manage to maintain a good rota for cleaning. You meet lots of people coming into the building every day and I enjoy getting to know them. Recently I have attended training on how to argue better, first aid and manual handling. I like doing these courses because I get certs and more training; and I get to know the staff.

Overall, I am enjoying my time here at TVG because

I am learning new skills and meeting new people. I am also looking forward to upcoming training and events held at TVG.

## Rachel Coffey (Community Development Worker)

I started linking in with the project back in 2015 through the drugs and alcohol project. I was keen to see the work that goes on in this area as I'm hoping to work in this type of environment in the future. In January 2016 I started officially on a volunteer placement on the drugs and alcohol project.

Since I started all the TVG staff have been very supportive of my role and have encouraged me to go further with my education and training. As a result of this I have gained training in areas such as acupuncture, mindfulness and TCAT training. I also attended an introduction to counselling skills in the Cork College of Commerce. In late 2016 I then took on a CE placement as Community Development Worker to support the drugs and alcohol project and have continued my training. I have been attending the Substance Misuse and Community Development course since September. In my role I attend meetings, conferences, events within the community and provide services such as mindfulness. I also engage in other tasks within the project such as

taking the minutes at staff meetings, typing work reports and attending events such as Traveller Pride Week, mental health flyer launch and sessions held in the TVG building. Lastly, I have run acupuncture and mindfulness sessions. I worked with Liz, TCHW to run two 6 week sessions of acupuncture and numbers were average. There were some challenges with the time of the sessions and we have learnt from this for next time. I am hoping to continue to run acupuncture and mindfulness at a time that suits the community in 2017.

Throughout my time here at TVG I have gained many skills and have grown as a person. Today, I feel that anything is possible, and from this I believe in myself and am confident to further my education by applying for the Degree in Youth and Community Work at UCC. TVG has given me that space to grow and explore my options and see what areas I am passionate about. The TVG team is an honest, open space to work in and everyone here is so friendly. I have seen from day one that working as a team only strengthens a workforce and this is why I feel TVG works so well. My time at TVG to date has given me a new set of eyes on how I view the community, my own experiences and society as a whole. I am looking forward to the year ahead and learning more in my role.

**Summary of work/events in 2016:**

- Smart recovery online training.
- MBRS mindfulness course.
- Acupuncture training.
- NVR Training.
- First aid.
- Fire safety.
- Manual handling.
- TCAT training.
- SAOL event.
- Conferences at Pavee point D&A.
- 2 sessions of acupuncture May & Nov 7 attended through Nov session and 4 in May.
- Mindfulness sessions.
- UCC Traveller accommodation conference.
- Service visits to the Glen project, Tabor Lodge and Bridge Recovery.
- Attended Traveller Pride Week.
- Did outreach with drugs task force with Frank in the city centre.
- Mindfulness retreat.
- Attended Reflections of hope event in aid of suicide.



*Mahon Equine Youth Group*

- Attend Family support network conference in New Ross.
- Attended a four week session on "How to argue better" through Cork city partnership.
- Attended conference in Dublin on peer led research around addiction and recovery.

## Tom O Sullivan (Community Development Worker)

2016 was my second year with the TVG on CE placement as the Community Development Worker who is placed within the TVG Health Team. I support the men's development work. In 2016 I supported the delivery of the equine programmes across the city with the Men's Development Worker.

In 2016 I also got involved with the Mahon after school group through the Development Worker Mary Hogan. When I first went out there, I did not know what to expect. Then I started to build relationships with the young people out there through after school/homework activities. It helped strengthen the relationship with the group then when I told them about the equine programme.

As Traveller pride was in June 2016, John O' Sullivan, the Men's development worker in TVG had the idea to build a small trailer that Travellers would have used in the 1980-1990. Cork city council part funded the project and also the Cork Traveller women's network part funded it with the objective of exhibiting the finished Bucaneer in the Cork museum. A Traveller man by the name of John Berry took on the project; from time to time John and I would have given him a helping hand. I thought that the idea was great and it was a great experience for me doing small bits of research for this project.

In September of 2016, I started a diploma in Youth and Community work in UCC. The course itself is ok, it is different than the first leadership access course I was involved in previously because there is no other Traveller on the course with me but that's fine too. Hopefully by May of 2017 I will have my Diploma in Youth and Community work completed.

## Paige O'Sullivan (Childcare Assistant)

Hi my name is Paige O' Sullivan and started a CE scheme in the crèche in TVG in November 2015. I really like working in the crèche and I have started going to college in the evenings doing my Level 5 in Childcare. I have 6 modules completed now and I am hoping to have the 8 modules done by September 2017. I like working in TVG because it's a really nice place to work and it's different every day and I'm always learning something new.



*Mahon equine youth group- Hop Island August 2016*

## 6. Childcare Centre

Since 2007 the TVG Goras Community Crèche has been in operation, offering affordable and high quality childcare to children from the Traveller Community. We have since opened our service up to children from the settled community so we now provide a place for children from diverse backgrounds to play and learn together in a safe environment where every child and their family are celebrated and welcomed. We still have a strong foundation in celebrating the unique Traveller culture.

### **Here are some of our developments from the past year:**

- This year we employed a third member of full time staff
- We held our first preschool graduation in June of this year with five children, two of whom are from the Traveller Community, participating.
- We started the ECCE programme for the third year and have eight participants, five of whom are members of the Traveller community.
- Ongoing FETAC level 5 training in childcare by one of our Community Employment staff.
- One of our full time employees also went back to finish her FETAC level 6.
- This year has been a busy one with a great participation from families of the Traveller community. In 2016 we provided care for 35 families in total. A total of 15 of these families were from the Traveller Community and 20 families from the Settled Community. The families from the Settled Community vary from Irish, African, Polish, Lithuanian and Russian families.
- All employees received new uniforms which are embroidered with the TVG logo.
- We took part in various fundraising initiatives which are aimed at helping children become active citizens through encouraging them to stand up for their peers. These would include National Pyjama Day and Cheerio's Childline Breakfast.
- This year we attempted to get a Parent/Toddler group up and running on Friday afternoons but the response was very poor.
- This year we had the crèche redecorated with the help of Tús.
- Work was also completed on the backyard area with Capital funding we received from Pobal. A new astroturf surface was laid and a new wall built and painted.
- This year we held our first Christmas fair, we invited members of the community and also advertised within the city area, participation on the day was strong from within the Traveller community and all money raised on the day was for the crèche.
- We continue to enjoy a strong professional relationship with other services and members of the Traveller community through outreach and also our participation in the 0-3 network and the Anti-bias network.



*(TVG Goras Crèche Staff Team)*



At play



Sand pit fun!



Halloween play



Outdoors play

- The crèche had their annual outing to the Glen Resource Centre in April as part of the Fun day with the Mayfield/Glen Network. This proved to be a huge success with a large number of participants from both the families and members of the wider TVG staff. We also had a fun day at Christmas with a Santa visit and the children singing songs.

#### **Over the coming year we are hoping:**

- To continue to run the ECCE programme.
- To support the Community Employment staff who are currently with us to further their education and to have more people come on board through CE.
- We hope to begin a Parent/Toddler group within the setting to members of both the Traveller and Settled Community.
- To have at least one staff member attend a Lámh training course.
- To begin the Happy Talk programme.

- To work with the Beag project again.
- To secure funding to allow us to be more financially sustainable.
- Continue to work and engage with the Traveller community.

#### **Obstacles:**

- Funding is always an issue for us and we constantly look for new ways to provide a quality service on a shoestring budget. New legislation means that CE participants cannot make up part of the child: adult ratios so we will need to find funding for a Childcare Assistant or reduce the number of families we can cater to.
- The number of children from the Traveller Community who use the service in the afternoon time has dropped and through outreach we hope to entice people from the community back into TVG to avail of either the crèche or the Pre-school.

## 7. Health Development Programme

### Ciara Ridge, Jan–May 2016 & Caroline Vasseur, June–Dec 2016 (Traveller Health Coordinator)

In 2016 the TVG health team, made up of 3 Health Development workers, 4 Traveller Community Health workers, 1 Community Employment (CE) Men's development worker and the TVG Health Coordinator, continued to progress and develop initiatives to support the health of the Traveller community in Cork.

The work of the 3 Health Development workers focuses on building capacity with Travellers in the community, through outreach to halting sites and houses, group-based activities, and family and individual support work around a very wide range of issues. Group activities are based on the self-identified needs of Travellers and the key findings of the All Ireland Traveller Health study report (2010) and vary from Travellers' participation in adult education programs, in health and well-being programs and workshops, and in developmental projects which require leadership skills from those involved. The workers also have an advocacy role and represent the Traveller community's needs at committee level with a broad range of statutory and voluntary services in Cork. Extensive committee and interagency work took place throughout 2016, with our aim being to help bring about better outcomes for Travellers in the areas of accommodation, education, access to health services, and support for Traveller culture and heritage. A section further on in this report highlights the work achieved in 2016 through each of these committees.

There has been a significant increase of Travellers' requests for support with accessing accommodation in 2016, and the health development workers have deployed time to take on individual case work and support families at risk of eviction and persons in homelessness and families living without facilities as basic as electricity or toilets. The severe, crippling accommodation crisis which is affecting many Traveller families in Cork has led the TVG to seek the support of local city councillors to help advocate for these families. The TVG staff team meets with Cork city councillors on a quarterly basis to brief public representatives about issues affecting Travellers in Cork and seek their support.

In 2016, the Health Development workers have also led and facilitated a number of educational and developmental initiatives. Ten men and twelve women participated in adult education and received QQI and Fetac level 3 and 4 awards for their achievements. Their courses encompassed education in literacy, computer training, maths, communication and personal effectiveness.

The year 2016 also saw a great boost in TVG's youth programs, particularly the youth equine programs in Spring and Summer. These programs, led by TVG's Traveller men's development workers and supported by a variety of other agencies, brought 12 to 16 years old Traveller children from Mahon, Spring Lane and Blackpool/Fairhill out to equestrian centres in Ballyspillane and Hop Island for 6 weeks programs in horse care and horse riding skills, as well as three separate summer outings to Hop Island in August 2016.

TVG's CE men's development worker Tom O'Sullivan also gave hands-on support to a number of initiatives, including the equine programs and the homework clubs in Meelagh community centre, Mahon. Tom also had the task of keeping our family data base up to date throughout the year. He is currently on the Youth and Community Work diploma course in UCC and we look forward to seeing Tom develop his role and career in the near future.

In 2016, two key pieces of community-based collective work with Traveller men have begun to take shape: the forming of a local Traveller horse owners association and training and consultations on conflict and violence within the community. These initiatives will be further developed by TVG's men's development workers throughout 2017.

Over the years, the TVG has strived to meet the needs of Traveller men for better living conditions, for better health and well-being, and for access to information, adult education, training and employment. However there are still important gaps in service provision. Most Traveller men are at a significant disadvantage in Irish society; in terms of their life expectancy, mental health, educational attainment, and access to training and jobs. Traveller men are particularly stigmatized within Irish society and we have a role in ensuring that other



TVG Staff Team, National End Domestic Violence Campaign 2016

organisations work pro-actively at reaching and including Traveller men as part of their services.

This year TVG development workers who work directly with Traveller men have begun to meet to discuss how we can better support men in achieving real changes for their health and life opportunities. We are reviewing and assessing the work of the TVG with Traveller men across geographical areas in the city over the past 10 years, in order to identify gaps in opportunities and service provision. This review of TVG's city-wide engagement with Traveller men, and the needs and gaps identified, will form the bones of a new TVG strategy for Traveller Men's development and support work in 2017.

The 4 Traveller Community Health Workers, who each work part-time, focus their work on engaging the community around Primary Health Care. Each worker has been assigned geographical areas within which they access Traveller families through outreach and through becoming involved in existing women's groups as well as supporting the establishment of new groups and programmes. A large part of the Traveller community health workers' role involves keeping Travellers informed about and linked in with health services in Cork, as well as actively delivering health promotion programs. This year, the workers have delivered asthma awareness workshops to Traveller women's groups across the city and through TVG's link with the Sexual Health Centre in Cork, a number of sexual health information sessions designed for different ages. Through TVG's involvement with the Cork Cancer Action group and the Irish Cancer Society, the workers organised several city-wide cancer prevention coffee mornings to raise awareness of

skin cancer, breast and cervical cancer, and ovarian cancer. The workers also organised and led walking groups as well as a ladies' soccer program which was a debut for the TVG.

The Traveller Community Health workers have spent the last part of the year reviewing their healthy eating program and resources to incorporate all relevant trends and materials gathered over the past year (such as the food pyramid and portion size information, Glycaemic Index (GI) diet guidelines, diabetes dietary advice) into one healthy food choices community education workshop. At the same time in 2016, the Southern Traveller Health Network issued a report on their research into Traveller women's food choices and levels of physical activity. This inspiring piece of research highlights the challenges experienced by Traveller women in creating change around dietary habits, the maintenance of a healthy weight and involvement in physical activity. The findings make strong links between the capacity for women to make changes in their life style habits and that of their families and the many stressors that impact on Traveller women's lives and health, ranging from their experience of poverty and discrimination, poor self-esteem, and social pressures effecting on them. This research sheds a new light on how Traveller health projects and workers can work more effectively with families around helping to address problems of ill-health via food and lack of physical activity, by incorporating personal development and positive mental health elements to our healthy eating programs.

The work of the health team is depicted in more detail throughout each staff members input in this report. As we report each and every year,

while our work leads to many positive actions and developments for Travellers in Cork, it also continues to be challenging because of the large number of families and persons that need support.

2017 will be a testing year for the TVG as we are planning on tackling a number of emerging needs and themes as part of our health development program. Our hopes and goals for the coming year are to identify, build and support leaders amongst the community, particularly amongst young Travellers and Traveller men. Furthermore, no organisation is ever perfect. While we strive to engage widely with the Cork Traveller community across all areas, we are also conscious that we might not be reaching everyone that would like to be involved in the TVG's activities and services. Another aim for 2017 is to broaden our outreach work by using the TVG family data base and to try and engage families and persons who traditionally would not have been as involved in the life of the project.

## Breda O' Donoghue (Part Time Women's Health Development Worker)

I work in TVG part time (14hrs) Job share – My role is to work with Traveller women around health and education development. My work includes advocacy work, group work, and one to one support to families around accommodation issues. I also deliver Traveller Cultural Awareness Training to agencies across the city and county and I am also the chairperson on the Traveller Visibility Group board of management.

### Group Work

The Farranree women's group was set up in 2002 and it has 13 members. It has done various different health activities over the years such as:

- health screenings
- Relaxation
- Healthy eating
- Swim and gym
- Massage



Receiving Fetac Awards



Protesting on World Anti-racism Day, March 2016



Gerard McDonagh- woodwork classes Churchfield November 2016)



Martin McCarthy- Woodwork classes November 2016

In 2015 one of the members of the group took on a lead role and is now facilitating the group on a weekly basis. This year, the group organised placards and took part in the anti-racism march in Cork. The group also wrote stories about accommodation issues that are affecting the lives of Travellers in Cork, these stories were read at the accommodation conference held by TVG in April. These stories were also used in a play performed by the Speak Out Theatre Company. Over the last 3 years, 5 members of the group and 7 other participants have been involved in various different courses in TVG. In October 2016, 12 women received Fetac level 3 and 4 certificates in computer training, communications, personal effectiveness and maths.

### Challenges for 2017

- Funding to keep the groups running
- To support women to complete a full Fetac award
- To support participants in accessing further training
- To support participants in accessing Employment

The Young Women's Forum has met 4 times over the last year and took part in various developmental activities like discussing Traveller history and the history of Traveller projects both local and national. They also took part in some soft options like cinema, swim and gym and relaxation. The aim of this group is to identify young group leaders who will take part in a leadership course in 2017 and possibly get more involved in the work of TVG and various regional Traveller health and development committees.

### Accommodation work

There are a number of accommodation committees in the city and county that I sit on including:

- Local Traveller Accommodation consultative committee(LTACC)
- Higher level interagency committee
- Spring Lane site oversight interagency group

The higher level interagency committee meets bi-monthly and consists of representatives from health, education, youth, employment, and accommodation, it also has reps from both the Traveller organisations in the city and it is chaired by former Minister of State for Primary Care, Mental Health and Disability, Kathleen Lynch.

The (LTACC) meets bi-monthly and is made up of local councillors, council officials and members of the Traveller community. The role of the LTACC is to consult with Travellers around accommodation issues and look at ways to improve the extremely poor living conditions of Travellers in cork. In 2016 the TVG held a number of meetings with local councillors and members of the Traveller community to try to address the accommodation issues across the city. It also gives Travellers the opportunity to meet their local representatives in their area and become familiar with who will be representing them at a local level.

As a follow on from my work on accommodation committees I link in with families and keep them updated on issues that come up, I also support families to make contact with relevant agencies such as the Traveller Accommodation Unit (Cork City Council) Homeless unit, Threshold and letting agencies.

## John O'Sullivan (Part Time Traveller Men's Development)

### **Furniture Making Woodwork Classes with North side group:**

7 Traveller men participated in furniture building wood work classes for 6 weeks in November 2016 in the Churchfield Community Trust. This group built and donated a "Horse Chair" to the TVG Goras Crèche to be used as an annual Christmas raffle.

### **Outreach Work to Cork Prison**

During 2016, in-reach work in Cork prison with Traveller men continued. A Traveller men only group was formed that met once a week in the education unit. The group varies from 10 to 15 Traveller men. The group involves Traveller Cultural awareness sessions, literacy with Traveller materials and Traveller DVD's. In May 2016, a week of events took place in the prison to mark Traveller Pride Week. A mass of remembrance was organised by the men's group who sang songs and prepared Mass cards for friends and relatives who have passed on. A 5 a side soccer event was organised and took place in the PE hall. A session on mental health

was organised which gave the Traveller men an opportunity to raise awareness and concerns about issues that are leading to increased levels of suicide in the community. During the week long events a Traveller display was organised where Traveller men displayed artwork, pottery, woodwork projects and a Traveller barrel top wagon.

### **Drama play with Michael Collins-The mobile October 2016**

In October 2016, a men's only event was organised by the TVG to look at Traveller feuding and issues of domestic violence in the Traveller community. This event was during the international campaign to mark the 16 days of violence against women campaign. Traveller actor and play wright Michael Collins performed the drama play "The Mobile" about Peter, a young Traveller man who gets caught up in a family feud and is forced to fight his best friend to settle a feud. 25 Traveller men attended the event. Chris McDonagh from the Tipperary Traveller Conflict and Mediation Service gave a key note speech around domestic violence and Traveller feuding. The Traveller men in attendance engaged in dialogue through a Q and A session afterwards.



*Michael Collins Plan, The Mobile*



*The Buccaneer – early stages*



*Traveller Horse Association visit to ISPCA Centre in Mallow November 2016*



*The Buccaneer – end product*



*Spring Lane youth equine summer programme in Hop Island - August 2016*



*Mahon youth Traveller Equine Programme Ballyspillane Stables, May 2016*



*Men's Group collecting Back to Education Certs, September 2017*



*Fairhill youth Equine Education Programme in Hop Island, September 2017*



*Celebrating Traveller Music Gig*

### **Buccaneer project June 2016**

John Berry a Traveller man from East Cork was contracted by the Traveller Culture Sub-committee to build a bespoke miniature Buccaneer caravan. This project was part of the local Traveller pride week events in June 2016 and also part of the Cork Heritage week in August 2016. It took nearly 4 months to build and is currently on display in the Traveller exhibition room in Fitzgerald's Park in Cork city.

### **Traveller Horse Project updates**

In 2016 the TVG has continued to engage with Traveller men around horse ownership. 6 Traveller men have come together to form a Traveller horse owners association and be part of a future Traveller grazing project in Cork city through the Horse Initiative Steering Group. They have met with the Tipperary Rural Traveller Project's Horse owners association and visited the ISPCA Grazing Project in Mallow Co Cork in November 2016.

## **Traveller Equine Education Programmes**

A pilot programme was run with young Travellers aged 12-16 from Mahon in May 2016 for 6 weeks. This involved 2 sessions per week; one out in the Ballyspillane horse stables in Middleton and one in the Meelagh Community Centre with a tutor learning equine skills around groom, feeding, worming and treating injuries. This group was also involved in a summer outing to Hop Island in August 2016. The two remaining programmes were run in September 2016 with Spring Lane and Fairhill groups. They took place in Hop Island equestrian centre. Both programmes ran for 6 weeks. While on these programmes the participants had a more hands on experience with the horses learning about horse riding, show jumping, grooming, feeding, and lunging. This group was also involved in a summer outing to Hop Island Centre in August 2016. The 3 Equine Education Programmes were supported with free transport through the Community Garda Bus in Mayfield.

## **Back to Education Initiatives in TVG 2016**

10 Traveller men received their QQI awards at an awards event in TVG in September 2016. 12 Traveller men participated in Back to Education Initiatives; they completed modules in literacy and computers. The classes took place in TVG on a weekly basis over 10 week which all the men really enjoyed and it gave them a positive and welcoming experience of education. They, along with the Farranree Traveller Women's group, received their awards from Denis Barrett and Sandra Brett from Cork Education Training Board in September 2016

## **Traditional Traveller Music Event**

TVG, through the Blanchardstown Traveller Development group, organised a Traditional Traveller music event in the Spailpin Fanac in August 2016 as part of national Heritage week 2016.

## **Challenges and Goals for 2017**

Following the success of the "Rings of Hope" booklet the TVG men's groups will look to create a DVD animation to look at feuding and domestic violence. It is hoped that it will be used as a resource tool to engage men's groups in dialogue and create

awareness about the impact feuding and domestic violence has on the community.

In 2017 it is hoped that a Traveller horse grazing project will be formed. This has been a long process to date working with Traveller horse owners to create a Traveller Horse Association, organising trips to national horse projects in Dublin and Kerry, and equine education initiatives with Traveller Youth in Mahon, Spring Lane and Fairhill groups.

## **TJ Hogan (Voluntary Men's Development Worker)**

Over the past two years within TVG I have been working voluntarily with Traveller men. Towards the end of 2016 I applied for the part time position as Men's Development Worker and will start in this role in early 2017 as a job share with John O'Sullivan. Over the past two years I have been involved in numerous men's groups such as:

- Traveller Horse initiative steering group
- Accommodation issues
- Health talks
- Health awareness
- Health checks
- Football groups
- Gym groups
- Literacy and computers
- Cork city marathon
- Youth work
- Promoting education with TVG & C.I.T

My time over the past two years had huge success with running groups and the key to that success was the engagement between staff here in TVG and the community. The groups always interacted with the information that was given. I have learned over the past two years that men work better side-to-side rather than face-to-face. This learning allowed for an approach to be taken to allow very sensitive information at the time to be delivered. During my time with TVG I have seen more men that are taking positive actions within their community and becoming a strong voice with the Travelling

community. This allows a space where men can come together to share experiences.

I have noticed through my work that men tend to slack off half way through a programme. This is down to a number of issues such as:

- Childcare
- Family commitments
- Not mixing with other Travellers
- Feuding
- Health
- Time the groups are running will not suit everyone.

However, in my view there are a lot of positives that weigh out these difficulties. There have been many highlights over the past two years and men's work will only strive forward in 2017.

## Caroline Vasseur, Jan-June 2016 (Health Development Worker)

### Individual/family generic support work

A large part of TVG's work is to offer individual and collective support and advocacy to Travellers in Cork in relation to whole range of issues and difficulties. Common issues which we are called on to support individual and families with range from accommodation and health difficulties on halting sites and non-official sites, accessing replacement caravans, situations of homelessness, accessing social housing and using the choice based letting scheme, threats of and actual evictions from non official sites, liaising with solicitors firms, advocacy work with TUSLA's family services and child case

conferencing, supporting access to free legal aid, difficulties with or refusals of social welfare benefits applications and supporting persons with their appeals, and liaising with schools.

The role of supporting the community with individual difficulties is generally shared within the health team, with more responsibility placed on TVG's health development workers. With a significant increase in Travellers' self-referrals and referrals from other services for needed support work in the past year, particularly in the area of accommodation and homelessness advocacy work, there continues to be a need in the TVG for more resources to be allocated for this specific role in order to achieve more prompt and better outcomes on what are often complex situations.

### Youth creative writing and music project

In Autumn 2016, 6 boys and girls (13 to 17 yrs.) from the Spring Lane site got together with Garry McCarthy of GMC beats to write and perform two songs 'Remember' and 'I love that feeling'. The songs speak about the young people's day-to-day thoughts and feelings like all teenagers but are also rooted in their experiences as Traveller children living in Ireland. These songs can be listened to on Soundcloud and links are also available on TVG's Facebook page Cork Traveller Visibility Group.

### Spring Lane site strategy work 2016

The Spring Lane site accommodation strategy was set up in 2014 by residents of Spring Lane, the TVG and the Cork Traveller Women's Network, to advocate for decent living conditions for the people of the Spring Lane halting site. This piece of advocacy work, which is steered by a working 'strategy' group made up of resident representatives



Shower facility on Spring Lane Halting Site



Youth rap group



Visit to Labre Park



Spring Lane site residents at accommodation march in Dublin

and Cork Traveller groups' workers, has continued to receive interest and support from equality and human-rights based organisations in Ireland and abroad as well as the wider public throughout 2016.

In January and February 2016, the strategy group drew up a new Manifesto aimed at election candidates and attended a number of meetings with local candidates in the run up to the election.

The group received valuable support and guidance from UCC's Law Department and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to further identify the basic rights of the people residing on Spring Lane which to this day remain unmet by the State. Parents decided to collectively write to the Irish Ombudsman for children to highlight the effects of the extremely poor conditions on site on the health and the life expectancy of their children. This work was greatly supported by UCC's Law Department who assigned a PHD student, Ms. Samantha Williams, to conduct this piece of work with the working group and the residents.

In April 2016, the documentary film '26 Years of Hardship: Spring Lane Halting Site' was screened in the Triskel Christ Church cinema in Cork city as part of the Lifelong Learning Festival and received further public support.

In June of this year, the residents of Spring Lane had the well-deserved honour to be awarded the national Traveller Pride award in community work, in recognition of their leadership and their continual involvement in their campaign. Later that month, residents were visited by actor John Connors and film maker Liam McGrath as part of the making of 'I am Traveller' documentary series.

In July 2016, Spring Lane resident representatives travelled to the Labre park site in Ballyfermot, Dublin, to meet with residents and community workers and discuss common experiences and a shared vision for a campaign of actions for decent living conditions.

Throughout the year, the strategy group continued to engage in regular correspondence and meetings with council officials regarding progressing the recommendations of the Respond! Report and the recommendations of the Spring Lane site manifesto. Representatives from the strategy group attended the Local Traveller Accommodation Committee, briefing meetings with councillors, and Traveller interagency meetings.

In summer 2016, the chair of the Traveller interagency high-level group proposed to form a working group to agree proposals to alleviate the accommodation crisis on site. Despite our disappointment that none of the resident representatives were invited to take part in this planning work, Breda O'Donoghue, Chair of the TVG Management Board and Bridget Carmody, Coordinator of the Cork Traveller Women's Network, attended the meetings between June and December and worked closely with the Spring Lane site strategy steering group to ensure as best as possible that the proposals made by the group gave consideration to the essential needs of the residents as featuring in the Manifesto document.

During that time and to assist this process, the Spring Lane strategy group also conducted a new full survey of the people living on Spring Lane and of their immediate emergency needs as well as future accommodation choices. This work was guided by UCC's social science department following a consultation, and presented to Minister for Housing Simon Coveney in early 2017.

We are hopeful for 2017, and look forward to further work with the residents, the local authority and with Respond! around consultations and planning, and to the prompt delivery of the proposals made by Cork City Council. This year we would like to thank all those who have showed their continued support for the residents accommodation campaign: the Irish Traveller Movement and its members, the Traveller Health Unit, UCC Law and Social science



*Spring Lane site residents at 2016 National Traveller pride Awards*



*Cakes made by Togher Women's Group*



*Health checks with Togher Women's Group*



*Coffee morning, 96 fm's radiothon for cancer*

departments, the Children's Rights Alliance, the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission, Niall Crowley and Damien Peelo, Senator Colette Kelleher, TD Jonathan O'Brien, Cork city councillors, the Triskel Art centre, CESCA, and all other voluntary organisations, journalists and members of the public who have helped highlight the long crisis experienced by the residents.

**Traveller Pride Week Nominations 2016**

The TVG and Cork Traveller Women's Network

put forward two national Traveller Pride Awards nominations in 2016: the first for the Spring Lane site residents group to be awarded the Community Award, and a second nomination for Timothy Joseph Hogan in recognition of his educational achievement and volunteering work with the Cork Traveller community. I am delighted to say both nominations were successful and nominees received their Awards as part of the national Traveller Pride celebrations in Dublin on June 1st.

## Elizabeth McGrath (Traveller Community Health Worker)

Hi my name is Elizabeth McGrath I work as a Traveller community health worker in TVG; I have been working here for five years. I work as part of a team of four, we each work with families in different areas of the city, I work with Traveller families in the Southside such as Straight Rd halting site, Hazelwood Grove group housing estate, Togher, Ballyphehane, Wilton, Douglas and Rochestown. My work involves regular outreach to these families to identify their health needs and work out ways to support them as a health worker. I also link with services regularly to act as a link between Travellers and services, to provide information to Travellers and encourage them to gain access to health services.

### **Togher Women's Group**

The Togher women's group is a group of ten women from Togher, Wilton, Douglas, Hazelwood Grove and Ballyphehane. This group meets weekly for two hours one evening a week. I see this group as a group of women who like to get together weekly to have time to themselves, to socialise with each other and who are also interested in the health and well-being. Quarterly within this group we have a "planning session" where we decide as a group what we will do for the next coming months. I think this works well because it gives the women an opportunity to have some input into the group and it gives me time to plan ahead for the group. As a health worker, I bring in health professionals regularly to the group as part of their well-being. Some of the work the group has been involved this year includes:

- The women completed a ten week course of swimming lessons in Bishopstown leisure centre.
- The group did a six week stress relief and relaxation programme.
- Health evening i.e. a cardio vascular nurse, Irish Cancer society, Nutritionist.
- Christmas cakes decoration.

The Togher women's group have held their weekly meetings in the Togher youth centre but due to changes in staff they no longer have that room available. The group were without a meeting room

for a number of weeks but we still managed to meet up as often as we could to keep the group together. We were able to book a meeting room in Togher, although it is not a suitable room for the group because it is a bit small and has no facilities. Numbers have dropped within this group in recent months possibly due to small meeting room, this group continue to meet regularly and are determined to keep group up and running.

### **Plans for this group for 2017**

- Secure better building to meet weekly
- Invite new members to join group
- Deliver Asthma workshop
- Deliver SCIDS information to group.

### **Asthma Training**

I took part in asthma training with local and regional TCHWs. The health workers and I did a workshop on Asthma to TVG staff and continue to bring this awareness to the community. We have delivered this to a number of groups throughout the community in the last year and have some groups outstanding for 2017. We also give this information to the community while on outreach. I find this very important and useful because there is a high rate of asthma within the Traveller community.

Myself and the other TCHWs have decided to pair up to deliver workshops across the city. I have worked with Bidy to deliver this information to the community in Mahon. As part of the training we were given an information pack which has demonstration inhalers and information cards. I find this pack useful as sometimes visuals work best with people. Correct usage of inhalers and what to do in the case of an attack is very important information to know.

### **Plan for 2017**

- Continue to deliver to community
- Deliver Asthma workshop to Togher women's group.
- Continue to give information one to one



*Women's group activities and workshops*

## **Acupuncture**

As I have been trained to deliver Acupuncture I teamed up with a staff member Rachel (also trained). We decided to work together and set up a six week walk in session programme in TVG. This worked well and we hope to run it again in 2017. I am hoping to deliver acupuncture one to one with the community by visiting them in their homes if requested. Acupuncture is a method of encouraging the body to promote functioning. This is done by inserting needles at very precise acupuncture points. Acupuncture can be very effective and very soothing for the individual. Other benefits of acupuncture include:

- Reduces Cravings
- Reduces stress
- Better sleep patterns.



*Drugs awareness workshop for children*

## **Cancer Awareness workshops**

We decided to hold monthly workshops around different types of Cancers. So far we held Breast awareness, ovarian Cancer, skin cancer and cervical cancer. We invited Eimear from the Irish Cancer Society in to do an awareness session in TVG. There was a good turnout as we had 10 women of mixed ages. Eimear Cotter from the Irish Cancer Society discussed breast cancer, liver cancer which the group were very interested in and were very open to discussion. We also held a coffee morning in aid of 96 fm's radiothon to raise money for Cancer services in Cork. This is our second year of supporting the cause. We held the event in TVG, had a cake sale, paper flower making and a raffle. There was a good turnout on the day and we raised €190.

## **Glycaemic Index (G.I) Diet**

The TCHWs worked on the G.I diet a lot in 2016. We met regularly with our Health Coordinator to discuss putting together an information pack for the community. The G.I is a rating system for foods containing carbohydrates. It shows how quickly each food affects your blood sugar (glucose) level when that food is eaten on its own. We hope to deliver information around this to the community as part of a healthy eating program we are putting together for 2017. This will include healthy meal options, portion sizes, and sugar content in selected foods, nutrition information, easy cooking demos and shopping on a budget. We are going to link in with STHN around the food research they carried out with Traveller women and hope to work with them on this.

## **Young women's forum**

I worked with Breda O' Donoghue and Jean in setting up a young women's citywide forum. We met with these women every six weeks. We held workshops with them which were focused on building their leadership skills in order to progress their community. The group also supported the "violence against women" campaign where we showed the animation DVD of the 'Rings of Hope' and had discussion about the campaign. We had another few women come forward from this group to take part in different areas of work in TVG including becoming a rep on the LTACC. We have selected a number of women we feel are ready to go

forward to the next step, we hope to run a leadership programme for these women in 2017.

## **Other work in 2016**

Setting up of the Fairhill women's soccer group with TCHWs; this was a group of 12 women who met weekly to have soccer training, we had a good number of women of different ages, we worked with Fiona who practised with the women every week, it was great fun and a good source of exercise.

Linking in with homeless services i.e. Cork Penny Dinners and the Cork Simon community.

3 step short video clip with National Traveller Mabs, about how we work with our local Mabs in sharing information and advice on household budgeting within the community.

Held an information workshop with the Drugs and Alcohol Worker in Fairhill with young Traveller children in the area following a report of children picking up used needles in the area. The session started with some general information, and then they did an exercise where they had to be detectives and find the drugs waste in pictures. The session ended with the kids doing a role play of what to do if they came across anything again.

I enjoy my work as a Traveller Community Health worker; I enjoy working with the community and seeing new ideas developing within the community. I can also see some changes within the community around healthier choices. I will continue to provide health care information to the community; to support and promote our culture; and to help Travellers gain access to health services.

## **Biddy McDonagh (Traveller Community Health Worker)**

I started back to work on the 12th September 2016 after one year of absence. As a starting point, I reconnected with the Traveller inter agency education sub group and quickly became involved in the planning of the Traveller Education Seminar which took place in the City hall on 11th Oct 2016. Over 100 people were in attendance. We had members of the Traveller community speaking on the day and we held workshops in the afternoon to discuss issues that came up during the morning



(Friday morning Mahon Women's group- November 2016)

presentations and any recommendations that needed to go forward. I hope this will be an annual event as it gives Travellers a great boost of pride and will identify role models for young Travellers in the education.

### **Asthma awareness**

I delivered an asthma awareness workshop to the Friday morning women's group in Mahon in December 2016. 10 women attended the workshop and we showed them all the different inhalers and how they are used. We explained trigger symptoms and gave the participants contact details for the asthma clinic in CUH and explained the traffic light system. The women said they were not aware of the traffic light system, and will be more aware of the triggers and symptoms in the future. We got great feedback and the women said they enjoyed the session.

### **Group work**

I support the Friday morning women's group in Mahon. 11 women attend. They are young mothers and grandmothers who meet every Friday morning; it is a social outlet for them. A TCHW and I delivered a workshop for the 16 days campaign against gender-based violence and we had a big discussion about violence against women in the Traveller Community. We also made a poster with a slogan saying 'WE say no to violence'. We took pictures of the women holding the poster and this will be sent to the international organising group to support the 16 days campaign against gender-based violence.

### **Challenges**

Living and working in the community and being

related to most of the people I engage with does present its own challenges, but I overcome such challenges with the support I get from all my work colleagues in TVG, and with the support of the Traveller community in the area I work.

### **Goals for 2017**

I would like to familiarise myself with all the TVG policies which were written or updated while I was on extended leave and make sure I use these policies in my day to day work in and out of TVG.

I hope to work more with the Meelagh project and support the women to access any activities or groups that will be held in the Meelagh centre. I hope to continue to support the Friday morning group and the Traveller community in the area where I work, by delivering health topic programmes that will be relevant to their life style.

I hope to continue to work as part of a team with the other TCHWs and the wider health team in TVG around exploring ways of getting the Traveller community to be more aware of good health choices and support them in maintaining such choices.

I would like to see more supports put in place for Traveller children in schools and more young Travellers going to third level education, and their achievements being highlighted so they are seen as role models for young Travellers.

I would like to see Traveller culture celebrated in schools and more schools take up the yellow flag programme.

I hope to see Travellers being more vocal for their rights in the future and discrimination being outlawed for all Travellers.

## Jean O' Donoghue (Traveller Community Health Worker)

### Women's Groups

My first women's group came from the outreach work I had done in Farranree. They asked me to support them get up and running. It became the Fairhill Women's group. We linked with a lot of services to get information about health and did small workshops on issues like breast checks, cervical checks, diabetes and the menopause. We also had walking and gym/swim groups. This group came to a halt as the participants temporarily moved abroad. It left the group very small (only two participants) which I switched to an already existing group, the Farranree Traveller Women's group. The new members are getting on well with the larger group but also will be linking back with their original group when they return.

### Shine a Light suicide awareness work

I sit on the Shine a Light committee. In this position I work with the community and other organisations getting the word out about suicide prevention. I am involved with fund raising. I was involved in the planning of the Treadmill Challenge. This gave me the opportunity to get the word back to my community about suicide. I also worked with a team to organise the "Movember fundraising challenge" which is about raising awareness about early prostate cancer prevention. It would be good to have Traveller men involved with this in the future to work together with each other and to support each other. At the moment men in the Traveller community are very hard to engage with so this would be a way to break the barrier, going forward.

### Health information workshops

We gave once off asthma workshops to three different groups: the Spring Lane Women's groups (older and younger), the Mayfield Women's group and the Fairhill Women's Group. I also worked with the Sexual Health Centre and the Sexual Violence Centre to give one off workshops to Traveller women's groups. I hope to deliver more in the future.



Health checks with Togher Women's Group



Shine A Light Threadmill Challenge- Merchants Quay October 2016

### Challenges

My challenges are literacy and computer skills. I do not let them get in my way as I have a lot of support and I also attend reading and writing classes. I hope to improve in the future. The other challenges were getting the community motivated to participate in and support the Cork Women's Mini Marathon and the Treadmill Challenge. I am hoping that this will change in the future and they will see the benefits.

## Goals for the future

At the moment we are organising a boot camp among the Traveller community health workers team and are hoping to have a lot of women on board for the future. We are also facing a challenge getting the information out about ADA-SCIDS (Severe Combined Immuno-Deficiency) to the Traveller community as we know this affects babies, and the risk of ADA-SCID in the Irish Traveller community is much higher than in the general population. We are also involved in rewriting our healthy eating community program. It has changed this year as there is a new food pyramid out so I will be working with the health team to get the updated information to deliver the programme to groups. We are planning to have a walk in morning at Cuanlee Refuge and Edel House to give support to Traveller women residing there. At the moment, we are supporting a group of young women to work towards the FETAC Level 5 certificate in personal development.

## Nora Cash (Traveller Community Health Worker)

My name is Nora Cash and I am a Traveller community health care worker in TVG for the past 6 years. In this time I have developed a good working relationship with Traveller families in Cork. I go out

and about on outreach to Traveller families in halting sites and in houses and to services. I make time with Traveller families for one to one support work if needed and my role is to help link Traveller families to services.

## General city-wide health information workshops

The TCHW's and I put on health programmes in TVG and invited Traveller families from all areas of Cork city to attend. In 2016 we organised a breast and liver cancer awareness session, attended by 10 women; a cervical and ovarian cancer awareness session, attended by 8 women; and a diabetes checks and awareness session attended by 10 women. We also provided other health information and awareness workshops such as asthma, sexual health, healthy eating, and parenting/child development information to local Traveller women's groups across the city throughout the year.

## Health and fitness programmes

I also got involved with women's groups by putting on block health and fitness programs such as walking groups, women's soccer (10 women), and zumba classes for the Mayfield (8 participants) and Spring Lane women (12 participants) groups. We also put on workshops to make the Traveller community more aware of the importance of health check-ups and how important it is to keep their appointment.



Women's' workshops



*Asthmas Awareness session with Spring Lane Women*

### **One to one support work**

As a Traveller community health worker we are here to support Traveller families if they would like us to attend appointments with them. We can offer this type of support and it makes a big difference to the Traveller community if they cannot read or write. We can support families with filling in forms for medical card or appointments or maybe just make a phone call for an older person who cannot hear well or that they don't understand the answering service on the phone.

### **Asthma awareness sessions**

We have also been delivering asthma sessions through women's groups, namely the Mayfield women's group (6/8 participants), the Spring Lane women group (10/12 participants), and the Farranree women's group (13 women). We have offered one to one asthma sessions to families and individuals.

### **Quit smoking programme**

Throughout 2016 I have given information to the Traveller community and in groups through outreach about the You Can Quit programme that was running in Mayfield. There was a big interest from some people. Two women in Mayfield started the programme and felt the programme was very good. We have new people waiting to start an upcoming programme soon.

### **Accommodation**

My role is to also give information to Traveller families around accommodation issues and link the families with services and other TVG staff. I link in with families from the homeless unit in Edel house. I am also involved in the Spring Lane campaign and in supporting families from Spring Lane halting site through the women's groups and outreach work on site.

### **Future goals**

In 2017, I will be linking in with the Healthy Minds project around the delivery of the Mind Your Head programme with the younger girls from Spring Lane. The TVG TCHW's have planned a programme around health and fitness called 'New Year, New You' which will run for 12 weeks. The programme will involve 3 weeks of nutrition, 3 weeks of walking, 3 weeks of boot camp and 3 weeks of weight tracking and feedback. Further work planned is around making changes to our healthy eating programme. We have linked in with the members of the Southern Traveller Health Network around their Food Choices and Physical Activity research (STHN/UCC public health) that they have been working on and are hoping to be linking in more with them in the future.



## Summary of TVG groups and health programs 2016

Name of Group/ program	Age group	Number of girls/ women	Number of boys/ men	Activities in 2016	Duration of TVG program	TVG key facilitator
Farranree Traveller women's Group	Adults	13	0	Relaxation; Fitness and aquarobics; Asthma awareness; Women's health training; Speak out drama workshop; Healthy eating program	Ongoing	Bridgie O'Reilly
Mayfield women's group	Adults	8	0	Zumba; Asthma awareness; Quit smoking program	Session- based only	Nora Cash/Jean O'Donoghue
Fairhill women's group	Adults	9	0	Walking group; Gym and swimming; Women's health information evenings	Until June 2016	Jean O'Donoghue
Togher women's group	Adults	9	0	Swimming; Relaxation; diabetes information session; women's health training; hand care and beauty; Christmas cake decoration Health evening.	session- based only	Liz McGrath (group leader Mary O'Brien)  Group supported by CTWN
Mahon Friday morning group	Adults	10	0	Asthma awareness; 16 days campaign against gender-based violence	Ongoing	Biddy McDonagh
Spring Lane women's group	Young adults	12	0	Asthma awareness; Women's health training; Zumba	Session- based only	Nora Cash; Group supported by CTWN
Ladies' soccer group	Young adults	10	0	Soccer training and fitness	8 weeks	Nora Cash/Liz McGrath/ Jean O'Donoghue
Fetac training levels 4 and 5	Adults	12	0	Computer training Personal effectiveness Maths Communications	14 weeks	Breda O'Donoghue
Young Women's Forum	Young adults	10	0	Discussion group History of Traveller movement  Community development principles  16 days against gender-based violence campaign	Ongoing	Breda O'Donoghue/ Liz McGrath/Jean O'Donoghue

<b>Name of Group/ program</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Number of girls/ women</b>	<b>Number of boys/ men</b>	<b>Activities in 2016</b>	<b>Duration of TVG program</b>	<b>TVG key facilitator</b>
Southside Men's soccer group	Adults	0	8	Soccer training and marathon relay team	Ongoing	John O'Sullivan
Fetac level 3 training	Adults	0	12	Computer training and literacy	10 weeks	John O'Sullivan
Woodwork group	Adults	0	7	Decorated chair making	6 weeks	John O'Sullivan
Meelagh men	Adults	0	5	Fitness and swimming	3 weeks	John O'Sullivan
Men's prison literacy group	Adults	0	10-15	Literacy; Traveller cultural awareness; Remembrance mass ; 5 a side soccer; Mental health awareness; art work	January-June 2016	John O'Sullivan
Traveller horse owners association	Adults	0	6	Traveller horse initiatives; grazing project work; attendance at inter-agency steering committee for Cork Traveller horse initiative	Ongoing	John O'Sullivan
Southside Teen gym Bishopstown	Youth	0	8	Fitness and swimming	6 weeks	Tom O'Sullivan
Northside Teen gym Churchfield	Youth	0	9	Fitness and swimming	6 weeks	Tom O'Sullivan
Rap Group	Youth	3	3	Creative song writing and performance	6 weeks	Caroline Vasseur
Mahon Equine programme	Youth	1	9	Horse care and horse riding skills	6 weeks + 1 summer day trip	John O'Sullivan/Tom O'Sullivan
Fairhill/Farranree Equine programme	Youth	0	12	Horse care and horse riding skills	6 weeks + 1 summer day trip	John O'Sullivan/Tom O'Sullivan
Spring Lane Equine programme	Youth	4	8	Horse care and horse riding skills	6 weeks + 1 summer day trip	John O'Sullivan/Tom O'Sullivan

## 8. Community Drugs and Alcohol programme

The TVG Support Project is open to everyone in the Traveller Community. We have a Family Support and Outreach Worker, Joan Nolan, a Community Drugs worker, Ann Jordan, and a Community Employment worker, Rachel Coffey. We all work part time. We can meet service users at TVG or somewhere where it is easier for them to meet.

The project supports people who are worried about drug use, alcohol use, gambling and other addictions in their families, with their brothers, sisters, children, or cousins, aunts and uncles. We work with people who are struggling themselves with addiction, and who are not sure where to go for help; and how to cut down or stop using what they are using, and doing what they are doing.

Often people are too nervous to talk to somebody outside their family because they think people will not understand, or they think that it is so difficult, and complicated, that it is not possible to actually get help. The TVG Support Project is an open door, and we offer listening and experience dealing with addiction services and other services.

The following chart gives you a sample of the types of substances that are being used in the community. The chart also tells you how many people got support from the project, and what drugs they had

problems with. This chart does not tell you how many people in the Traveller Community are having problems with drugs, alcohol, gambling etc. So, we work with the people that look for supports, there are a lot more people out there in the community who do not look for supports. People can ring Joan 0857550811 or Ann 086 6084659 to ask for help themselves, or services can ring us to refer somebody to our project.

This project offers people an opportunity to try something different, especially if you have not looked for help before. When you are new to meeting us, we always have to fill out some paperwork so you understand how we work, how confidential we are and so we can start creating a plan going forward. We fill out forms called initial assessments, and we work in a system called case management.

Joan and Ann, get clinical group supervision where we can discuss work, and make sure the work is guided most suitably. We are also supervised in TVG, but we do not share client information with all the TVG team. We offer supports through talking, but also through relaxation, or through practical activities organised by colleagues. The TVG space and approach is importantly culturally sensitive.

	Alcohol	Cannabis	Benzodiazapines eg. D5s, D10s Upjohns, Oxy's	Heroin	Gambling
<b>No. of people</b>	21	3	10	3	3

Figures from Jan – August 2016

<b>Support work with community drugs worker from Jan to August 2016</b>	<b>Support work with family support worker</b>
A total of 22 clients engaged with CDW	In 2016 8 females engaged in 1:1 work
16 clients engaged between Jan and April (13 male and 3 female )	
15 clients engaged between April and July (11 male and 4 female)	All females
Age range: 18 to 41 years	Aged from 23 years to 65 years
6 were new clients to the project	Only 2 clients were new to the service.
14 clients were referred into the project in 2016.	One of whom only engaged for 3 sessions.

Figures from Jan – August 2016

Here is a sample of some of the techniques we use in our work:

<b>1-1 Support Work</b>	<b>Family Support Work</b>
Keyworking, Case management	Keyworking and case management
AUDIT & DUDIT, BI, MI, Reduce the Use	5 Step Method
SAOR	Mindfulness, Acupuncture
Mindfulness, Acupuncture	ETB Community Education hours

In 2016 we found that people were struggling with the massive lack of appropriate accommodation. This problem especially effected people who had a parent in addiction, and clients who have previous charges. We found that it was extremely difficult for these clients to move forward with their accommodation needs. There is also a significant gap in Traveller specific accommodation options. This project also found that agencies are still slow, at times, to work cross departmentally or in an interagency style. We have found that strong communication between agencies helps the people we work with, because there are less blockages and people can be helped more transparently and quickly.



*Travelling to the Saor training event*



*Mindfulness*



*Mass for those suffering with addiction*



*Joan and Rachel at a family support event*

## 9. Development of St Anthony's Park Community Centre

St Anthony's Park is located on the edge of Knocknaheeny and Cork city. The old St Anthony's Park (formerly called Knocknaheeny Halting Site and Nashes Boreen) was closed in summer 2015. Families then moved into the brand new, purpose built, Group Housing Scheme across the road. It has 16 bays with either a house and a yard, or a living unit, and space for a trailer and yard. In general the living conditions are a vast improvement on the old St Anthony's Park. Families now have safe access to water, and safer access to their homes and their washing facilities. Families have more space, and adequate surfacing in their bay and between bays. A number of the families have a strong interest and livelihood in horses, and despite ongoing issues in relation to suitable accommodation for horses and other problems, families have kept up this livelihood, and indeed, parents are keen to make sure that these skills are passed down to the younger generations.

Along with the new accommodation, a new and important resource on St Anthony's is the Community Centre. In 2016 TVG took on to host a Community Development worker for the centre as part of the interagency steering group made up to develop the centre there. Initially Mary Hogan, also Community Development Worker in the Meelagh Traveller Group Housing Scheme in Mahon, worked at the centre for a small number of hours per week from April to July through hours provided by the Cork Education Training Board. In September, Ann Jordan took on the more full time roll of Community Development Worker at 30 hours a week for a 6 month contract following the recruitment process.

A large part of the role was organising the use of the Centre. The Centre first opened in Spring 2016. Mary Hogan, from the Cork Traveller Women's Network (CTWN) had been working alongside Jean O Donoghue (TCHW) and Ciara Ridge (TVG Project Coordinator) to start using the Centre. Mums and young women in particular had been using the centre for approximately two mornings per week. Women took part in relaxing activities like massage. A family fun day was held in June to officially open the centre and family members, younger and older, enjoyed the Balloon Man, Aarons Circus performing and face painting.

A large part of the work at St Anthony's Park, has been building relationships and organising ways of



*Cork Community Circus at St Anthony's Fun Day 2016*



*One of the lads placed the planters at the end of the group*



*Recycling an old car tyre*

using the Community Centre. Many residents have called the centre, the 'Youth Centre' but it has been difficult to organise a space for the young people with one worker. We did try an afterschools club, but it was too early in the relationship building, and it did not work out. The idea definitely has a lot of potential now though, as parents are very keen to offer support so that their children can use the centre.

In the early parts of 2017, with the support from the CETB, a group for the older teen lads who had left school was initiated by the worker. This went very well, with the 8 lads in that age group participating at some level. The lads played pool, listened to some music, and made planter pots and flower pots from old tyres.

During the course of the work on St Anthony's Park the key groupings of residents engaged with included: the parents, both mothers and fathers, the younger men, older teens and, to a lesser extent the young women. The Community Worker also met regularly with the children, especially the boys, from 10-15 years old. However, the main people to use the centre were the men, the older teens and the children. The key interest areas for residents was in relation to having something practical for the men and older lads to do like carpentry; driver theory practice for the older teens and young adults; and flower arranging for the women. The children used the centre, but that was mainly to help their dads, or to have a game of pool.

Parents and local services are very aware that the centre has the potential to be a really useful first point of contact for activities for the very young children, whether by way of a crèche service or a pre-school. On the back of this, a pre-school taster for the younger children and their parents was arranged. We had lively attendance at the second session, with 4 children and some parents. The children met Nibbles and Twitch, the Happytalk puppets. They also did some colouring, played music and body parts, tug'o'war with elastic material, and story time of course.

Women, mothers and daughters have organised to do mock flower arranging in early 2017 and are currently organising resources for this. Some of the younger women used the centre for the Driver Theory practice. They were also keen to engage



*Pictures of shed and dog boxes made*



*Introduction to preschool activities, by Deidre Cotter, the TVG Crèche Manager*

around the topic of CE Schemes and met with the local CE Supervisor who did an outreach session to raise awareness of CE opportunities.

St Anthony's Park has a very energetic community. There is strong interest in horses, a keen sense of family and there is strong potential to use the community centre to the Community's advantage. The final activity with some residents was a visit to the Traveller Culture Room at the Fitzgerald Park Museum. It was a memorable day, as Traveller ethnicity had been officially recognised a few days previous.

The Community Worker's position operates up to

## Summary of Activities at St Anthony's Community Centre

<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>No. of Participants</b>	<b>When</b>
Carpentry Men's Shed: t was raffled between all the men in the group.	Men over 18s	5 core members, but up to 18 boys and men on a given sessions	November – early Jan
Carpentry Dog Boxes	Men from 18-23 approx	8 signed up, 5 finished boes.	Jan 30th – March 3 – 2 hours per week
Carpentry Dog Boxes	Men over 18s - older dads	5 older Dads. All finished boxes.	Jan 30th – March 3 – 2 hours per week
Creative project – practical work, pool, music	Teen Boys , generally from 16 + : all have left education, and majority are barred from youth services	8 however the children who are on reduced timetables and others who are out sick ' are often trying to enter the group. This means there are often up to 12 accessing this time	Mondays, 12-2pm.
Driver Theory	Older teens and adults – male and female	9 people signed up. Most showed but perhaps people should not have had appointments. Perhaps open sessions instead.	Organised a set morning.
Christmas Flower arranging	Women – over 18s	14 women	Fridays Nov + Dec
Mock Flower arranging	Women – over 18s	20 women at introduction session, but flowers have not arrived yet!	Friday mornings January and February

the end of February 2017. The interagency steering group for St Anthony's Park will continue to explore next steps for developing the community through the resource of the centre. TVG will continue to provide regular outreach and support the families to plan an event for Traveller Pride Week 2017. The TVG's Men's Development worker, TJ Hogan, will also continue to deliver equine related education work in both the local primary and secondary schools with boys from St Anthony's Park.

## 10. Overview of TVG's participation in local, regional, and national interagency committees

Committee involvement has long been a very important part of the work of the TVG in order to progress the development of the Traveller community, not only as a community as a whole, but in terms of building equality and increasing an understanding of this in society across all the areas of the determinants of health model. In 2016 TVG continued to represent the needs of the Traveller community across a number of committees locally, regionally and nationally. The following lists all the committees that the project participated in:

### Local

- Cork City Traveller Interagency High-Level group
- Cork City Traveller Interagency Spring Lane Halting Site Steering Group
- Cork City Traveller Horse Initiative Steering Group
- Cork City Celebrating Traveller Culture Interagency group
- Cork City Traveller Youth Interagency Working group
- Cork City Traveller Youth Workers Forum
- Cork City Interagency Traveller Education Subgroup
- Cork City Community Education Network
- Cork City Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Cork County Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- St Anthony's park, Knocknaheeny, Community Centre Steering Group
- Healthy Minds, Traveller Suicide and Mental Health Project Steering Group
- Cork City Cancer Action Network
- Cork City Community Health Network
- Shine a Light steering committee
- Cork Local Drugs and Alcohol Task **Force** Network
- North Side Drugs Initiative Committee

- Alcohol Pilot Strategy in Churchfield/ Knocknaheeny/Gurannabraher
- Cork Equal and Sustainable Communities Alliance (CESCA)
- TVG/ Cork City Local Councillors Network Meetings

### Regional

- Regional Traveller Health Unit Committee
- Traveller Cultural Awareness Training Steering group
- Regional Traveller Primary Health Care Network
- Regional Traveller Accommodation Group
- All Ireland Traveller Health Study (AITHS) 2010 Working Group
- Regional Traveller Bereavement Group
- Southern Traveller Health Network

### National

- National Traveller Primary Health Care Network (Pavee Point, Dublin)
- National Traveller Men's Development Network (Pavee Point, Dublin)
- Minceirs Whiden Traveller Only Space Network
- Cena (Culturally Appropriate Homes Ltd) Steering Group
- National Drugs Network (Pavee Point)
- Traveller Prison Initiative Group
- National Traveller Accommodation Working Group
- National Traveller Roma and Integration Strategy

## 11. Management & Staffing



### List of TVG management 2016:

Breda O Donoghue	Chair/ Director; Traveller Representative
Chrissie O Sullivan (On leave)	Director; Project Coordinator & Traveller Representative
Jane O Donoghue	Director; Traveller Representative
Daithi Mac a Bhioicair	Director; Photographer
Siobhan O'Dowd	Secretary; Project Coordinator Ballyphehane Togher CDP
Cora Williams	Member; Director of Public Health Nursing HSE North Lee
Alistair Christie	Member; Head of School of Applied Social Studies UCC
Eleanor Moore	HSE Community Work Advisory

### List of TVG staff 2016:

Ciara Ridge	Project Co-ordinator
Mary Coughlan	Project Administrator
Margaret Bernadette McCarthy	Assistant Administrator (10 hours) – up to June 2016
Sarah McCarthy	Assistant Administrator (10 hours) – from Sept 2016
Caroline Vasseur	TVG Traveller Health Coordinator
John O Sullivan	Men's Health Development Worker
Vacant	Development Worker (21 hours)
Breda O Donoghue	Women's Health Development Worker (14 hours)
Biddy McDonagh	Traveller Community Health Worker (17.5 hours)
Jean Donoghue	Traveller Community Health Worker (15 hours)
Nora Cash	Traveller Community Health Worker (15 hours)
Elizabeth McGrath	Traveller Community Health Worker (19.5 hours)
Ann Jordan	Community Drugs and Alcohol worker (21 hours)
Joan Nolan	Drugs and Alcohol Family Support (14 hours)
Deirdre Cotter	Childcare Manager
Susan Mannion	Childcare Team Leader
Gemma Lewsley	Childcare Worker Childcare Worker
Steven O'Keeffe	Childcare Worker Childcare Worker - up to Sept 2016

### Community Employment Scheme:

Margaret McCarthy	Receptionist
Priscilla McCarthy	Housekeeper
Oliver McCarthy	Caretaker Vacant
Tom O'Sullivan	Community Development Worker
Rachel Coffey	Community Development Worker
Paige O'Sullivan	Childcare Assistant
Lillian Ossenegar	Childcare Assistant

## 12. Acknowledgements

### Funding:

Social Inclusion (HSE)

Traveller Health Unit (HSE)

Cork Local Drugs and Alcohol Task Force (HSE)

Pobal

Cork Education Training Board

Cork City Council

### Individuals:

John O'Connor, Sergeant, An Garda Siochana

Jim O'Donovan, Director of Environment & Recreation, Cork City Council

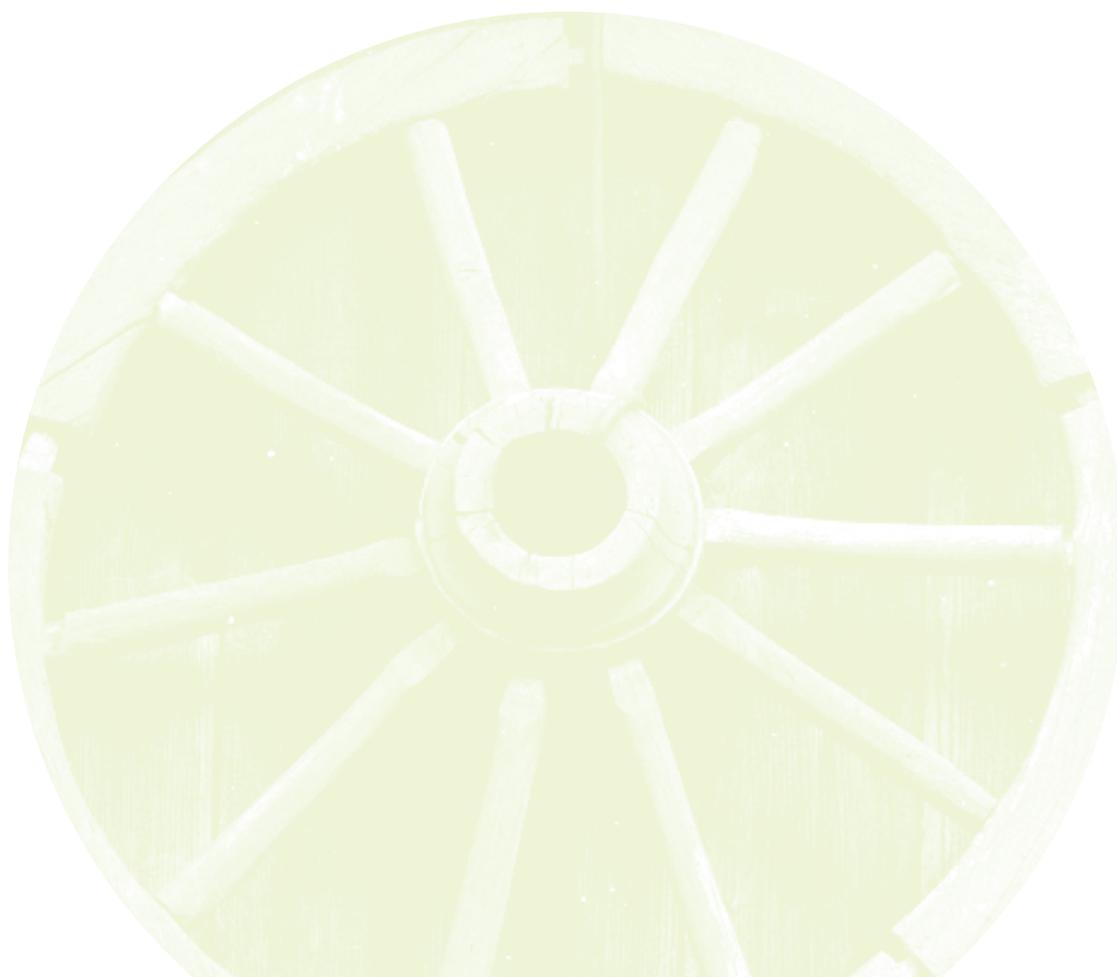
Catherine Sheehan, Community Childcare Worker, Cork City Partnership

(John, Jim and Catherine all retired from their positions in 2016 and would have provided support to the TVG, both at committee level and when the need arose within the project, for many years. TVG staff wish them all the best in their future).

Damar Thaapa (MaaDi's) for all the support he gave to us in developing our website;

Samantha Williams, PhD Student in Law at UCC, for her commitment and work on the Spring Lane Halting Site Strategy;

George Akomfrah, Masters in Public Health Student, who supported some of our health based initiatives during his student placement with TVG.



### 13. Mission Statement

**TVG is a Traveller led Cork based organisation which brings the settled community and Travellers together in order to facilitate community development work for the Traveller community.**

TVG works with Travellers in Cork towards achieving real change and improvement in their lives.





Cork Traveller  
Visibility Group Ltd.

# Traveller Visibility Group CLG 2016 Annual Report

