

For immediate release 14th December 2009.

PRESS RELEASE

Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) & Longford County Council launch new DVD *'View from Here'*.

On Tuesday 15th December Cllr. Peggy Nolan, Mayor of Longford will officially launch an interactive educational DVD *'View from Here'* in the Longford Arms Hotel at 8pm.

The purpose of this resource is to raise awareness among students and teachers of the simple steps they can take, the attitudes they can choose and the decisions they can make that will improve how people with disabilities are treated.

The inspiration for this programme came from two 14 year old students who live almost identical lives but are treated very differently by many people. One of the girls has a physical disability and the other doesn't. Often a physical disability can be viewed by many as a major barrier to succeeding in life. Both girls do not agree with this and want to change people's attitudes by sharing some of the situations they experience on a daily basis.

Cameras were fitted to a wheelchair so viewers of the DVD will see some of the daily situations that arise for a wheelchair user and perhaps be surprised at what can happen. The wheelchair user is a representative of all members of a community who face a mobility challenge in any way.

14 year old student and IWA member Claire Kenny, commented,
"We hope that this resource will help students and teachers see what they can improve in their schools and help them to understand the difficulties faced by people with disabilities that may not be blatantly obvious."

This DVD resource includes a booklet that assists teachers and leaders with further support material, workshop handouts and outlines the key issues involved.

Speaking about this project, Cllr. Peggy Nolan, Mayor commented,
"Longford County Council is proud to be part of this innovative initiative which will be used to raise awareness of the issues facing young people with disabilities and thereby promote better integration in our schools."

This IWA led project is jointly funded through the *Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA), Longford County Council and Longford VEC.*

Anne O'Donnell, Head of Participation, OMCYA stated,
"The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA) is delighted to have funded this resource as part of our Inclusion Programme. We are confident that this resource will help to

increase awareness among students and teachers of the reality of the lives of children and young people with a wide range of disabilities. Ensuring that young people who are seldom heard is a priority for our Office."

The DVD will be sent to all secondary schools in Longford and the resource booklet is available for download from www.iwa.ie . In early 2010 this resource will be distributed to secondary schools nationally.

For further information, please contact Mairéad Farquharson 087 277 3270 or Daragh Kennedy 087 997 5444

Additional information

The Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is a national organisation dedicated to the achievement of the full social, economic and educational integration of people with disabilities as equal, independent and participative members of the community.

Our Association is made up of a vibrant network of 20,000 members and over 2,000 staff, as well as many dedicated volunteers. Together we work to achieve greater independence, freedom and choice for people living with a disability.

IWA provides a wide range of services including Resource and Outreach Centres, Youth Services, Holiday Centres, and Assisted Living Services.