



## Department of Social and Family Affairs

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### **€25,000 For Innovative Youth Information Initiative – Minister For Social And Family Affairs**

Mary Coughlan TD, Minister for Social and Family Affairs, has approved funding of €25,000 to develop a youth information initiative.

"I am delighted to be able to support the Community Creations project which will include an interactive website, an online help, information and support service and a quarterly magazine for young people in the North West," Minister Coughlan said.

The youth health and information initiative 'Inside Out' will be developed by working with young people in schools, colleges and other youth friendly settings. The website will provide information, advice and support with online help using text messaging and email. In addition, a quarterly magazine will be based on the website content.

The North West has one of the highest youth populations in the EU and a feasibility study for this new project found that there are huge gaps in the provision of information and support for young people. It also found that 70% of young people now use the internet and 90% of young people own mobile phones and are the world's 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest 'texters'.

"Young people need information on options available to them with regard to education and work, particularly those who might find it difficult to find work or to go towards further education. This initiative will present such information in ways that are appealing and relevant," Minister Coughlan said.

ENDS June 7<sup>th</sup> 2004

**NB: See factsheet attached.**

#### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Community Creations** was set up in January 2004 as an independent non-profit organisation with the aim of 'working towards happier and healthier communities through innovative, participatory and locally based projects with the youth of Ireland'.

Donegal based community workers Ruairí McKiernan and Keith Corcoran founded the organisation based on a shared vision of communities re-engaging with young people through holistic projects in order to realise their common potential.

The **background** to the project began in 2002 following on from suggestions of Donegal teenagers when the North Western Health Board initiated the 'youth website project' by establishing a Steering Committee of partner agencies. These included Foróige, Donegal Youth Services, The National Educational Psychological Service, the Gardaí, Coláiste Cholmcille Ballyshannon, the Home Liaison Service and local students. These original partners are still involved in providing support.

A **six-month feasibility study**, which involved hearing the views of parents, teachers, health professionals, computer experts, media workers, youth workers and young people was completed in June 2003.



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The **main priorities** of Community Creations will be engaging young people in the areas of

- Health, well-being and spirituality
- Equality, diversity and socio-economic inclusion
- Community empowerment, participation and decision-making
- Environmental and cultural awareness
- Global citizenship and awareness