



2023 Derry & Raphoe Mothers' Union Annual Report and Review of Diocesan Activities

Method of Election

Office Bearers within the Dioceses of Derry and Raphoe MU are elected for a term of three years and are eligible for re-election for a second term. Not less than fourteen days before the meeting of the Council nomination papers are sent out to each member of the Council who may nominate one member for the post of President or other Diocesan Official. The nomination papers are returned within a period of time agreed by the Trustee Board to the Finance and Central services Unit Co-ordinator. No name which has received less than three nominations is submitted to the vote. Permission must be sought from a nominee before nomination. On the receipt of the nomination papers by the Finance and Central Services Unit Co-ordinator, a voting paper giving the names of the persons nominated is sent to every member of the Council. Each member of the Council has one vote.

The voting papers are handed to the Finance and Central Services Unit Co-ordinator at the Council meeting and are unsigned. A member of the Council unable to attend the meeting may record their vote by sending their completed and signed voting paper to the Finance and Central Services Unit Co-ordinator before the Council meeting.

All Diocesan Officials are elected by the Diocesan Council and must retire triennially. They shall be ineligible for re-election to the same office, if they have already served two consecutive periods. In the year 1994 and triennially thereafter at the second meeting of the Council held in that year the Diocesan President is elected. In the year 1996, and triennially thereafter, at the first meeting of the Diocesan Council held in that year, the election of all Diocesan Officials, including the Diocesan Secretary is announced and they take up office in January of that year.

Regarding the election of Area Secretaries, nomination and voting papers are prepared by the retiring Area Secretary and copies sent to each Branch Leader, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Member and Clergy wife (if a member of M U) in her area. Once again, no name

which receives less than three nominations can be submitted to the vote and the consent of the nominee must be obtained before nomination.

Main Banker

Mr Peter Clampett, Diocesan Treasurer, Address as above. Banks used for Mothers' Union Diocesan business are the Ulster Bank, Catherine Street, Limavady and the AIB, Main Street, Letterkenny.

Auditor

Mr Gavin Harkin.

Registered with the Charity Commission for NI: NIC100834

UK Inland Revenue No. XR76024

Recognised as a Charity by the Revenue Commissioners: CHY5161

Registered Charity No: 20007331

Aim, Purpose and Objectives of the Mothers' Union

Purpose, Aim and Objects

The Purpose of the Mothers' Union is to be specially concerned with all that strengthens and preserves marriage and Christian family life.

The Aim of the Society is the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of marriage and family life. In order to carry out this Aim, its Objects are:

1. To uphold Christ's teaching on the nature of marriage and promote its wider understanding;
2. To encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church;

3. To maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer, worship and service;
4. To promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and the protection of children;
5. To help those whose family life has met with adversity.

Mission statement of the Mothers' Union

1. The Mothers' Union is an Anglican organisation which promotes the well-being of families world-wide.
2. We achieve this by:
 - (i) developing prayer and spiritual growth in families;
 - (ii) studying and reflecting on family life and its place in society;
 - (iii) resourcing our members to take practical action to improve conditions for families, both nationally and in the communities in which they live.

Diocesan Structure

In keeping with the All-Ireland structure, Derry and Raphoe MU has a Trustee Board and Diocesan Council.

The Trustee Board

The Trustee Board consist of the Diocesan President, the Diocesan Secretary, the Bishop's spouse (if he or she so desires), the four Vice-Presidents and the four Unit Co-ordinators and also the Diocesan Treasurer (non-voting). The Diocesan Chaplain (ex officio) may attend meetings of the Trustee Board but may not vote. In addition, the Diocesan President has authority to invite an individual to any meeting where expertise is required for a specific

task, but they may not vote. The Diocesan President shall have the authority to appoint persons to fill all vacancies created by resignations.

The Trustee Board is the decision-making body in the Diocese. Subject to the approval of the Council, the Trustee Board exercise powers assigned to them by the Diocesan Council. The Trustee Board has the power to form sub-committees. All sub-committees lapse when their function ceases.

The Trustee Board shall meet as may be required but not less than twice annually. The quorum for a meeting of the Trustee Board shall be fifty per cent of the membership plus one.

The Diocesan Council

The Diocesan Council consists of the Diocesan President, the Diocesan Secretary, the Diocesan Treasurer (in attendance but with no voting rights), the Chaplain (ex officio), the four Unit Co-ordinators, the Bishop's Spouse, Unit Representatives, Area Secretaries, the four Vice-Presidents, Branch Leaders, all Past Diocesan Presidents, Branch Secretaries, Branch Treasurers, Representatives on All-Ireland Committees, Representatives on Committees at Mary Sumner House and Any Past All-Ireland President or World Wide President who resides in the Diocese. Clergy spouses who are not office bearers in their Branch may attend Council but may not vote.

The Diocesan Council shall meet at least twice yearly. Forty members constitute a quorum. Not less than fourteen days' written notice of the date of regular meetings is given to members of the Council and copies of the agenda is sent with the notice.

No business is transacted, or motion made at any Council meeting without due notice appearing on the Agenda paper except at the request of the Diocesan President and by consent of two-thirds of the Council present and voting. Every question is settled by a show of hands and every member of Council has one vote. The Chairman has a casting vote in addition to her ordinary vote.

The Diocesan Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Council and keep minutes thereof and generally carry out the business of the Council. The Diocesan Treasurer receives and applies all monies of the Council under such regulations as the Council may make.

The Diocesan President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.

The Derry and Raphoe MU has four Units each with a Unit Co-ordinator. These are:

- (i) Finance and Central Services
- (ii) Action and Outreach
- (iii) Fundraising and Communications
- (iv) Faith and Policy

There are six Area Secretaries, one for each of the geographical locations within the diocese. These are:

- (i) Derry
- (ii) Donegal
- (iii) Omagh
- (iv) North Sperrin
- (v) South Sperrin
- (vi) Strabane.

The Diocesan President has oversight and responsibility for the outworking of Mothers' Union activities in the Diocese. She is encouraged and supported by four Vice-presidents.

Membership

There are 541 members in the Derry and Raphoe Diocese of the MU. This includes 15 new members, 29 Indoor members and 10 Diocesan members. These membership figures reflect the members paid for by our Diocesan Treasurer during the calendar year 2023. The subscription fees collected are £31.00 per member living in the Derry Diocese and €34.00 per member living in the Diocese of Raphoe.

2023 Branch Overview

2023 saw virtually all branches return to a new 'normal'. Many branches are choosing to meet during the day for part or all of the year. Other branches are organising to have some shared meetings. A number of branches have new members, and, as always, a number of members have died. In all our membership stood at 78 members, including 2 Diocesan members in the Raphoe area and 467 in the Derry area, including 5 Diocesan Members. 31 Indoor Members are included in this number?

Janette to provide IM statistics

Ballynascreen MU gave notice of closure in February 2022, to date the closing service has not yet taken place. Falling membership was cited in this closure.

Stranorlar Branch gave notice of closing in early 2023 and Clondevaddock MU gave notice of closing in December 2023. Current branch officers have been in place for a number of terms, and no one was willing to take over. Both branches have indicated that they are keen to keep the link with MU. Due to its rector leaving Stranorlar Branch have not yet held their closing service. Two members joined as Diocesan Members and the Diocesan President was invited to speak at the Harvest Thanksgiving service in Stranorlar Parish Church.

Communications:

- **Facebook** posts continue.
- Due to illness and communication difficulties, the **Derry & Raphoe MU website** is still in place, though we have been unable to update any aspect of it since early 2020.
- An MU related article continues to be placed in the Diocesan **nVision** magazine which is published four times a year.
- Each month a **diocesan email** including information together with a short thought and prayer is emailed to every diocesan member and branch. Some branches share this information.
- In October MU were given an opportunity to speak to our **Diocesan Synod** for 3 minutes. This year we concentrated on promoting the RISE UP project and . MUe had another successful day promoting MU.
- **On Sunday Sequence, Radio Ulster** Jacqui had a 10 min interview with Audrey Carville in January. She was also interviewed, along with June Butler, AI President, for the latest

Church of Ireland **Council for Mission video** centring on the fourth mark of mission – *Tackling Unjust Structures*.

- Trustees agreed to the adaptation of the MU Connor booklet for members entitled '**Your membership Makes a Difference**'. This was adapted to reflect Derry & Raphoe, and contains a section supplied by Mary Sumner House midyear entitled - *What does your subscription deliver?* This was delivered to branches for distribution in January 2024.

Diocesan Awards

The Helen Livingston Award for the Branch Programme that best reflects the current theme and the aims and objects of MU was won by Clondehorkey MU. The judge stated that it was '*simple, very clear, front cover informative, programme details simply and clearly done with enough detail included – excellent*'

The Presidents' Award took the form of a Table Quiz. This award was won by the team from Templemore MU and Strabane MU received the runner up Avril McNee Rose Bowl.

Worldwide: Despite the rising cost of living, MU members continue to give generously to Worldwide projects. 20 out of the 32 branches contributed to worldwide in 2023. *The Eileen Moore Award* is awarded to the branch who has contributed the most per member to the worldwide work of Mothers' Union in 2022. In all Derry diocese contributed £6,043.22 and Raphoe diocese contributed €2,550. Clondehorkey won the Eileen Moore Award, contributing an average of €53.08 per member.

Diocesan Chaplain: in September we congratulated and sent our best wishes and prayers to Very Rev. Liz Fitzgerald on her appointment as Dean of St Eunan's Cathedral and Rector of Raphoe, Raymochy and Clonleigh.

Council Meetings: At Spring Council we introduced a new look Council meeting. **15 branches** were represented. Officers were invited to read the reports beforehand. Council included a 'Whistlestop Tour of Mothers' Union' presented on PP by the Diocesan President, each Unit Coordinator introduced their team, presented the current main focus of their unit and gave the floor an opportunity to ask questions. This was followed by treasurers, branch leaders and secretaries getting together in groups for discussion. Feedback was excellent and those present appreciated the engagement and the format of the evening.

Due to refurbishment of the Diocesan Office, Autumn Council was held on zoom. 17 branches were represented. Angela Hughes, Neonatal Manager, Altnagelvin Area Hospital, addressed MU members. This was her opportunity to personally thank members, to engender interest and to give guidance. Unfortunately, it was not possible on this occasion to forward reports beforehand, consequently members had to listen more and time did not afford opportunity to engage on a meaningful basis.

Diocesan Members:

We have a small but growing number of Diocesan Members. 7 in 2023. They met in January for coffee and chat, at a Flower Festival in June, enjoyed a Christmas lunch in December and supported MU diocesan events throughout the year. Each month they receive the Derry & Raphoe monthly email. Our Diocesan Secretary, Kathleen Finlay, greatly assists in motivating the Diocesan Members and oversees a monthly round of golf with MU members and friends.

All Ireland Triennial Conference:

Revitalise, reenergise, renew was the underlying theme of the reimagining conference at An Grianán at the end of March and those who were present built new, as well as renewing,

friendships while endeavouring to plan for the future of MU, building on our experience, knowledge and skills. **Six members attended representing the diocese and two further members were present as All Ireland officers.** During the weekend equipping leaders, support improving relationships with all levels of clergy and promoting the work of MU, reviewing membership categories and criteria, MU Live and many other elements of reimagining MU were discussed and explored. The DP, whilst still in isolation regarding covid, was pleased to take part in the DP meeting via zoom on the Sunday morning.

Annual Gathering in York

The Diocesan President and Diocesan Secretary attended the MU Annual Gathering in York joining with 800 members across the Britain and Ireland, including 15 members from Ireland. There, Sheran Harper, Worldwide President, gave a very moving and motivating keynote address. Membership, clergy engagement and new and innovative ways of reimagining MU were to the forefront. The RISE UP Against Domestic Abuse Campaign was launched. We were inspired by the energy of Mothers' Union in taking forward community and social projects wherever we are.

MU Live Reports

The remainder of the Derry & Raphoe Annual Report is cut and pasted from MU Live postings. Remembering to log onto MU Live with information is a challenge, yet the information it contains at year's end is uplifting and revealing.

Category Description: Offering Gifts of Love – Mums In May Grants

Number of people impacted: Community: 600

Mums In May is MU's triennial fundraiser in Ireland. Mums in May makes grants available to each diocese. This makes a REAL difference to our outreach, enabling us to creating new projects and to support existing projects.

Recent grants received in Derry & Raphoe have supported

- *Family Fun Days* - over 200 children and their parents attended two Fun Days - one for families of children with disabilities and the other was the annual Diocesan Family Fun Day. We Manned the welcome tables and provided help throughout these activity led days in partnership with our Children's SEEDS ministry and Derry Raphoe Youth
- *The Ukrainian Teddy Project* continued - to date over 220 teddies have been distributed to Ukrainian refugees in Derry & Raphoe

A £1,000 MIM Special Summer grant was awarded to each diocese requesting that the funding be used for disadvantaged children and families. With this funding DRMU supported:

- *A refugee resettlement project* where two families were being housed in Donegal.
- *A refugee initiative* in partnership with Foyle Friends of Ukraine - 8 adults, 7 primary, 6 teenagers. Four trauma informed workshops took place with a fully qualified art therapist.
- *A 6 week food programme* supporting 64 young people and their parents in a deprived area - breakfast and lunch was served daily
- *Two Families in challenging circumstances*
- *A Youth Club initiative* to thank carers in their community -- to reach approx 250 carers and workers in care homes. Many carers in one care home from Sri Lanka - a lovely gift and welcome for them. MU supplied 120 Curry In a Hurry books towards this project - simple recipes with ingredients found in every supermarket.
- *Food vouchers* supplied for migrant families living on the breadline - 8 £10 food vouchers very gratefully received

Changes Brought: This outreach has welcomed many strangers to Irleand and brought hope to many children and families. Through it we are building stronger partnerships with our clergy, with refugees and migrants in our communities, with our children youth and their families.

It is portraying MU at its best and we are recognised as a positive face to 'faith in action' in Derry & Raphoe

Category Description: Nurturing Faith

Day of Refreshment: A Spring Morning, with Bishop Pat Storey, on the theme '*Reinvent*', was held on Saturday 25th February in Clooney Methodist Centre. This was a very fulfilling event. Bishop Pat based the inspiring sessions on Psalm 139; reminding us that we are "fearfully and wonderfully made". She challenged us to consider this from our mind, body and soul perspective. This was a perfect, reflective start to the Lent season, leaving us with a Lenten promise "to be kinder to me". We headed home with the word JOY imprinted on our minds. C.40 members attended and a Fairtrade stall was available.

Two '**Summer Gatherings**' were hosted in Convoy in Raphoe Diocese and Errigal (Garvagh) in Derry Diocese. In a summer where the good weather was hard to find, both days we were blessed with beautiful sunshine. There was a great buzz and lots of laughter as members and friends came together, uplifted by the words of Bishop Andrew and Irene Boyd (All Ireland Indoor Members Contact) at the respective services. We enjoyed fellowship together with the sumptuous and delicious tea parties; everyone rejoicing in coming together, the gift of spiritual nourishment, and the freedom of giving and receiving hugs and handshakes and chatting with friends. C. 75 people attended.

International Widows' Day: Branches were encouraged to connect with widows in their parish. A set of prayers from All Ireland was forwarded to all branches for individual, branch or parish use. On **Mary Sumner Day** members gathered for a Prayer Walk in the See House Quiet Garden. The garden itself has undergone much transformation over several years and was a very fitting location for the 'Transformation' theme of the day. Revd Liz Fitzgerald opened the afternoon reflecting on how, as was evident in the beautiful surroundings of the gardens, with a bit of toil and effort we can make great things happen. As music Andrew White's music filled the air the prayer walk began. Each stop along the way centred on one of our four units – Central Services, Action and Outreach, Fundraising and Communications and Faith and Policy – giving thanks for all the work that had been done and praying for strength and encouragement as we move forward in this time of change and hopefully new growth. C.45 people attended

The **Diocesan Service** was held in St. Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe in mid September. This was well attended by members and clergy. The speaker was Jenny Smyth, CMSI, who had recently visited a number of dioceses in Africa. In each diocese MU were very active and Jenny spoke glowingly of CMSI support and partnership with MU work in these dioceses. It was wonderful for members and clergy to hear of the amazing and transformative work of MU across Africa c.120 attended

Thy Kingdom Come and Prisons Week:

Prayer resources were widely shared and participation was encouraged.

Category Description: Campaigning

16 Days 365 International Women's Day Service - A beautifully prepared worship service was led by Chaplain Rev Liz Fitzgerald on Wednesday 8th March, International Women's Day. Despite

bitterly cold weather a large crowd gathered in St Eunan's Cathedral, Raphoe and a lovely time of hymn singing, worship and fellowship was had by all.

Guest speaker Dr Marie Hainsworth, Director of Donegal Domestic Violence Services, explained how valuable the support of Mothers Union has been. Our donations give the organisation flexibility to make small creative differences to women and children in extreme situations. It was significant that Donegal Mayor, Councillor Dónal Kelly, joined us to indicate his interest and support. It was a privilege to share tea and chat with Dr. Hainsworth and the mayor following the service and welcome so many members to this memorable occasion.

Changes Brought: 58 people attended who are now more aware of the specific needs of women and children in Co. Donegal. Branches have made a personal connection with DDVS and Dr. Hainsworth and her team are willing to engage with parishes / branches.

Dr. Hainsworth is passionate regarding the effect of domestic violence/abuse on children and has agreed to write an article for the Autumn edition of Derry & Raphoe Diocesan Magazine. Donations on the evening for DDVS came to €530

The Mayor indicated the occasion was particularly helpful in informing him on the current issues surrounding domestic abuse in his area.

The service centred on celebrating achievements and on EMBRACING EQUITY, the theme of IWD 2023. DP collated the service and introduced the theme of Embracing Equity in a global and local MU context.

Category Description: Offering Gifts of Love

Information about the activity: Domestic Abuse Services

Changes Brought: January 2023

'We thank you most sincerely for your donation of €405, raised at eh 16 Days 365 service to mark the retirement of Mary McKenna. We appreciate all your support over the years for this much needed service. ' Marie and staff at DDVS (Donegal Domestic Violence Services)

February 2023

'Thank you for the kind donation of children's pyjamas, baby items, women's clothing, bedding, colouring books and crayons that we received in November 2023.

These donations were warmly received by the women, children and families we support.'

M. Brown, CEO, Foyle Women's Aid & Foyle Family Justice Centre

Category Description: Campaigning

Information about the activity: 16 Days 365 in 2023

Global Day of Action: In Derry & Raphoe, the Mothers' Union 16 Days Global Day of Activism was marked with a #NO MORE 1 in3 RISE UP ROADSHOW in St. Columba's Parish Hall, Omagh. The Roadshow was opened by Councillor, Anne-Marie Donnelly, Vice Chair of Fermanagh & Omagh Council. Keynote speaker Adel Fox, Omagh Women's Aid set the exceptional context on Domestic Abuse; Sgt, Johnny Beattie, PSNE NPT & Vulnerability Team, spoke engagingly on the Role of the PSNI in tackling Domestic Abuse and Rev, John White, led and encouraging session on the Church rising up to take action in this important topic.

The Roadshow featured the supports of the PCSP and PSNI in the community under the guidance of Greg McMullan, Claire Hinchcliff, Diocesan Youth Officer, encouraged participants to engage with the mental wellbeing TOOLBOX, Anita Hill created a mini Souls of Our Shoes Exhibition, Ger West ably guided us in the creation of origami doves and Diane White outlined the MU RISE UP

BRONZE AWARD. In the midst of it all the ladies of Drumragh MU Branch served a sumptuous cup of tea! It was a wonderful, memorable and worthwhile occasion.

Attendance: 36

Refuge Support: Once again there was a generous response from branches to the call for support for Foyle Women's Aid, Omagh Women's aid and Donegal Domestic Violence Services.

Euro Vouchers: £910 Sterling Vouchers: £425

A generous and varied selection of items was delivered to each service provider.

Parish Outreach: An invitation was sent to all rectors and branches for the Global Day of Activism event. 16 Days intercessions were forwarded to all parishes and branches. Members were encouraged to spread the word far and wide.

Schools Outreach:

Two secondary schools availed of the 16 Days outreach in 2023.

The NI College has 1,500 students. Operation Encompass has really awoken staff interest and this year they decided to have a 16 Days outreach throughout the school. MU was invited to conduct MU two Assemblies – lower 6th and upper 6th. The school collaborated with Foyle Women's Aid and MU in seeking advice in presenting an assembly to the younger age groups. FWA provided an Assembly for Y10-Y14. The school is the first school to enter into an official partnership with FWA. All students will undertake a Healthy Relationships programme delivered by FWA. FWA also provided slides for the College's public computer system – which was on a roll on Friday 24th November – WEAR PURPLE DAY. Students were encourage to wear purple, contribute 50p and a 'bun sale' took place. 420 students attended the two assemblies conducted by Jacqui Armstrong, Diocesan President.

The RoI Comprehensive School has also engaged very positively since the 16 Days 2017. Here they prefer a more detailed 40 min presentation with each 5th and 6th Year classes. In 2023 4 presentations were led by Jacqui with 220 students in all. The students were highly engaged and interested.

Changes Brought: The three domestic abuse services were delighted to receive the goods and the vouchers each reiterated that these would make a huge difference to their clients.

The schools are very engaged and each year move a step further in building healthy relationship programmes. A pdf leaflet was prepared with a short explanation of the 16 Days and GBV, age appropriate signs of healthy and unhealthy relationships, and a short list of helpful helplines.

It is difficult to encourage people to attend Global Day events. However, one member who had never engaged with the 16 Days was bowled over by the content of the day. She didn't know why she had never engaged in the past and is now determined to do so in the future.

The RISE UP Roadshow was advertised widely in the diocese, so many people have heard about it and we shall build on this in 2024.

'Equipping The Church To Take Action and End Domestic Abuse' Six parishes in Derry & Raphoe have undertaken this programme.

'Changing The Story Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group': One facilitator and one member attended the first Kintsugi Hope Wellbeing Group in 2023

Church Informed Trauma Training: Two members from Derry & Raphoe are currently undergoing this training programme.

Two **‘Changing The Story on Domestic Abuse’ conferences** took place in September in Seagoe Parish Centre, Portadown and Kilternan Parish Centre, Dublin. The two brilliant and engaging keynote speakers were Bekah Legg, Restored, and Helen Paynter, author of *‘The Bible Doesn’t Tell Me So’*. During the conference Rev. Graham Hare, Drumragh spoke movingly of the positive impact and engagement his parish team have experienced as a result of undertaking the Equipping the Church Programme, Jacqui Armstrong, DP, summed up the programme and Bishop Andrew Forster closed the conference in Portadown with stirring and empowering words. Various partners on the issue of domestic abuse spoke from an Irish perspective. These were two highly impactful days. In all 152 people attended from across Ireland. Those present were highly engaged and amazed by what they had experienced in the course of each conference. Three members and four clergy attended from Derry & Raphoe.

Category Description: Offering Gifts of Love – Emergency Toilet Packs

Number of people impacted: Hospitals: 435

Information about the activity: Altnagelvin Area Hospital

13th January 2023	50 Emergency Toilet Bags	
4th April 2023 -	113 Emergency Toilet Bags	
18th June 2023	111 Emergency Toilet Bags	
September 2023	100 Emergency Toilet Bags	TOTAL 374

Letterkenny University Hospital

February 2023	41 Emergency Toilet Bags	
September 2023	20 Toilet Bags	TOTAL 61

Changes Brought: Emergency Toilet Packs are handed to those who have come into hospital suddenly and want to be able to have a shower or just freshen up. They are also for the use of parents or family who are staying with a patient.

Category Description: Crafting

Number of people impacted: Community: 20 Hospitals: 2017

Information about the activity: 20 hats delivered to Women's Centre, Derry where BAME women and children meet in groups during the week. TOTAL 20

13th Jan 2023 - Altnagelvin Area Hospital	100 Baby Hats
75 Teddies	30 Prem Hats
7 Knitted breasts	8 Prem Cardigans
6 Lap blanket	30 Baby Cardigans
3 Cot blanket	10 Knitted Prem Gowns
10 Prem blanket	4 Angel Pockets
70 Prem hats	4 Prem Blankets
120 Baby hats	7 Cot Blankets
21 Prem cardigans	8 Cosy Nests/Quilt
10 Baby cardigans	6 Pairs Bonding Hearts and Squares
5 Angel pockets	10 Fiddle Muffs/ 3 Fidget Blankets
6 Fiddle muffs	10 Prayer Squares TOTAL 260
7 Fidget blankets	
TOTAL 340 items	

15th June 2023: Altnagelvin Area Hospital

4th April 2023 - Altnagelvin Area Hospital	Baby Hats = 329
30 Teddies	Prem Hats = 75

Angel Pockets. = 9
Trauma Teddies = 90
Baby Cardigan = 36
Prem Cardigan = 20
Blankets
Prem. = 4
Cot. = 4
Large = 13
Lap. = 6
Fiddle Muffs. = 15
5 pairs Bonding Squares
3 pairs Bonding hearts
12 Prayer Squares
Bag of booties 20 TOTAL 641

September 2023 - Altnagelvin Hospital

53 Teddies
6 Cot Quilts
2 Incubator covers
9 Cosy nests
46 Prayer Squares
19 Pairs Bonding hearts
4 Pairs Bonding Teddies
70 Baby hats
13 Baby cardigans
14 Lap blankets
20 Prem hats
15 Cot blankets
TOTAL 271 crafted items

(TOTAL 1,512 items to Altnagelvin AH in 2023)

FEBRUARY 2023 - LUH - 45 pairs of hearts for
End of Life Team

JULY 2023:LUH End of Life Team - 103 prayer
squares

September 2023 24 Prayer Squares in pairs +
6 pairs of hearts
TOTAL: 178

LETTERKENNY UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL - 4th

April 2023

30 Baby Hats
16 Prem Hats
4 Prem Cardigans
5 Cot Blankets
6 Fiddle Muffs
3 Lap Blankets TOTAL 109

9th May 2023:LUH

6 Fiddle Muffs
3 Fidget Blankets
4 Angel Pockets
60 Baby Hats
10 Cot Blankets
12 Red baby Hats TOTAL 95

September 2023 LUH

4 Lap blankets
3 large blankets
7 Fiddle muffs
4 Prem blankets
3 Cot blankets
50 Baby hats
25 large hats
15 Prem hats
5 baby cardigans
7 Teddies
5 pairs hearts
TOTAL 103 crafted items

(Total of 485 items to LUH in 2023)

Changes Brought: The hats to the BAME women and children were particularly welcome in the cold spell as these women and children find the climate here very inclement.

Hospitals:

An email received from Elizabeth, Sister in Ward 25, the Fracture Ward in Altnagelvin Hospital thanking Mothers' Union for handmade knitted gifts and emergency hygiene provision packs. 'We are delighted to receive these gifts, for patients and are already making great use of them. The teddys bears, blankets and fidget blankets are all very useful for our patients in the ward, we use these with patients who have dementia or confused as a means of diversion for them to help them feel at ease.'

Niamh, End of Life Coordinator, Letterkenny University Hospital

'Thank you for the beautiful knitted hearts that your group left in the hospital. These hearts have given great comfort to grieving families. I have personally used them many times with families over the past two years.

Recently, I had a large bag of knitted hearts left at A+E for me on the first day that I started my new post as End of Life coordinator. All the staff loved the hearts and accompanying prayers. The little flat knitted pieces have been very useful for teenage boys who lost their dad. I just want to make sure you realise how much they have helped. Again – thank you.'

Category Description: Offering Gifts of Love – Ukrainian Welcome Teddies

Number of people impacted: Community: 147

Information about the activity: Ukrainian Teddy welcome packs were requested a special Ukrainian Christmas event (at Epiphany), hosted by the Lady Lord Mayor on 8th January. This was a wonderful gathering for 600 Ukrainian mothers and children, and local VIPs to celebrate Christmas on Ukraine's traditional date.

- 48 teddies and passports were presented to children in 3-5 years group in Girdwood Community Hall in North Belfast.
- Kiltonga Christian Centre distributed 32 MU Ukrainian teddies for a similar 'Ethnic Project' gathering in North Down and Ards Council area before Christmas.
- On the 5th May 35 teddies were delivered to the Ukrainian Community in Merville, Co. Donegal.
- On the 8th July, Day 500, 20 teddies were handed over to Ukrainian children in Derry-Londonderry. Young mums come to learn English and the children are minded by Ukrainian volunteers in Foyle Child Contact Centre.
- 12 teddies were gratefully received by a teacher in Milford NS in Co. Donegal where a number of Ukrainian families are settling into Donegal life.

Changes Brought:

Girdwood Epiphany celebration

Comment received afterwards:

'Thank you very much, that you could come and spend a time with our community. It was a great idea to present teddies to our toddlers. I hope you likes this event and enjoy. We try to make as better as we can ...' Alina from Ukraine.

Merville, Co. Donegal

Tears welled up as the Ukrainian Teddies were distributed to the children. The women and mothers were so touched and each asked to hold one. Some ladies have children still in the Ukraine and all of them were missing home. The ladies have very little English and expressed their thanks and delight through one lady and a few teenage interpreters.

FCC, Derry- Londonderry

HOPE and encouragement were brought to the women and children learning English. Interesting conversations with the young Mums regarding the trauma they had experienced and their experiences in Ireland.

Category Description: Offering Gifts of Love – Prison Outreach

In November 2023, 200 cards were handed to Paul Darragh, Prison Fellowship worker in Magilligan Prison. These had been obtained from the MSH Community of Interest for Prisons initiative, building on the link we made through the provision of cards in 2022.

Category Description: AFIA Cost of Living BAME Outreach

Following research undertaken on the plight of BAME women in Derry and Raphoe with Foyle Women's Aid, Omagh Women's Aid, the Women's Centre, Derry and Donegal Domestic Violence Services, funding was requested and received to assist BAME women and children.

The critical BAME women are those from Africa and Asia eg. China, Vietnam and other non European destinations, who may have arrived on a spousal visa or have made their way to N Ireland/Ireland in the hope of either gaining refugee status or of attempting to apply for leave to remain once they have arrived. Those from the Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan are afforded rights once they arrive.

Accessing supports for BAME can be complicated. Once forms are filled in it can be a minimum of 12 weeks until women receive support. BAME women in NI are entitled to £41 per week and £3 extra per child. If domestic abuse is a factor, there is a current pilot project with the Home Office where a weekly allowance of £60 plus £15 per child has been negotiated. This is only available for 12 weeks, by which time the women are supposed to be rehoused. In reality this is impossible and services are supporting the BAME women and children as best as possible.

In RoI most women have a Stamp 3 visa with almost no entitlements, so every effort is made to transfer them to a Stamp 4 visa, which opens access to housing and education.

In both jurisdictions women are often advised to go home and apply for correct visa designations and re-enter NI or RoI, as applicable.

Comments:

'Thanks again, this is very much appreciated. Your kind donation will indeed help our current BAME clients with no recourse to public funds.' FWA

'Thank you so much for this funding and for taking the time and interest in this aspect of the work. We will keep you informed of how it was used.' DDVS

'Thank you so much for the very kind donation we are very appreciative.' WC

'Thank you so much for your ongoing support and this is particularly beneficial for those more vulnerable BME women as discussed.' OWA

2023 AFIA Cost of Living Crisis Scheme

During 2023 the 'normal' AFIA Cost of Living Scheme supported 9 households which included 15 adults, 11 children under 13 and 3 teenagers.

Changes Brought: AFIA is a confidential service.

The funding is to be used as directed eg. top ups for energy cards, supermarket vouchers, Shopping Centre vouchers, housing needs etc. Tabs are kept by agencies on who gets what so they can track what is going on.

Several clergy have indicated their support for MU through AFIA CoL Crisis Scheme.

One recent comment

'I have to say, we'd be lost without the work of MU!'

In conclusion

The work Mothers' Union undertakes in Derry & Raphoe is amazing. It can only be so through the wonderful dedication of our diocesan trustees, diocesan officers, branch officers, diocesan members and branch members, and for this we are very grateful. We are also very thankful for the

encouraging support we receive from our bishop and clergy, our partners within the diocese and the many friends of MU.

We thank God for the light of His love that shines in Derry & Raphoe on behalf of MU and our continued prayer is that this light will continue to bear fruit for God's Kingdom as we move 'REIMAGINING' forward in 2024.

None of you lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl.

Instead, you put it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light.'

(Luke 11: 33)

Jacqui Armstrong,
Diocesan President

December 2023