

Directors Report

A lot has changed within this period: the cost of living has increased, reduced funding across the sector, and an increased pressure on communities to fill the void caused by a lack of government has taken its toll on many community organisations and those working within them.

However, a lot has also stayed the same: the care and dedication provided by the staff and volunteers in Focus on Family, the variety of programmes we have on offer to the community, and the positive impact Focus on Family has within Ballysally, Coleraine and further afield.

We had to make the very difficult decision to close The Little Wonders childcare facility, and this was not a decision that was taken lightly. The service delivered by The Little Wonders team was first class but unfortunately in this current economic climate, it was not viable to keep it open any longer. Directors want to thank The Little Wonders team for all their hard work, passion and determination over the years in providing a safe, caring and nurturing environment where children were able to thrive, and parents trusted us with their little ones.

Thank you also to Brendan, our Project Manager, who has continued to build the organisation within these trying times and has adapted to every new situation which arises. His passion, his vision and his dedication has ensured that Focus on Family stays relevant and provides the services needed by its community. At a time when it is easy to become disheartened within the community and voluntary sector, Brendan has continually stepped up and moved this organisation forward, with the support of his team and Directors. And a heartfelt thank you to each member of the Focus on Family team; each person plays a vital role in supporting the Ballysally community and is an integral part of the jigsaw which is Focus on Family!

We couldn't carry out our activities without the financial assistance and support of our many funders, and I would like to place on record Director's thanks to them for believing in us and our vision.

Directors are proud of Focus on Family, and of each member of our team. We wish them all every success and happiness in the future, continuing to grow and go from strength to strength.

Our SureStart childcare manager and team continue to provide an outstanding service to support little children and their families – and it always raises a smile to hear them singing and laughing throughout the building!

We also continue to provide a diverse and healthy range of courses and programmes for local families and individuals to access and benefit from and this includes our nurturing programmes for parents and children, recreational courses for people to socialise and participate in activities they enjoy, therapy programmes to enhance health and well-being, Essential Skills courses in Maths, English & ICT, working with the Men's Shed & Coleraine Armed Forces Club at The Cornfield Project, the newly established Aspire Media Academy, the Ballysally Integrated Nurturing Project and the wide range of other groups that bring their own activities in the centre.

We genuinely have the most committed and passionate staff team here at Focus on Family. It is well recognised, as with many workers in our sector, that they are underpaid for the roles that they do, but they are never under-valued. From across the organisation and much wider from every single child, parent or individual that they positively impact, their tireless work doesn't go unnoticed.

And what could we say about our volunteer team?! We are truly blessed to have the most amazing, colourful, and upbeat group any organisation could wish for. Volunteers from all walks

of life help to make Focus on Family what it is – a truly diverse and thriving organisation – and we simply couldn't do what we do without the vast range of volunteer supports. We have volunteers in reception, building supervision and maintenance, launderette, childcare, counselling, delivering courses in sewing, cookery, arts & crafts, reiki, supporting nurturing programmes, social enterprise work, media projects, outdoor activity and much more!

Focus on Family has always been about people and with the Directors, staff, and volunteers here, and with the wider community behind us, we will move forward to a positive future and despite the many challenges, always with a smile on our faces!