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## Rotary Club of Enniskillen District Grant 20/21

### ***PROJECT KINDNESS –OUTCOMES REPORT***

Heather Ellis President Rotary Club of Enniskillen.

- The Rotary Club of Enniskillen wishes to offer thanks for the District Grant which continues to support Mental Health Services in County Fermanagh. The application was aligned with the general mission of the Rotary Foundation and helped to cement relationships between the Rotary Club of Enniskillen, Mencap NI , Action Mental Health and the Mums Wellness project.
- The initial aim of this project- PROJECT KINDNESS was to work specifically with 3 organisations and local charities, the club had already developed relationships with some through Rotary activities in recent years. These initiatives cemented the contacts that the club had made during the pandemic due to the activities of the COVID-19 Steering Group outreach.
- Project Kindness enables the three providers to drive change in our community, helping families and individuals to live mentally healthier lives with a particular focus on those in greatest risk. We realise that mental health problems can affect anyone at any time. We wanted to support providers in our county who believe that mental health is everyone's business. We know that there is an added benefit in helping others through Rotary projects and that it is good for our own mental health as well.
- PROJECT KINDNESS has therefore helped all our club members as well as those to whom we have reached out.

- **MUMS WELLNESS PROJECT**

This project is an early intervention project for expectant mums and mums with a baby up to 2 years who are experiencing emotional health and well-being difficulties. The mums wellness workers were unable to meet mums and babies in person but they are able to make contact virtually with mums and families in a support program running on Monday mornings. This was piloted through January and benefited from the support of student occupational therapists who continue to run sessions on the importance of play and nutrition. This was very challenging during lockdown and it is therefore important that the mums have available to them appropriate Activity Packs specific to their need and that of

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their child (also included is some IT hardware to enable easier links to the project workers). The organisation also offered a menu of stand-alone sessions for parents of 0 to 11-year-olds and those who are pregnant.

- **MENCAP NI**

This project is for individuals aged 14 to 24 years who have difficulties including those with a learning disability and / or autism diagnosis. Once again, the young people have been in lockdown and the preparation and provision of care packages have benefited them greatly. They have focused on mental health during this most recent lockdown period and some money has been spent on the provision of resources for example journals, arts and crafts, books etc. This has allowed the organisation to develop the young people personally and encourage positive mental health, as these resources were used as tools for positive thinking. The organisation also focused on the physical connections with mental health some of which necessitated the purchase of yoga mats, exercise balls and equipment.

When restrictions are eased the organisation's support workers would like to be able to bring the group together and focus on reconnecting with other young people for example focusing on areas of music and mental health development in outdoor settings. The main aim during the summer will be to spend a few days together and build friendships after the year of lockdown periods end.

- **NEW HORIZONS MENTAL HEALTH ( ACTION MENTAL HEALTH).**

In March 2020 the organisation closed its local building in response to Covid regulations and quickly remodelled their service turning it into an online training delivery service with individual telephone support. Digital poverty emerged as the primary barrier to this model of service delivery as many clients did not have access to devices or Wi-Fi to enable them to engage with the extensive training program which was being delivered remotely. Recognising this, investing in technology and access to it became a funding priority for the financial year 20/21. This is where the Rotary funding made a real difference.

A varied portfolio of training continued to use a blended approach and in the catering department they delivered an OCN course with some clients attending in person when the regulations temporarily allowed it.

The funding monies which we offered were spent on the purchase of tablets which were given to clients on loan. At present 30 devices are out on long-term loan. It has also been possible to provide pre-paid monthly Sim cards to individuals who need them most and Rotary is also providing 12 months Wi-Fi for two

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clients enabling them to get the support they need. The Service Manager Caroline Ferguson stated that *'she was genuinely blown away by the quality of training delivery and the confident and enthusiastic contributions of the clients. She continues 'one of these clients last year was most resistant to using zoom as she could not bear to look at herself on the screen however she is now relaxed, engaged and clearly enjoys herself as she learns'.*

We hope soon to be able to test out the conferencing equipment which has also been installed. This will allow us to Zoom from our meeting into the 'new learning environment' of the clients and see for ourselves how learning develops client engagement, as our monies help to support the ongoing work of the organisation.

Thank you to Rotary Ireland for the District Grant which has enabled us to play a small part in achieving these outcomes.