

PALs Newsletter

Spring 2024

After a long winter, the arrival of Spring brings much joy. The extended evenings and favourable weather provide us with ample opportunities to engage in outdoor activities and embrace a more active lifestyle. The year 2024 has commenced on a positive note, with 57 new PALs who have completed their comprehensive PALs training. Our dynamic team extends a warm welcome to all the new members joining the Age & Opportunity family.

PALs Workshops

In January and February, a fresh set of PALs workshops commenced in County Louth and County Cavan, attracting an impressive turnout of nearly 40 individuals across both series. Furthermore, we concluded our PALs series in Kerry, where all participants received their certificates. The attendees displayed immense positivity and enthusiasm, and we would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to everyone who attended. We have further PALs training starting in Cork and Tipperary before the summer. The Cork PALs series is scheduled to begin on April 16, 2024, and the Tipperary PALs series will commence on April 17. If you are interested in obtaining

more details or wish to register for either of these PALs series, e-mail

maire.murphy@ageandopportunity.ie.



Lively Louth PALs Drogheda 2024 trained by Barbara and Margaret.



Cheerful Cavan PALs 2024 with trainers Margaret and Barbara.

Reconnect Workshops

The inaugural Reconnect workshop for the year 2024 was held on March 22nd in Kilkenny. We were delighted to see a fantastic turnout of 24 enthusiastic PALs in attendance. This workshop spanned the morning and provided a valuable platform for PALs to reconnect and exchange ideas with one another. Additionally, it allowed our trainers and the Active team to gain insights into the progress of the groups and identify any support we can provide to help PALs maintain the activity levels within their respective groups. We had an amazing day with the Kilkenny PALs, where we enjoyed learning new dances and giving everyone an opportunity to participate in the Go for Life games. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who attended, as we had a fantastic day with 'The Cats'.



Go For Life Games

We are delighted to announce the return of the Go for Life Games this year. The event will be held in Dublin City University on Saturday the 8th June. Teams will travel from all over Ireland to take part in a fun, inclusive day of sport. The games include our very own games of Málaí, Scidils and Flisk. We are currently hosting refresher workshops throughout the country in partnership with the Local Sports

Partnerships. To get involved contact your local sports partnership or Nicole Evans e-mail Nicole.evans@ageandopportunity.ie or phone 01 9133945.

Walking Football



Clonakilty Men's Shed with Trainers Peter and Des.

Walking football is a fun non-contact sport, and it offers significant physical and mental health benefits. It takes place over 5 consecutive weeks and gives a great introduction to the game of Walking Football.

Maire, our PALs coordinator went off to join the Clonakilty Men's Sheds sessions to see what it was all about and reports, 'I had the privilege of participating in my first walking football session. The session was led by two exceptional trainers, Peter MacNulty and Des Meade. Engaging with the local Clonakilty Men's Shed team was a truly enjoyable experience that challenged me physically. Despite never having played football previously, I was able to quickly grasp the game's dynamics. Walking football encompasses various positive aspects of sports, such as interactivity, competitiveness, enjoyment, and a beneficial workout. Being the sole

female member of the team did not deter me, as the inclusive and safe environment created by the trainer's prioritised health and safety measures. The group of men were so lovely, and I felt they really were enjoying the game, even when the rain came.' If you would like further information about walking football, please contact active@ageandopportunity.ie.

FitLine

If you are aged over 50 or know someone who you think might benefit from some encouragement to help get them more physically active, FitLine would love to hear from them. When you sign up to our FitLine initiative, you receive a welcome pack in the post with some ideas on exercises you can do yourself at home to help keep you strong and improve your balance. A FitLine mentor will be assigned to you and will phone you every 2 weeks to chat to you about what you enjoy doing and encourage you to move a bit more. To find out more about FitLine please contact fitline@ageandopportunity.ie.

Grants Launch

On February 1st, 2024, the Active National Grant Scheme applications were made available, and we have received an unprecedented number of applications this year, over 1,400 in total. The Active National grants launch will take place on April 24th, at the Sport Ireland Campus. All applicants will be notified during that week.

CarePALs

Our CarePALs initiative, aimed at individuals employed or who volunteer in day or residential care settings, is still in great demand. This training is free to participants and funded by HSE. So far, we have conducted CarePALs training sessions in Monaghan, Roscommon, Clare, and Cork. Additionally, we have upcoming training sessions scheduled in Kilkenny, Kildare, Laois, Dublin North and South, and Sligo before the summer season. Spaces are limited, if you would like to sign up for any of the upcoming training, please contact Máire Murphy maire.murphy@ageandopportunity.ie.



Clare CarePALs with our trainers Bridget and Fiona.



Monaghan CarePALs with trainers Margaret and Barbara and our new trainer Laura.



Roscommon CarePALs with our trainers
Bridget and Fiona.



Cork CarePALs in action



Cork CarePALs 2024 with trainers Kathleen
and Fiona.

Trainer Day

Every year we get together with all our wonderful trainers who work tirelessly all year to deliver all our initiatives. This year we had a great demonstration from Olympic Handball Ireland to introduce the trainers to another sport that can be included in our workshops. On the day we also had a presentation from Declan O 'Leary from Sport Ireland Coaching on the importance of physical literacy, *'the motivation confidence physical competence, knowledge and understanding that enables a person to value and participate in physical activity throughout their life.'*

Additionally, we were treated to a demonstration of walking handball by the talented trainers Joao Ferreira and Caroline Nerbas. This new initiative is something we are considering implementing later this year, so it was fantastic to witness and get involved in the demonstration.

The trainers really enjoyed it and recognised the numerous physical and mental benefits of the game.

About Age & Opportunity

Age & Opportunity is the national organisation that provides a range of opportunities for older people. Our aim is to enable the best quality of life for us all as we age, where we can be more active, more visible, more creative, more connected, and more confident. If you would like further information on our programmes, you can visit our website,

www.ageandopportunity.ie.

**Best Wishes, Máire Murphy, Active
Programme PALs Coordinator.**