



## Minister Hanafin visits centres which support families and communities in Co. Tipperary

The Minister for Social and Family Affairs, Mary Hanafin T.D. today (*Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2009*) officially opened the refurbished ACCORD premises in Thurles, Co. Tipperary.

ACCORD provides marriage and relationship counselling and education services to individuals and couples. Minister Hanafin also visited Tigh na nDaoine in Clonmel and Spafield Family Resource Centre in Cashel.

Speaking with staff and guests at Tigh na nDaoine, the home of Newcastle Community Youth and Resource Group in Clonmel. Minister Hanafin said **“Tigh na nDaoine provides such a wide number of services and opportunities to the local community from childcare, IT training and a jobs club to drama and film classes to Club 66, a social morning for older people in the area which provides exercise, dinner and social activities. The Centre is successfully reaching out to all ages and sections of the community with practical support, educational opportunities and a social outlet.”**

Minister Hanafin also met staff and participants availing of services in Spafield Family Resource Centre (FRC) in Cashel, Co. Tipperary and saw at first hand how the Centre is providing a range of services and facilities to the local community. Minister Hanafin said **“Spafield FRC is proving to be a tremendous support to the people of Cashel providing many supports including a crèche and pre-school service, an after-school service and parent and toddler group. Training and education opportunities are available including computer classes for all levels of experience and community development work is undertaken with various groups in the community. The contribution that Spafield FRC makes to the local community was recognised and celebrated when it was awarded a Pride of Place Special Award in November 2007.”**

An extension to Spafield FRC is almost completed and it is expected that the services on offer will be expanded to include an enhanced counselling service, cookery classes for children and adults in the new kitchens and extended community development aspect of the Centre's work to include

Spafield FRC has been funded under the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme since 2001. In 2008, the Centre received over €310,000 to extend and renovate the premises. The Centre is



## Department of Social and Family Affairs

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receiving a further €157,000 this year for its day to day funding and €8,300 to support its counselling services.

**“The services provided in Spafield FRC and Tigh na nDaoine are a practical response to the real and local needs of their communities. Of course, they would not be the successes that they are without the dedication and commitment shown by their management boards, staff, volunteers and local people and I wish them well in their future work”**, concluded Minister Hanafin.

Minister Hanafin then went on to officially open the newly refurbished ACCORD centre in Thurles. Speaking with staff, guests and volunteers Minister Hanafin said **“in these difficult times, marriages and relationships are facing new pressures and challenges. The ACCORD centre, which is celebrating its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in Thurles this year, is helping couples in North Tipperary as well as parts of neighbouring counties to meet those challenges.”**

ACCORD provides a range of family services including marriage preparation courses and marriage and relationship counselling services. ACCORD provides its family services through a network of 58 Centres nationwide. ACCORD, which was established in Ireland in 1975, is receiving funding of €3.45 million in 2009 from the Family Support Agency’s Counselling Grants Scheme. ACCORD in Thurles has benefited from funding from the Family Support Agency with almost €125,000 granted since 2006.

Minister Hanafin continued **“I am aware of the huge input into ACCORD made by members on a largely voluntary basis. This allows ACCORD to provide a direct service to clients based on their needs as opposed to their ability to pay. These members are a huge asset to the organisation and have played a significant role in making ACCORD what it is today.”** The Minister concluded her visit by wishing staff, volunteers and all those who avail of the services in the newly refurbished centre every success in their future work.

**ENDS**