

New plan - Silver Arch Family Resource Centre

'Helping People, Strengthening Communities'

Launch of Silver Arch Family Resource Centre's five-year plan

Accessible, welcoming, approachable." These were three words that came to the mind of guest speaker Dr Eddie Murphy when launching the new five-year plan of Silver Arch Family Resource Centre.

Supporting generations of families and individuals across North Tipperary for more than 40 years now, Silver Arch FRC (formerly Nenagh Social Services and North Tipperary Community Services) has prepared a new strategic plan for its future development. Titled 'Helping People, Strengthening Communities', the five-year plan was officially launched on Zoom last week.

Silver Arch Board Director Pauline Gannon hosted the meeting while Manager Caroline Lydon outlined the background of the organisation and provided an overview of the new plan, in which a number of key issues in North Tipperary are identified.

Among these is unemployment, which remains a significant issue in the three big towns of Nenagh, Roscrea and Thurles. There is a continuing pattern of low levels of third level educational attainment in North Tipperary, and parts of this area of the county are hugely reliant on social housing and the private rental market. 48 small areas of North Tipperary are classified as disadvantaged, with seven classed as 'very disadvantaged'.

Ms Lydon said a particular concern was the rate of referral of children to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) in North Tipperary,



The Silver Arch FRC team at their official launch at their base in Silver St, Nenagh, in 2019.

which is the third highest rate in the state. North Tipperary also has the fifth highest suicide rate in the country.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

A consultation process preceded the plan and involved a series of meetings in which 35 people took part, and a consultation survey in which some 183 surveys were returned.

For families, the two priority areas identified were the need for Parent & Family Support, and Counselling. Parent & Family Support was also a priority for communities, along with Housing, Addiction issues and Isolation and Loneliness of Older People.

ACTION AREAS

Respondents were also asked to share what they felt the actions of the Silver Arch service should be over the coming years. Action areas included

Children & Family Support, Mental Health services, and Therapeutic Supports, Community Connectivity and the need to advocate for greater resources and supports for the population of North Tipperary.

Strategic Priority 1: Strengthen the Organisation
Strategic Priority 2: Strengthen Families and Communities
Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen our Influence

Mentioning the challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the organisation, Ms Lydon acknowledged the "hardworking team at Silver Arch FRC, and I commend them for their unwavering enthusiasm and commitment in the face of very hard times.

"I would also like to acknowledge

and thank our hardworking voluntary Board of Directors, who support our organisation in everything that we do, as well as all of our volunteers who help."

SERVICE USERS

The launch also featured a couple of fitting vignettes of users of the Silver Arch FRC services. Tom Darcy, Family Support Worker, interviewed Jane, who told of the support she received from Silver Arch FRC after moving to Nenagh from Limerick with three small children in 2015.

Brigid Murphy, who co-ordinates the Community Mothers Programme at Silver Arch FRC, spoke to Alice, a young mother who began availing of the local service three years ago. Alice was introduced to the Silver Arch as a good family support following the premature birth of her son, and she found the one-to-one assistance of the Community Mothers Programme - which runs at six locations around North Tipperary - an invaluable support.

'BOLD AMBITION'

Clinical Psychologist Dr Eddie Murphy spoke of the important role that early intervention and prevention can play in assisting local communities, and how Silver Arch FRC is the "hub" of this activity in North Tipperary.

"Whether you're a board member, staff member, manager, funder, service user - everybody has a key role to play and you've all played a massive role in bringing this organisation, which had small steps - and even the longest journey begins with a single step - to where it is today," he said.

"But it's not enough. Silver Arch want to grow; they want to flourish. They want to make changes in their

communities.

"For me, it's like a pebble; you throw out a pebble, it has ripple effects, and ripple effects at generational level in supporting young people... parents, including their children. And for Silver Arch, they want to strengthen communities, they want to provide services for seniors, they want to stretch the different areas they work in. I think this is bold ambition and the strategic plan sets this out."

For Dr Murphy, the Silver Arch tenets of being accessible, welcoming, approachable reflected the human skills and the person-centred way that the service operates. "It's a very powerful reflection of the individuals that are in the service," the guest speaker noted.

'THE WAVE COMES NOW'

He added that the support provided by the FRC is more important now than it is ever was. Previous studies of times of upheaval such as pandemics and emergencies have shown that the "psycho-social" impact comes through in the aftermath of the crisis. "The wave comes now," Dr Murphy warned.

Speaking on behalf of the Board, Carmel Toohey acknowledged the achievements of the Silver Arch team under the "enthusiastic and competent leadership" of Ms Lydon, "an enthusiasm that permeates through the whole organisation".

Ms Toohey acknowledged the support of all funders of the Silver Arch FRC, and made particular mention of Fionnuala Kenny and her team at the local Tusla PPFS department. Ms Toohey said the Board is looking forward to working with Ms Lydon and her team at Silver Arch FRC towards achieving the goals set out in the plan over the next five years.



Small Matters; Big Matters; YOU matter

As North Tipperary's only Family Resource Centre
we are here to assist and support you...

- We run **parent/baby groups** in six locations across North Tipperary (currently outdoor walking groups)
- We can provide **family support & advice** that focuses on the needs of each family
- We have a range of training **programmes** available run by experienced tutors (e.g. parenting programmes; health and wellbeing; personal development)
- We offer low cost **counselling support** for all ages
- We are very active on social media, with daily updates that offer information, support & advice. Please connect with us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to keep in touch.

To find out how we can help, please contact us on **067-31800** or **info@silverarchfrc.ie**

www.silverarchfrc.ie