

ACET NEWS

Winter 2016

ACET (AIDS Care Education & Training) Ireland provides care for those affected by HIV, and education & training services on HIV and related issues.

You are welcome to the Winter 2016 edition of ACET News!

Thank you for your support throughout 2016 which enabled us to provide care and education throughout the North Inner City, Dublin, and around the country.

If you are no longer interested in receiving this newsletter, or if you prefer it online, please let us know. And, as always, feel free to drop us a line or catch up with us on [Facebook/ACETIreland](https://www.facebook.com/ACETIreland) or at acet.ie.

In this issue:

- Read all about how your support is making a difference to our clients, *this page and page 2*.
- Thank you from **Matilda Project**, *page 3*.
- Adventures in cross-cultural parenting, *page 4*.
- Good news: staff, board, and local updates, *page 4*.
- How to give, *below*.

Your Generosity Helps Make Christmas

Because of the donations of hampers and gifts to our hardship and hamper funds, we were able to deliver personalised hampers for all of our clients and their families.

We are grateful to the many individuals as well as the staff of **Volunteer Ireland** who provided hampers this year. A big thank you to everyone in **Adelaide Road Presbyterian, Holy Trinity Rathmines, Lucan Presbyterian, South City Church and Trinity Church Network** who continue to provide hampers every year.



We wish all of you a very happy Christmas, and peace and hope for you and all those you love in 2017.

From all of us in ACET,

Richard Carson, Lynn Caldwell, Hansi Chisnall, Terrie Colman-Black, Olivia Corbett, Vivienne Morrow Murtagh, and Andrew Sloane

If you would like to give: **Bank details:**

Bank of Ireland, O'Connell St, Dublin 1
BIC: BOFIE2D IBAN: IE82 BOFI 9000 3360 9597 90
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Standing order forms are available from the office.

Donate



www.acet.ie

It is your support that enables us to do all that we do—thank you!

Friends Remembering Friends

Reflections on the annual memorial service in Dublin 8, led by ACET board member Tony MacCarthaigh and the Quilt Group

Every year, the seasons of Advent, dark winter, World AIDS Day, and Christmas are launched for myself and my colleagues in a small room in a community centre in Rialto, a village in Dublin that sits on one of the epicentres of drug devastation in this city. The event is a memorial to people from the community who have died, many of them, most of them, through drugs. It is both reflective and celebratory, with a baby at the front to remind us that life does go on, and that as we approach Advent there is an immense power and hope in the vulnerability of a small baby. The quilt group unveils their latest memorial or story-telling quilt and we always sing *Lean on Me* at the close, but what has the most impact, every year, is the reading of the names. We read pages, and then pause for a poem or a song, then go back to reading more pages. Although these are lists, they aren't just words: they are memories and faces and people, some of whom have been there in that room with us reading out names.

Friends Remembering

In this room I reckon the names of the dead outnumber the living
We read the lists, line after line a litany, a liturgy
a hymn for the lost, a flickering candle of memory
scraps of small moments in time like the sudden bright fabric of the quilts
Sometimes a breath, a pause
a catch in the throat
a blank space left for the next one
The pages in our hands tremble, uncertain as heartbeats
Life beyond this room suspended for us, like a breath sucked in and held
Outside in the brick-lined streets it goes on, with or without us
Yet greater than the calling out of names and rustling of paper,
louder than the rattling breaths of the dying or the keening of the still living
is the sound of comfort, a note of a song
There is still breath in us to make words
though the stillness is deafening
here, in this room.

This piece was originally published in Lynn Caldwell's blog, kennedystreet.wordpress.com



Care Update

We are grateful for your support during a season of change for us (new office, many new referrals) and for our families (new living arrangements, new babies)!

Facing homelessness, being undocumented, having a serious illness, and not speaking English are some of the challenges for our new clients. In order to support these people, as well as using our own resources, we have partnered with:



Stopping to smell the flowers on an Airfield day out.

- Barnardos Teen Parent Support Programme
- Helping Hands
- the Migrant Rights Centre

It was lovely to see a client family take the initiative to prepare their home for a new baby. They took the initiative to use local resources and showed a new confidence in making decisions and changes to their home. These become building blocks towards moving into a more restorative place during difficult times.

Memories of loss and grief, as well as the reality of loneliness, physical pain, and financial stressors are magnified at this time of year as we approach the typically difficult season of anniversaries and the especially emotional Christmas season. Thanks to the generosity of many of you, we are able to alleviate some of the practical pressure through our hardship fund and Christmas hampers.



Right: the Quilt Group's newest piece unveiled at the memorial, *The Rita Quilt*.



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Matilda Project

Thank you!

Your support for Matilda Project in 2016 supplied **2730 school breakfasts** every day for **195** days of the year; **42** primary school and **35** secondary school students' fees; monthly food packs for **600** families for several months; and **220** orphans and children living with HIV will receive a food pack this week to keep them over the month-long Christmas holiday.



Meet Castro, *left*:

Castro is an orphan living with HIV. His school fees are paid for by Matilda Project. Castro is one of the students receiving breakfast each morning; Matilda also provides food packs for him during school breaks.

Conversations: Incarnation, Resurrection, Diversity and Grace

Let's create safe spaces within our churches for testimony and story-telling so we may all come together in grace and begin to heal together.

The **Reverend Sally Hitchiner**, senior chaplain and inter-faith adviser at Brunel University in London and founder of **Diverse Church**, was in Dublin on Saturday, October 15th at the invitation of Changing Attitude Ireland, Accepting Sexuality, and ACET to give a workshop on how best to help LGBT+ Christians in the churches in Ireland.

Her message — that at the heart of the Trinity is diversity — was apparent in the themes for the day: living out your faith; telling your story; and realising how your story fits into the Christian story of incarnation and resurrection. Reverend Hitchiner highlighted that grace is needed on all sides of the debate on human sexuality, reminding us of the love at the heart of God's wishes for us.

The day was part of ACET's LGBT & Faith project which exists to move conversations in the church from a place where LGBT Christians are talked about to a place where they are talked with.

Thanks to Stephen Spillane for his report on the day.



UCD Church of Ireland chaplain Scott Evans; Gareth Williams, Accepting Sexuality; the Reverend Sally Hitchiner and Richard Carson, ACET.

It is your support that enables us to do all that we do—thank you!

Adventures in Parenting,

Part 2

Valuable skills taught in Ireland's only Parent/Teen cross-cultural course.

In November we completed our second **Parent-Teen Communication** course. The Open College Network (Level 2) accreditation was facilitated by the team from ACET Northern Ireland. **Sanctuary of Salvation** in Dublin 12 were the hosts on this occasion as the participants explored conflict resolution, understanding teenage development, communicating to teenagers about sex and much more.



This is the only Parent/Teen Communication course in Ireland that is focused on parents who grew up in a very different country or culture to that of their teenagers. Our thanks to all our funders including **MAC AIDS Fund**.



Other Education News:

Richard Carson has been busy supporting church leaders including the team in **Living Waters Church** in North Inner City Dublin. Living Waters is a multi-cultural church which has its origins in Malawi. Richard had the opportunity to preach on HIV and facilitate a broader discussion on church responses.

Read Richard Carson's report on **World AIDS Day in Dublin** on our website, acet.ie.

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Office News



Enjoying the O'Connell Street rooftop view one last time.

In November, we moved from our offices on O'Connell Street—where we had been since 2007 — to **The Exchange** (former Labour Exchange building) on Lower Gardiner Street.

A very big thank you to the team from **Serve the City** who helped us with our office move. Without the team of 8 people (from 7 nations!) we would not have been able to complete the move in one day.



We are grateful to our new hosts, [Trinity Church Network](http://TrinityChurchNetwork.org), who offered this space to us for now, and to [Jobcare](http://Jobcare.org) who have made us very welcome and given much help with installing our IT systems. We will miss having a front row seat on all the activity in O'Connell Street, but we are enjoying our quiet space and the interaction with Jobcare and Trinity Church staff.



Our new space: in the foreground is our wall-hanging created with clients, volunteers, and staff at our 20th anniversary barbecue, and in the background the quilt, 'Quilting in the Community' made by the quilt group to celebrate 20 years of working together.

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