

## **Social Inclusion Week**

Celebrating the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion across Ireland.

To celebrate the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Inclusion, The Department of Social Inclusion designated the 17<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> of October as Social Inclusion Week in Ireland. As part of this week, over 30 city and county councils around Ireland were provided with funding to highlight the positive work being carried out by community groups and statutory organisations across Ireland to help fighting against poverty and social exclusion.

The main theme for the special Social Inclusion Week was to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion and to promote an understanding of social inclusion in local communities.

Speaking at the launch of Social Inclusion Week Mr. Pat Carey T.D, Minister for Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs said, “Social Inclusion Week gives us an opportunity to showcase the excellent work being done at local level and to reflect on the EU commitment to making a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty. This week is an important part of the Irish National Programme of events to highlight that 2010 has been designated the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion.”

He continued, “During Social Inclusion Week there will be a focus on active citizenship and on how this can be directed towards promoting greater social inclusion. Better social inclusion outcomes can be achieved through greater integration of policies and their implementation, within local government, between national and local levels, with the community and voluntary sectors, and with other stakeholders”.

For example during the week Dublin City Council held various events to promote Dublin's diversity including a Tai Chi demonstration and a multi sports festival. Carlow County Council held a women's health & well being exhibition while in Cork one of the more interesting events to take place was the political speed dating event where a number of councilors volunteered to be quizzed by tomorrow's voters at a special function in County Hall. In Donegal rhythm classes were held for preschoolers and in Galway Age Action proved you're never too old to engage online by holding computer classes for the elderly.

Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Council celebrated the week by holding "Inclusion Fusion", a celebration of full and equal participation. This interactive show included performances by the Discovery Gospel Choir and the Holly House Belly dancer. While in Clare the Clare Volunteer Centre held workshops aimed at providing "Disability Equality Training" to assist voluntary organisations in creating volunteer opportunities for people with disabilities and promoting an inclusive and diverse volunteer workforce.

For more information on Social Inclusion Week and the EY2010 programme in Ireland see

<http://www.welfare.ie/EN/eu2010/Pages/eu2010.aspx>