

Women in Sport

2010

Three women in sport programmes were delivered under the women in sport initiative in 2010: -

1. *Circuit training*: Three circuit training programmes were delivered: -
 - The first programme linked into an overall personal development programme for teenage single parents in Clara town which was partly funded by the Department of Social Protection.
 - The second programme was delivered in Rhode through the local parish development association. As a result, there was increased participation of teenage girls in the local Community Games events, and a programme of coaching support was developed in conjunction with the local parish Community Games committee.
 - A third programme commenced in Killeigh parish. It grew out of a desire by a newly established community games committee to have winter training opportunities for the secondary school girls in the winter months
2. *Gaelic 4 Girls*: This programme was designed to allow for liaison with Cumann Peile Gael na mBan in the delivery of the Gaelic 4 Girls programmes in urban locations in the county. In 2010, the programme focused primarily on the Gracefield area. Over 60 girls participated on the programme. Participants were given the opportunity to attend the Gaelic 4 Girls blitz in Tipperary, and an end of programme activity in Croke Park.

Of particular note, was the quality and the enthusiasm of a number of TY volunteers that were trained to help in the delivery of the programme. It is further noteworthy that a new club was established in Gracefield following on from the programme.

3. *Meet & Train* In conjunction with our neighbours in Laois, a 10 week meet and train programme was established in Portarlinton to increase participation among adults in physical activity and sport. Over 60 people signed up for the programme. The programme was delivered primarily on the local Coillte trail in Garryhinch Woods.

Originally planned as a 10-week programme, two days per week, the majority of the group agreed to undertake a third training day after a few weeks into the programme. The programme culminated in the running of an inaugural 10k in the town; and many of the participants continue to meet and train under the direction of the training leader.

4. *Pauline Curley "Women's" Marathon Relay Challenge*: Following the successful running of the inaugural Pauline Curley "Women's" Marathon Relay Challenge in 2009, this event was run again in 2010.

Five schools (St Brendan's Community School Birr, Banagher College, Sacred Heart School Tullamore, Tullamore College and Gallen Community School Ferbane) and over 160 girls participated with St. Brendan's Community School starting the race as red hot favourites to retain the title they had won in the inaugural running of the event. St Brendan's Community

School, Birr romped home in a time of 2h4m50secs for the shared marathon, over 7½ minutes clear of the competition and within 1 minute of the world record for the event.

The marathon relay is a shared running of a marathon by teams of 32 teenage girls in remote locations, changing a baton after every 200m. In the course of the run each team is trying to record a faster time than their competitors on the day. They also set themselves a target time to beat such as a world record, a national record or a local record.

2009

One women in sport programme was delivered under the women in sport initiative in 2009: -

Pauline Curley “Women’s” Relay Marathon The inaugural Pauline Curley “Women’s” Marathon Relay Challenge was held in October 2009. Five secondary schools participated on the programme.

The programme was developed by Offaly Sports Partnership in consultation with local Olympian, Pauline Curley to support increased participation of teenage girls in sport. It is based on a similar international event for children developed by George Bunner of the Amateur Athletic Association in the UK.

Eamonn Henry, Coordinator with Offaly Sports Partnership explained that the challenge was to see if 21 girls sharing a marathon run, passing running duties from one to another after every 200m, could run the distance faster than Pauline Curley’s personal best time. The second challenge was to see which school team could record the faster overall time. Each school competed on their own grounds and race officials sent periodic times to the event coordinator who in turn sent times for all schools back to the five locations. The participating teams and times achieved were as follows: -

- Pauline Curley’s personal best achieved in Rotterdam in 2008 which qualified her to run at the Beijing Olympics: 2:39.05
- St. Brendan’s Community School, Birr: 2:13.08
- Sacred Heart Secondary School, Tullamore: 2:23.00
- Tullamore College: 2:25.38
- Presentation Secondary School, Killina: 2:26.34
- St. Mary’s Secondary School, Edenderry: 2:27.08

The Pauline Curley Marathon Relay is a project of Offaly Sports Partnership supported by the Women in Sport Programme of the Irish Sports Council, and the Health Promotion Unit of the Health Services Executive. Development Officers of the Athletics Association of Ireland, board members of the Sports Partnership and staff from the Community and Enterprise Section, Offaly County Council acted as independent officials for the event.

2008

Two women in sport programmes were delivered under the women in sport initiative in 2008: -

1. *Circuit training*: A number of women in sport circuit training programmes carried over from 2007 have taken place in various clubs and locations throughout the county. At least one of these programmes will continue with the support of Cúl le Chéile in Portarlington
2. *Programmes for disadvantaged women and girls*: Two programmes catering for disadvantaged women were rolled out with the support of the Disadvantaged Women in Sport Implementation Group 2008: -
 - The first programme was a basketball programme catering for teenage girls. This programme was rolled out in three centres (Clara Youthreach, Edenderry Youthreach and the Tullamore Community Training Centre) from October to December 2008. This project culminated in a women in sport basketball blitz in February 2009.
 - The second programme was a bocchia programme catering for women. This programme was rolled out through the Birr and Tullamore Traveller Training Centres from October to December 2008. 36 women participated on the programme, and with the success of the programme, queries have been received from the centres in relation to the continued roll out of this programme. The Partnership has advised each centre that while the programme has been completed for 2008, it is envisaged that members of the Traveller Tutor Training Project will continue to deliver the programme in centres and sites countywide.

Offaly Sports Partnership wishes to acknowledge the commitment and dedication of the members of the implementation group and the organisations that they represented for bringing this project to fruition. They were Clara Youth Reach, Edenderry Youth Reach, Margaret Sheridan Birr Traveller Training Centre, Marina O'Malley Tullamore Training Centre, and the Tullamore Community Training Centre.