



Mary Coughlan Minister for Social and Family Affairs launches County Carlow Citizen's Information Centre

Mary Coughlan Minister for Social and Family Affairs today officially opened the County Carlow Citizen's Information Centre in St Catherine's community services centre to mark UN Day of the Family.

"I am greatly impressed with the range of activities and supports offered by St Catherine's, and the support offered by the community at large in fund raising, and the large number of volunteers who offer their time and expertise," said Minister Coughlan.

"The 231 volunteers who give their services to eight schemes including, meals on wheels, summer camps for 500 children, the counselling service ACCORD and the Carlow Citizens Information Service deserve our appreciation and praise.

"Today as I officially open the Carlow Citizens Information service, I'd like to pay tribute to everyone who has worked hard to see the service grow from an eight hour a week service to a full time service, offering a variety of important services including free legal advice, consumer affairs information, a taxation service and an outreach service.

"It is through centres such as this that so much information directly tailored and helpful to the individual citizens is disseminated – making a real change in people's daily lives," said Minister Coughlan.

The "Moving on programme", which is supported by the Department of Social and Family Affairs, is a development



programme for young mothers in the 16-25 years age bracket. While the majority of the participants are lone parents, it is not confined exclusively to them and some at risk young married are included in the programme each year.

The overall aim of the project is to enhance the life long prospects of young mothers by helping them to achieve inclusion in education training, enterprise opportunities, the local labour market and their own communities.

”This is a valuable programme helps its participants develop their own abilities, reach their potential and allow them become independent from welfare in the long term, “ said Minister Coughlan.

”The partnership of my own Department, FAS and Carlow Vocational Education Committee has proved a fruitful group that has helped numerous young mothers with education, training and enterprise opportunities. The provision of a quality childcare on site has been a crucial factor in the removal of a significant barrier to participation in such a scheme by young mothers, and it is a feature of this scheme that should be emulated in any future similar schemes in other locations around the country, “ said Minister Coughlan.

Ends

15th May 2003