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**Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, is Patron of Third Age.**

Third Age is a registered Charity 16647, Company No 414509

## **Third Age Vision**

An Ireland and a world where the third age in life is valued and celebrated

## **Third Age Mission**

To value older people's contribution to society and help to meet their personal and community needs through innovative programmes

## Chairman's Address

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I am delighted to present the Third Age annual report for 2014 - a year which was a very successful and groundbreaking one for the organisation. Our work took place against a difficult funding environment in the charity sector, and in a climate where honesty and transparency is particularly prized. Early in the year a Finance and Governance sub-committee of the board was established. At the same time, our CEO set up a senior management committee to review policy. This committee carried out a thorough examination of current policies and procedures in line with best practice, having regard to staff welfare, organisational transparency and risk assessment.

Third Age is a national voluntary organisation responding to the opportunities and challenges of ageing in Ireland. Third Age has over 1,200 volunteers countrywide, working as tutors, listeners, advocates and more. Thousands of people of all ages benefit each week from our services, by volunteering on our projects, and participating in our programmes, which include lifelong learning, health and social initiatives.

A number of changes took place at board level in 2014. Two board members – Tim O'Connor and Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh – retired during the year. Both Tim and Micheál were splendid ambassadors for Third Age. We also thank them for their huge contribution to the work of the board and I would like to add a personal thanks for their support to me as Chair. We also welcomed Tom Collins as a new board member in January. As a board we also acknowledge the support provided by Tom Costello who has retired as Programme Executive with The Atlantic Philanthropies, and by Sarah Donohoe, Atlantic Philanthropies Acting Professional Associate.

On the staff front we welcomed Mervyn Taylor, Programme Manager of Sage – Support and Advocacy for Older People, (formerly known as the Third Age National Advocacy Programme), and his team. We also welcomed Ruth Loughran, our new Business Strategy Executive, Natasha McAvinney and Claire Dalton, Fáilte Isteach Development Officers, and Beryl Carroll, Senior Help Line Administrator. Our team continues to expand.

Our colleagues Liam Carey and Ariana Ball were appointed Innovation Hub Programme Manager and Fáilte Isteach Programme Manager respectively, and we wish them well in their new posts. This year we said goodbye to Ann Cox, Fáilte Isteach Development Officer, Neil Bruton, Communications and Marketing Officer, and Mary Fletcher Smith, Acting Programme Manager of our Advocacy Programme, all of whom left us for pastures new.

In June 2014 our new national headquarters opened in Summerhill, Co. Meath. Sited in the Summerhill HSE Primary Care Centre, the facility includes a GP practice and pharmacy as well as Third Age. The event was celebrated by members old and new, friends of Third Age, staff and colleagues. We were lucky with the weather, and the sun shone down on Minister Alex White TD who performed the opening ceremony and on distinguished guests. Our new offices point a positive way forward for Third Age, offering us meeting rooms, modern offices, kitchen and patio garden.

Third Age connects and engages with older people within their communities through our three national programmes. These programmes continued to develop successfully during 2014 and were joined by our new initiative, the Third Age Innovation Hub.



During 2014, Fáilte Isteach opened seven new branches. This means that every week during the academic year 650 volunteer tutors in 68 centres welcome over 2,000 students to free conversational English classes. In December Third Age held a national event in Dublin to acknowledge and celebrate the work of our Fáilte Isteach volunteers. Looking at the hundreds of volunteers as I thanked everyone for coming, I reflected that a project like Fáilte Isteach answering a real need is bound to be successful.

In January Senior Help Line embarked on the first year of its three-year centralisation programme. By December, over 60 new volunteers had been trained, mentored and were working with the service. Many of our new volunteers are retired people with skills that they still want to use. Working with the help line gives continued recognition to these abilities and life experience, as well as providing a social outlet. Meanwhile, our traditional volunteers in established centres continue to be supported, and I cannot thank them enough for their continued commitment to easing the path of life for older people in need of support.

2014 was the year of the greatest change and development in our advocacy programme, Sage Support & Advocacy for Older People. With the support of Atlantic Philanthropies and the HSE and in continued partnership with Nursing Homes Ireland, Sage is continuing to consolidate and develop. June 2014 saw the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement by the HSE, Atlantic Philanthropies and Third Age for the development of Sage as a support and advocacy service for older people. In December Sage officially opened its own new office in Dublin.

Another new development for Third Age during the year has been the birth of the Innovation Hub. This development builds on the organisation's reputation for innovation in offering a step by step process for screening and developing new projects. The Innovation Hub is being funded by The Atlantic Philanthropies, and we thank them for seeing its potential in the sector.

Third Age Summerhill, under the guidance of Mary Nally - in charge of local services and activities - has had a busy year. A number of new health initiatives were introduced bringing in new members and benefiting the health and well being of existing members. An intergenerational dance project in conjunction with Scoil Dara Secondary School Kilcock, Co. Kildare is proving a hit with all ages. In addition, holidays, outings, and many services were available for members who come from near and far to avail of our local programmes. While Third Age has developed successfully into a national organisation over the years, our ongoing commitment to local older people means that their needs continue to be met through a vibrant local service.

While this is a challenging time for charities and voluntary bodies, Third Age remains fortunate in attracting funds from those who know our track record and believe in our vision. I would like to offer a particular vote of thanks to the generous support from The Atlantic Philanthropies, to the HSE, our core funder, to the Iris O'Brien Foundation, the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration and to Nursing Homes Ireland. We also wish to thank members of the public, donors, sponsors and members for their support in 2014.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the professional expertise and generous time given by my fellow Board members, and on their behalf express our appreciation of the wonderful leadership of our excellent CEO, Áine Brady, her top class management team and all the dedicated loyal staff of Third Age.

**Tom Dowling**  
*Chairman*

## Who's Who in Third Age?

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### Board

**Board Chairman:**

Tom Dowling

**Company Secretary:**

Maura O'Keeffe

**Board Members:**

Katie Burke, Pat Cox, Mary Culliton, Michael Meally,  
Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh<sup>^</sup>, Tom Collins<sup>\*</sup>, Tim O'Connor<sup>+</sup>

<sup>^</sup> resigned in November

<sup>\*</sup> appointed in January

<sup>+</sup> resigned in August

### Senior Help Line

**Board Chairman:**

Tom Dowling

**Company Secretary:**

Michael Meally

**Board Members:**

Katie Burke, Pat Cox, Mary Culliton, Michael Meally,  
Maura O'Keeffe, Mícheál Ó Muircheartaigh<sup>^</sup>, Tom Collins<sup>\*</sup>,  
Tim O'Connor<sup>+</sup>

<sup>^</sup> resigned in November

<sup>\*</sup> appointed in January

<sup>+</sup> resigned in August

### Staff

#### Third Age

**Chief Executive Officer**

Áine Brady

**Operations & Finance Manager**

Alison Branigan

**Communications Manager**

Anne Dempsey

**Administrative Assistant**

Maeve Carton

**Administrative Assistant**

Monica Ryan

#### Sage Support & Advocacy Service for Older People

**Programme Manager**

Mervyn Taylor

**Service Administrator**

Roisin Clarke

**Intern**

Helen Fitzgerald

**Research & Information Coordinator**

Maria Patterson

**Education, Training & Support Coordinator**

Michelle Rooney

**Education, Training & Support Adviser**

Dr Meta Reid

**Development Coordinator**

Eileen O'Callaghan

**Development Workers**

Trish Martyn

Michael Cahillane

Danielle Monahan

Vivienne Ahern Dooge

Anne Griffin

Maureen Finlay

Brenda Quigley

Tessa Digby

Anne Harris

**Practice Development Adviser**

**Special Projects**



Áine Brady, CEO ▲

### ***Fáilte Isteach***

***Head of National Development  
National Development Officer  
National Development Officer***

Ariana Ball  
Natasha McAvinney  
Claire Dalton

### ***Senior Help Line***

***Programme Manager  
Summerhill Administrator  
Dublin Administrator***

Damian Leneghan  
Ann O'Brien  
Beryl Carroll

### ***Innovation Hub***

***Programme Manager  
Business Strategy Executive***

Liam Carey  
Ruth Loughran

### ***Summerhill***

***Founder, Head of Services  
Administrator  
Administrative Assistant  
Driver  
Driver  
Little Jobs Manager  
Housekeeper***

Mary Nally  
Yvonne Keane  
Noreen Edwards  
Martin Daly  
Gareth Bennett  
Sean Reilly  
Sai Ying Pak

*Third Age employs a number of staff under the FÁS Community Employment Scheme*

## **Developments 2014**

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During 2014 CEO Áine Brady set up a policy review committee composed of senior management under the chairmanship of the Innovation Hub Programme Manager. The work of this group was to revise and develop the current policies and procedures of Third Age in line with best practice regarding health and safety, staff welfare, organisational transparency and risk assessment. This has led to a review of such policies, including draft recommendations for change and action being submitted to the management team. The aim is to ensure that all internal stakeholders are committed to, and knowledgeable about Third Age's approach to delivering quality programmes and opportunities for older people. This work is ongoing.

A Finance & Governance sub-committee of the board was established in February 2014. We wish to thank outgoing board member Tim O'Connor for chairing this sub-committee until September, and we thank Tom Collins for taking over on Tim's resignation. The Irish funding environment 2013-2014 has been difficult due to some fiscal scandals associated with high profile charities. This has created a more problematic funding environment for the NGO sector in terms of public trust and transparency. Third Age is committed to transparency in answering any media questions regarding organisational matters, including staff salaries.



We wish to thank outgoing board member Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh both for his work on the board and for the way he has externally promoted and represented Third Age. We wish also to place on record our thanks and appreciation to Tom Costello, who has retired as Programme Executive with The Atlantic Philanthropies and to Sarah Donohoe, Acting Professional Associate, both of whom have been so helpful in guiding and supporting our organisation in recent years.

## **A Year of Change & Expansion**

Third Age has undergone a number of significant changes during the year. These include:

- Reorganised structure for Sage, Support & Advocacy Service for Older People formerly known as the Third Age National Advocacy programme
- Appointment of Mervyn Taylor, Programme Manager Sage, and recruitment of relevant team
- Founding of Innovation Hub and appointment of Liam Carey as its Programme Manager
- Appointment of Ariana Ball as Fáilte Isteach Programme Manager, and appointment of Fáilte Isteach National Development Officers - Natasha McAvinney and Claire Dalton
- Appointment of Ruth Loughran as Third Age Business Strategy Executive
- Continued centralisation of Senior Help Line, including appointment of Beryl Carroll as Dublin administrator
- Resignation of Fáilte Isteach National Development Officer Ann Cox following the birth of her daughter in 2013
- Resignation of Communications and Marketing Officer Neil Bruton to work in Burma.

Mary Fletcher Smith was Acting Programme Manager of the Third Age National Advocacy Programme until April 2014. We thank Mary for her commitment to the programme since its inception, for her input in terms of education and training, and for her loyalty to Third Age and its staff during the year. A farewell dinner for Mary in May was attended by board chairman, board members and staff.

In April Mervyn Taylor joined Third Age as Programme Manager for Sage, Support & Advocacy for Older People. Mervyn's prior positions include Director of M.S. Ireland and CEO of the MS Care Foundation, Manager of Planning & Organisation with the National Social Service Board (now Citizens Information Board), and European Development Manager for a consortium of IT companies. From 2006 to 2012 Mervyn was Manager of the Hospice Friendly Hospitals (HFH) Programme, and from 2009 was Project Manager for the Forum on End of Life and of its flagship project 'Think Ahead'. He is a Director of the Fourth Age Trust and a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

In September Ruth Loughran was appointed Business Strategy Executive to Third Age, with fundraising - in co-operation with the management team - as part of her role. She reports to the Innovation Hub Programme Manager, and will support him in establishing new programmes and projects, and in identifying revenue sources for their scale-up. She will also work across all Third Age programmes in order to support, market and finance their initiatives. This will include identifying potential donors, suitable grant applications and effective marketing opportunities.





## Promoting Our Organisation

During the year, CEO and staff continued to promote our organisation and programmes, and to forge a number of valuable new alliances with key stakeholders, potential funders and other sector and community contacts.

We held a number of public relations campaigns during the year. Regarding Senior Help Line, we published figures on call numbers, using the anonymised quotes from callers to convey the reality of their lives. This led to requests for interviews from radio and print media. We also planned campaigns throughout the year around World Elder Abuse Day, National Volunteering Week, the summer holiday season, (when some services to older people are temporarily withdrawn), Halloween and the winter months. We were invited to take part in a discussion on Loneliness on RTÉ's 'Today with Sean O'Rourke', and to write a blog on older loneliness for the Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland, (CARDI). Third Age contributed a feature in The Irish Times on the engagement of older people, and currently contributes a monthly column in 'Mature Living' a magazine for older people.

We had two planned regional radio campaigns during the year using our ad voiced over pro-bono by RTÉ's Ronan Collins. We took advertising space in two print media supplements: Older & Wiser and the Senior Times. We promoted Senior Help Line to potential callers in the Irish Catholic newspaper in cooperation with a week-long event in Knock.

A short video was made in September to promote Senior Help Line, featuring CEO, staff, volunteers and a real call simulation. The video was shown at the Soroptimist fundraising event in October, and we plan to promote it with potential funders.

A variety of press releases generated during the year promoted Third Age and each of our programmes. We developed interviews promoting Third Age's Innovation Hub in Eolas, business and public policy magazine and promoting Senior Help Line in Comhnasc, journal of the Retired Teachers' Association of Ireland. We have also advertised our programmes in targeted media such as guidebooks and directories for older people.

Locally, we produced a brochure to promote Summerhill services to coincide with the opening of the new Primary Care Centre. We publicised the opening with media, obtained coverage in the Meath Chronicle and were interviewed by LMFM.

The sponsored funding of Senior Help Line of a two year partnership with a public relations consultancy ended in December 2014, and we wish to place on record our thanks and appreciation for the invaluable help and guidance offered in this relationship.

## Third Age Website

It was agreed during the year that our website in its current form does not do justice to the scope of Third Age programmes, or sufficiently engage the general public, potential funders, volunteers, or service users. Plans, therefore, are under way which will incorporate all national programmes into a complete on-line narrative. This redevelopment will include all social media platforms as well as a mobile enhanced website.

The new website will serve as an effective medium to communicate with current Third Age members and volunteers, enhance volunteer training opportunities, attract potential new participants as well as engaging



with other organisations in the sector and potential corporate partners. The Innovation Hub Programme Manager is overseeing this development.

## Third Age Events 2014

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### Operation Conversation - March

On March 3rd we launched Operation Conversation in partnership with hotels, restaurants and coffee shops in Navan, Summerhill and Trim, Co Meath. From 10am till noon, outlets in these locations offered their customers a chance to enjoy tea, coffee and a scone for €2, meet old friends and make new ones.

The aim of Operation Conversation is to tackle loneliness and isolation among older people by encouraging them to get out and about and meet others. The initiative aims particularly to reach those sections of the community who are housebound due to lack of transport, isolation, or poor mobility.

We promoted Operation Conversation in parishes, libraries, with social clubs, to groups working with older people, and with statutory and voluntary agencies. We spoke directly to families and individuals encouraging them to share transport with friends and neighbours so that as many as possible could participate.

Operation Conversation was part of Third Age's 3rd of the 3rd celebrations, celebrating a day to highlight different aspects of growing older in Ireland. The day was a success in encouraging more people to meet each other, and in the positive response from cafes and hotels.

Third Age organised a second Operation Conversation for Positive Ageing Week in October in co-operation with Trim Age Friendly Town initiative.

### Opening of Summerhill Primary Care Centre - June

In June Third Age celebrated the opening of new national offices in Co Meath. Sited in the Summerhill Primary Care Centre, the purpose-built facility was officially opened by Alex White TD, then Minister for State with responsibility for Primary Care.

The new facility also accommodates the HSE Primary Care Centre, GP Practice and Summerhill Pharmacy. Siting a Third Age centre within this facility acknowledges Ireland's changing and ageing demographic, and promotes the value of keeping older people living independent, engaged lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible.



Minister of State Alex White cutting the ribbon at the opening of the Primary Care Centre Summerhill ▲

Board member Tim O'Connor spoke at the opening ceremony: "This is another landmark day in the journey of Third Age, and shows how far we have come. We think this can be a brilliant model for other such centres around the country," he said.

"Making this centre a reality is due in no small part to the support of funders, The Atlantic Philanthropies, FÁS Community Employment Programme and to the untiring fundraising efforts of our members, volunteers and the local community. To each we owe a deep debt of gratitude. Third Age members and volunteers

remain an inspiration in all the work we do," he said.

Tim O'Connor recognises the role of the new Centre as contributing to our vision for the future. "Third Age has always been a pioneering organisation, and now with the baton from founder Mary Nally being very ably carried forward by Áine Brady and her fine team, it is determined to continue being a beacon of excellence into the future. This will enable and facilitate the rich contribution that older people can make to society, and also ensure the highest quality of support in the community in terms of the needs of older people. This beautiful new Centre will be the perfect platform for us," he said.

With four different, yet complementary services under one roof, the new Centre will facilitate and advance the benefits to be derived from mutual collaboration. The programmes, activities, and services of Third Age will now be accommodated in modern new surroundings with meeting room, kitchen, offices and patio garden.

## Soroptimist Gala Evening – Making a Difference – October

Friends of the Soroptimists and Third Age mingled at a gala fund-raising evening organised for Third Age/Senior Help Line by the International North Kildare branch of the Soroptimist organisation on October 18 at the K Club, Straffan, Co Kildare.

In thanking her fellow Soroptimist members, Third Age CEO Áine Brady paid tribute to the global organisation; "As many of you know, the Soroptimists do make a difference. The organisation

was founded to encourage women to take a more active role in public life. The Soroptimists worldwide and in Co Kildare do this through a range of community service initiatives. Every year the Soroptimists choose a charity to support, and this year, we are extremely fortunate that they have chosen Senior Help Line, Ireland's only national confidential telephone service for older people," she said.

She went on to describe the programmes of Third Age and the positive impact they have on communities throughout Ireland.

Third Age thanks individual members of the Soroptimists, and the branch as a whole for all their hard work. A particular thanks is due to Soroptimist branch president Moya Murphy. Third Age board member Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh spoke to assembled guests, and Robert Carley was an excellent MC for the evening.



Staff members Yvonne Keane and Ariana Ball with guests at our Soroptimist fundraising event October 2014 ▲

## Fáilte Isteach Celebration Lunch – December

"I don't think you realise the power of what you are doing as volunteers. If you suffer from inequality, if you are a member of a minority, inequality sucks itself into your bones. It can shape your life. The great liberator is education, and you have it for life."

Minister of State, Aodhán O'Riordáin was speaking at the Third Age Fáilte Isteach event celebrating the commitment and dedication of its volunteers. The Minister highlighted the value of English tuition for



Aodhán O'Riordáin TD Minister of State at the Department of Justice and Equality and Arts, speaking at the Fáilte Isteach Lunch ▲

migrants; "You are giving them the freedom of language, the ability to speak for themselves, to stand up for themselves, and to be part of this country", he said.

Áine Brady welcomed all invitees: "Today's event is a well-deserved recognition of the tremendous commitment of our volunteers. Through their dedication and enthusiasm, they help migrants improve their English language skills, they are helping to build stronger, more integrated communities and are making a real and lasting difference to community cohesion in the areas in which they live", she said.

Board member Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh also spoke at the event, and board chairman, Tom Dowling closed the proceedings by thanking everyone involved for their contribution to such a successful programme.

## Opening of Sage Office in Dublin – December

Áine Brady welcomed invited guests to the opening of the offices in Dublin. Situated at 24-26 Ormond Quay, the new location marks the expansion and development of the Third Age national advocacy programme Sage Support & Advocacy Service for Older People.

"Sage is working to build a team of people capable of tackling the most complex support and advocacy challenges presented by older people. At national level a core team will include paid and volunteer staff with a wide range of professional, organisational and personal skills. At local level we are seeking people who can commit time to supporting vulnerable older people in and across a variety of care settings," she said.



Áine Brady, Greg Price, Patricia Rickard Clarke and Tom Costello at the opening of Sage's Dublin office ▲

Our CEO paid particular thanks to Greg Price, HSE Director of Patient and Staff Engagement, to Dr Philip Crowley, HSE National Director Quality and Patient Safety Division, and to Tom Costello Programme Executive, The Atlantic Philanthropies for their belief in and support of the programme. She also thanked Third Age Board member, Micheál Ó Muircheartaigh, who lent his name to Sage's first recruitment campaign.

Greg Price spoke movingly of the value of a programme such as Sage as part of a chain of care for older people in nursing homes, while Patricia Rickard Clarke, Chair of Sage's Advisory Panel, looked forward to the enactment of the Assisted Decision Making (Capacity) Bill 203. Tom Costello, in one of his last public events before moving on from his role in The Atlantic Philanthropies, expressed his satisfaction at being able to champion and support funding for the programme, thus facilitating its development.

## Our First Gingerbread Village – December

On December 14, Third Age held a Gingerbread Village fundraiser at Bewley's Hotel, Ballsbridge. People of every age were invited to take part in a Gingerbread House decoration competition for all the family. Entries were judged by Ciara Fennessy of Ciara's Kitchen as seen on RTE's 'Today' show.

Today, Gingerbread Villages feature in Christmas exhibitions and celebrations all over the world. Third Age is one of the first Irish charities to invite members of the public to participate.



# third age



The fund raising event was a family affair featuring children's games, photo booth, face painting, colouring competition, and a post box for Santa and presents from Santa. 'Snug as a Bug' children's wear and Bellezora jewellery added colour and style to the proceedings. There was a well-supported raffle with prizes for adults. Admission was free.

Third Age would like to thank sponsors Comfort Keepers, RKD Architects, Emma May and friends, Decobake Clane who provided prize hampers and vouchers, as well as those who supported us on the day. A special thanks to Ciara Fennessy who was our competition judge and who gave so generously of her time.

## Active Ageing in Partnership – AAP

Active Ageing Partnership (AAP) is a consortium of three organisations (Active Retirement Ireland, Age & Opportunity and Third Age) with a commitment to promoting the concept of positive ageing and to advancing the wellbeing of older people in Ireland. The three founding AAP organisations aim to embed the following principles as characteristics of their shared endeavour:

- A dedication to work with – as opposed to for – older people
- An aspiration that gain for older people will not be sought at the expense of another vulnerable group in society, with a particular emphasis on intergenerational solidarity
- Commitment to cost-effectiveness and proportionality
- Equality and a recognition of diversity as a cornerstone, without precluding positive discrimination towards the most vulnerable
- Focus from the outset on the sustainability of the effort, in terms of older people's ownership and of resources
- A commitment to the analysis of research evidence as a basis for advocacy positions

In 2014, AAP embarked on a process of dialogue with established groups of networks of older people, including the Older People's Councils under the Age Friendly Counties structure. AAP will reach out to other informal networks of older people throughout the country, and to this end Third Age had a number of meetings in 2014 with the Later Life Network in Co. Meath.

Third Age, through Active Ageing Partnership, is involved in the following groups:

- **The Human Rights Working Group**  
Other members include Alzheimer Society of Ireland, Age Action, The Irish Council for Civil Liberties and FLAC (Free Legal Advice Centres). Third Age attended a number of Human Rights workshops for Older People during the year in Co. Meath.

- **National Positive Ageing Strategy Implementation and Monitoring Group**  
Established in November 2014, Third Age is represented on this Group by our CEO. Its aim is to link with the various governmental departments around the implementation of the NPAS.
- **The Touchstone Project**  
Touchstone is involving people across the community in civic engagement that will impact on how our lives change as we age in Ireland. Led by the three NGOs of the Active Ageing Partnership, Touchstone brings together a consortium of organisations that play significant roles in the ageing sector. The first Touchstone centre has been established in Galway, with the support of NUIG. Meath has been chosen as the venue for the second Touchstone location, with activities beginning in 2015.

## Sector Events 2014

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### Reducing Isolation Among Over 75s – Grundtvig Programme

Third Age took part in a European exchange project funded by Grundtvig to examine ongoing learning by older volunteers. Four members of staff travelled to Europe during the year to participate, and Third Age staff from all our programmes welcomed a group of volunteers from the UK, Netherlands and Slovenia to Dublin and Summerhill. The programme aimed to provide innovative recommendations in supporting the engagement of older learners in community activities. Participants shared information on good practice, engagement, volunteering and local services. The learning from the project will be developed into recommendations to enable partner staff to respond more effectively to the needs of the older age group.

### Ashoka

Ashoka Ireland is part of a global organisation promoting the work of social entrepreneurs and changemakers in Ireland. During the year Third Age participated in a number of meetings organised under the umbrella of Ashoka Support Network for partner entrepreneurial organisations. This included the presentation by staff of our programmes - part of Ashoka's support for organisations in terms of marketing, communications, PR and social media.

### AIGNA 6th Annual Conference Galway – May

CEO Áine Brady was invited to give the opening address 'Maximising the Ability of Older People' at the AIGNA national conference of the All Ireland Gerontological Nurses Association 2014. She told her audience that the abilities of older people can often be unrecognised: 'It used to be thought that the ageing process inevitably brings about intellectual decline. Some of these conclusions were based on cross-sectional tests - that is testing a group of 40-year-olds and a group of 70 years olds, and finding that the 40-year-olds scored higher. However, other researchers began to question this method as not comparing like with like,' she said.

'More recently, longitudinal studies which assess someone at 40 then again at 70 came up with different results. These results indicated that there could be less difference than was thought in cognitive functioning as people age', she continued. Ms Brady went on to speak about the positive engagement of older people in Ireland, and Third Age's contribution to this process.

### Centre for Ageing research & Development in Ireland (Cardi) – June

In June Third Age attended an event hosted by Cardi to launch findings from two research reports. The first focused on the wealth of older people in Ireland, North and South; the second on the socio-economic inequalities affecting older people. The event, chaired by Linda Robinson, CEO of Age NI, included



presentations from Professor Paddy Hillyard, Queen's University Belfast; Paul McGill, Strategic Research Officer, CARDI; Robin Webster, CEO, Age Action Ireland and Evelyn Collins CBE, CEO of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

### **Think Ahead 2 – Irish Hospice Foundation – July**

In July Third Age attended the launch of Think Ahead 2 by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny in Dublin. This is a public awareness initiative of the Forum on End of Life which is supported by the Irish Hospice Foundation. Think Ahead is a resource which guides people in thinking about and recording their wishes and preferences in the event of emergency, serious illness or death. Sage, Support & Advocacy Service for Older People is supporting the development of an online version of Think Ahead and will be promoting it through its work across all care settings.

### **New Facilities Opening James Connolly Hospital – July**

Our CEO was invited to attend the opening of the new Acute Medical Assessment Unit and MRI suite at Connolly Hospital in Blanchardstown, performed by newly appointed Minister for Health, Leo Varadkar.

### **'Only the Lonely' Age Friendly Ireland – October**

Third Age attended the launch of 'Only the Lonely' a report by Professor Brian Lawlor, Mercer's Institute, St James's Hospital. This report and half-day seminar discussed the positive findings from the evaluation of an effective and low cost intervention to tackle loneliness among older people.

### **'The Social Engagement of Older People, Dublin – October**

Third Age CEO was invited to address a public meeting in Dundrum on 'The Social Engagement of Older People'. In a wide-ranging speech promoting Third Age and our programmes, she discussed an ageist society, the contribution of older people, the value of volunteering, and the uniqueness of each individual irrespective of age.

### **National Volunteering Management Conference – November**

Keynote speaker Rob Jackson explored some of the myths regarding working with volunteers at this Dublin Castle conference attended by Third Age staff across a number of programmes. Workshops held throughout the day offered useful exploration on communicating with and motivating volunteers, fostering long-term working relationships with volunteers, and developing one's style as a volunteer manager.

### **Age Friendly Cities Europe Declaration City Hall – November**

Third Age was invited to attend the signing of the Dublin Declaration on Age Friendly Cities and Communities in Europe 2014 by 10 local authorities, witnessed by An Taoiseach. The Declaration expresses the clear and strong commitment of political leaders to champion actions which improve the lives of older people. The local authorities signing the Declaration join 21 authorities who have already signed, making Ireland the first EU State to declare a national commitment to creating a country where older people are valued and respected, and where their needs are recognised and addressed.

### **An Award for Sage Support & Advocacy Service for Older People – December**

In December this programme was awarded a prize for Innovation in Dementia Services by the Dementia Elevator Programme based in DCU. The prize was for a project we have proposed - to introduce a model of non-instructed advocacy in a nursing home.



Dementia Elevator is an education and empowerment programme to help individuals, communities and health systems engage with and support people with dementia. The project is led by Dr. Kate Irving, Lecturer, School of Nursing and Human Sciences, in partnership with the HSE, with the support of The Atlantic Philanthropies. The main motivation behind Elevator is to improve quality of life for people with dementia by ensuring that there are people in communities with the right skills at the right time to make staying at home a more obvious choice than is currently the case.

### **Intercultural & Diversity Education Centre Ireland (IDEC) Conference – December**

Fáilte Isteach presented at IDEC's Ennis conference whose theme was 'Diversity – Creating Community Wellbeing'. Since 2010, IDEC- Ireland has hosted a conference to coincide with International Human Rights Day. Their vision is to create and promote opportunities for integration among communities in Ireland through dialogue, engagement and research on intercultural and diversity education.

### **Genio Annual Dementia Conference – December**

Third Age attended this event which brought together healthcare professionals, family members, academics, carers, and volunteers working with and supporting people with dementia. The morning session focused on 'Listening: The Lived Experience', the mid-morning session was on 'Understanding: Value and Values' and the afternoon session on 'Enhancing: Collective Approaches to Change'. Genio works to bring government and philanthropic funders together to develop better ways to support disadvantaged people to live full lives in their communities.

## **Our Programmes**

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### **Senior Help Line**

Senior Help Line is one third way through a three year development phase 2014-2016 with the aim of achieving service sustainability, improved quality of service and a more cost-effective model.

During 2014 Senior Help Line recruited, trained and mentored a total of 58 new volunteers. These are working mainly in our city centre offices in Dublin, with a smaller number working in our Leopardstown centre. Dublin City volunteers now work from 10am till 1pm each Monday, Tuesday and Friday morning, all day Wednesday and on Thursday afternoon from 1-4pm. Our Clúid offices comprise our own call centre, and use of training room, meeting rooms and kitchen facilities. We greatly appreciate the welcome we have received from Clúid and their ongoing support to staff and volunteers. Our Leopardstown volunteers work on Friday and Saturday nights from 7-10pm.

At the same time, and in accordance with our planned development, centres have been closed in Ballyfermot, Cavan, Galway, Summerhill and Tallaght. We supported these centres and visited each prior to closure. After closure, we are meeting each centre for a 'thank you' lunch and presentation in which each volunteer is awarded with a Certificate of Appreciation. Refresher training was offered during the year to all existing centres, and new volunteer training was delivered for two centres in keeping with our commitment to support all volunteers.

We wish to place on record our sincere gratitude to our committed volunteers who have served us so well over the years, and we thank them for their understanding and co-operation at this time of change.

In August, Beryl Carroll took up position as Senior Help Line Administrator, Dublin. Beryl supports the management of Dublin volunteers, and works in collaboration with Ann O'Brien, Senior Help Line



Administrator based in Summerhill.

Centralising the service is achieving our objective in providing improved monitoring and supervision, thus facilitating the provision of an improved quality service to callers. The change is also contributing to improved record keeping, rota management, log sheet uniformity and the development and implementation of similar quality control mechanisms. Centralised location is bringing about economies of scale (line rental, line maintenance, premises, furnishing, administration, postage), and improvements in recruitment, training, mentoring and support.

Our Manual of Governance has been updated to meet new training and volunteer needs. Changes in the external environment include the future need for Garda vetting for each volunteer – this is being implemented in a cohesive manner for all new Dublin and Leopardstown volunteers. We produced two national newsletters during the year, and offered CPD to Dublin volunteers. During 2014 Senior Help Line provided mentoring and training to colleagues in the Telephone Helpline Network.

Calls are divided between regular and new callers. Our service remains vital to a disparate group of older people who lead lives of some loneliness and isolation. In addition, we heard from new callers, who have a variety of concerns regarding physical and emotional health, family, security and bereavement. We receive a small number of calls from people experiencing elder abuse. Our volunteers are trained to respond empathetically and supportively to each call, which can help callers to reframe the problem or to see a new way forward. There has been an increase in calls around a range of financial issues including cost of living, budgeting, water charges, USC, property tax and more. Our volunteers may also signpost to other appropriate services if judged to be helpful.

## Case Study

**Caller Experience:** Maire, Co. Galway (not her real name)

*"I phone Senior Help Line sometimes when I need someone to talk to. I am retired, I miss my work and would miss people to talk to. Talking to the Senior Help Line people can really help. I just tell them about my day, or maybe some of the things I'm worried about, nothing major. I live now on a widow's pension, managing can be difficult, and my son and daughter are not in Ireland. The help line people always listen and I feel they understand. I usually put down the phone feeling better and not so alone. I'm really glad Senior Help Line is there."*

## Fáilte Isteach

2014 was another year of expansion, development and celebration for Fáilte Isteach, a community-based project which offers free conversational English classes to migrants of all ages. The opening of new branches in Portlaoise, Cahirsiveen, Cahir, Carlow, Dun Laoghaire, Rush and Limerick brings the number of classes offered nationwide to 68. The growth of the project in 2014 ensures that every week approximately 650 volunteer tutors welcome over 2,000 migrant students from 76 different countries to the community, helping them to integrate and thrive. Fáilte Isteach branches - variously located in 22 counties throughout Ireland – offer a combined total of 40,000 hours of free tuition annually.

As well as benefiting volunteers, Fáilte Isteach is making a real difference in the lives of its migrant students. Being able to speak English helps families to get to know their Irish neighbours and so become part of the



community. Fluency in the language is also helping new migrants find work and so take their place and contribute to Irish life. In today's Ireland, Fáilte Isteach is filling a vital educational need, and enriching every community of which it is part.

Following a redesign and redevelopment of all pedagogical materials used by tutors in 2013, a 2nd edition of teaching manuals was produced in 2014. These publications incorporate ideas and suggested improvements made by the volunteers. A Tutor Handbook was also designed to offer practical teaching guidance and advice to tutors. The new manuals and the Tutor Handbook have been distributed to all branches by the Fáilte Isteach team, accompanied in each case by a comprehensive tutor-training workshop.

During 2013 Fáilte Isteach joined a new initiative entitled Change X. This hopes to share previously tried and tested social initiatives with communities - within Ireland and internationally - who may benefit from these solutions. To achieve this, Change X launched a website, containing relevant information on Fáilte Isteach, enabling interested people who wish to set up a Fáilte Isteach educational project in their area to download all the resources they need. In May 2014 the Fáilte Isteach team attended the official launch of the Change X initiative in the Burren, Co Clare.

In December Fáilte Isteach marked five years as a national service. In recognition of the tremendous commitment of our volunteers we hosted a Volunteer Event in Dublin. We felt this was a most appropriate way to celebrate the dedication of our volunteers nation-wide. We acknowledge that the success of the programme would be impossible without them.

During 2014, Fáilte Isteach welcomed two new members to its team. Natasha McAvinney and Claire Dalton joined the project as National Development Officers. Both bring a wealth of experience in the education and NGO sectors as well as digital expertise. This which will allow Fáilte Isteach to maximise the online capacity to scale the project and enhance its delivery through online support.

## Case Study

**Migrant Experience:** Adam (Fáilte Isteach Waterford)

*"I came to the Fáilte Isteach classes five years ago with my wife. At the time, I had no English at all. I continued the English classes and five years on I have reached the intermediate level. I have started my own business as a painter and I am communicating with Irish families to get painting jobs which I would not have done before. I have been in the business for the last two years. Five years ago I would not talk to anyone as I was a quiet person, but the English classes have helped me to grow in my confidence. They have helped me to come out of myself."*

## Sage Support & Advocacy Service for Older People

In June this year a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed to acknowledge that 'from July 1st 2014 Third Age will take full responsibility for the governance, management and development of Sage Support & Advocacy Service for Older People with joint funding from the HSE and The Atlantic Philanthropies until 31st December 2017 and continued funding from the HSE from 2018 onwards'. The MoA stated that the scope of the service was 'The development and provision of an independent and impartial support and advocacy service for older people in all care settings – home, nursing home, hospital, hostel and hospice – and in the process of transition between them'. The key elements of the approach to developing the service were stated as:



- Safety & Quality
- Support & Advocacy Continuum
- Systemic & Individual Advocacy
- Social Impact
- Sustainability

The MoA to develop Sage as a support and advocacy service for older people came nine years after the historic television documentary in May 2005 which exposed the treatment of residents in Leas Cross Nursing Home. Part of the HSE response to this event was to work with older people's organisations, and others, to develop an advocacy service for nursing homes from 2007 onwards. Following a review in 2011, it was recommended that this service, which was then provided by trained volunteer advocates only, should be developed independently of the HSE. In 2012, Third Age, was asked to manage the service following a call for expressions of interest across the sector and having established that there was no other appropriate statutory agency in a position to take responsibility at that time.

Since the signing of the MoA, Sage has recruited a core team of paid staff, created an operational base in central Dublin and established a National Advisory Committee (NAC) which is chaired by former Law Reform Commissioner, Patricia Rickard-Clarke. Orientation events for new staff and the NAC were held in September. A monthly eNewsletter began to be circulated to over 1,000 contacts in that month. This is ongoing. A recruitment drive for new advocates was launched in October. An Information & Advice/Rapid Response Service for nursing homes was initiated in November. Three work groups of the NAC have been established to oversee the work of the service: Practice & Guidance; Education, Training & Support; Research, Impact & Evaluation. New Policies and Guidelines have been drawn up, and work has begun on the development of Quality Standards for Support and Advocacy Work with Older People. A database has been developed to record and analyse activities and support case work.

The mission of Sage is: "To promote and protect the rights, freedoms and dignity of older people by developing support and advocacy services wherever ageing poses a challenge for individuals."

At national level Sage is committed to building a team of people - with the qualities of a 'sage': wisdom, judgement and experience - capable of tackling the most complex support and advocacy challenges presented by older people. This core team will include paid and volunteer staff, with a wide range of professional, organisational and personal skills: legal; financial; clinical; communications; operations; design. At local level Sage is seeking people who can commit time to supporting vulnerable older people in and across a variety of care settings in roles such as advocate, facilitator, support person. The qualities sought in all Sage Representatives are compassion, competence, commitment, creativity and courage.

The service is currently being developed on an incremental basis in nursing homes, homes/primary care settings and hospitals with the aim of providing:

#### **Nursing Homes**

- Information and advice to nursing home managers about providing access to support and advocacy services for residents, and meeting HIQA standards on advocacy
- A rapid response service where residents urgently need support, and local services are unavailable
- Independent facilitators for residents groups who are trained and supported.
- Support and advocacy with and on behalf of individual residents from Sage Representatives who are trained, supported and accountable
- Support in the use of the 'Think Ahead' resource for registering wishes and preferences in the

event of an emergency, serious illness or death.

- Learning and development opportunities for those who see the expression of residents' opinions and concerns as a way to improve the quality of their services

## Homes /Primary Care

- Support and advocacy with and for people who are struggling to remain in their home or who are trying to return to their home from a hospital or nursing home
- Support for groups of older people who want to improve the ways in which their services and entitlements are provided in their locality
- Circles of Support to maintain people in their homes and follow them as they transition into other care settings

## Hospitals

- A support person for unaccompanied older people in emergency departments in collaboration with clinical staff
- Facilitators to ensure that patient and family experiences are taken into account in the design and delivery of services
- Support and advocacy for patients in transitional care situations such as discharge units and 'Step Down' facilities

## Case Study

### Advocacy Experience: Helen

*"Having received treatment in an acute hospital for a minor stroke, Helen wished to be discharged to her own home. The stroke left her with mild cognitive difficulties and compromised her ability to communicate. Because of these difficulties, family members were worried that Helen would not be able to manage at home, and wanted her to go to a nursing home. Sage appointed a representative who listened to Helen's story and, with Helen's agreement, advocated for her at Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings held about Helen's discharge. The Sage Representative put Helen's desire to go home (with her knowledge of the risks involved) forward to the team. The advocate represented Helen at many meetings with the MDT and the family, after which Helen was discharged to her home with a home-care package. Helen was very happy with the outcome and the family felt comfortable about the decision. The advocate has since visited Helen at home to follow up and is available in the future if further support is needed."*

## Innovation Hub

With its proven record in innovation, Third Age wished to develop a competency in service design which could initially be applied internally to the benefit of existing programmes. Later, this expertise would be used to explore and design creative new ideas with an income-generating potential through access to institution grants and funding, consultancy and competitive tendering.

This aim led in 2014 to the conceptualisation of the Innovation Hub, which would actively pursue opportunities for strategic partnerships with other similar entrepreneurial organisations in the academic, NGO and institutional spheres.

As presently envisaged, the Strategic Plan anticipates the necessary organisational structures to develop and maintain a successful Project which:

- Is capable of being applied to existing programmes

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- Is a fit with the Third Age ethos, supporting and developing services which benefit people of all ages and help to build communities
- Will facilitate the development of strategic alliances, both nationally and internationally
- Does not duplicate existing ideas or services in Ireland, but may look to best practice services in Europe and beyond
- Will have income-generating potential
- Will become a resource for other organisations who may wish to develop programmes and initiatives that help the lives of older people in Ireland

The principles underlining the work of the Innovation Hub will be the UN Principles for Older People, and specifically these guiding principles – Independence, Participation, Care, Self-Fulfilment and Dignity.

During 2014 the Programme Manager developed a Scoping Document outlining the strengths of Third Age, organisations relevant to innovation, and potential areas for growth and funding. This will now form the basis of a Strategic Plan for the Innovation Hub which will be implemented in 2015.

## Third Age Summerhill

2014 proved to be another busy and productive year for Third Age Summerhill, one in which a number of new programmes and services were launched, while ongoing activities continued to flourish. In April, the organisation moved into its new purpose-built premises, an event celebrated by members new and old.

The Summerhill philosophy is one of inclusion and collaboration, with programmes developing in co-operation with members. In addition, many local members act as spokespersons for Third Age and for ageing issues generally.

An A-Z of established activities and services for members at the start of 2014 includes:

- Access to Socially Monitored Alarms Scheme
- Advocacy
- Aromatherapy
- Art & Drama
- Beautician
- Chiropody
- Computer Classes
- Drop-in Centre
- Hairdressing
- Health Initiative
- Holidays
- Homeopathy
- Library
- Little Jobs Project (community service)
- Ondamed (neurological stimulation for pain relief)
- Outings
- Reflexology
- Resource Centre
- Socials
- Third Age Choir
- Transport Service for Members





## New Programmes & Services

In February Third Age launched a counselling service for members. This offers the opportunity to discuss issues in confidence with a trained professional.

In March Third Age began an eight-week Slimathon Programme with a weigh in and health check. Each week participants were weighed, listened to talks on relevant issues such as diet, exercise, health promotion and illness prevention. This was an extremely successful programme, with participants emerging slimmer, fitter, with more knowledge of health and fitness.

In September a new 'Get Fit for All' programme facilitated by fitness expert Frank Fahy began for members, preceded by an individual medical assessment by local GP Doctor Joe Clarke. In the same month a new weekly dietician service began for members, offering advice on shopping, nutrition, and healthy eating.

In October a new intergenerational project through the medium of dance began. Based in Scoil Dara, Kilcock, Co. Kildare, 'Rap Around the Clock' brings Third Age members together with Transition Year students for dance, conversation and fun.

## 2014 Events

An annual Garden Party & Mass for deceased members took place in July, while members enjoyed two holidays during the year. In May, a pilgrimage to Lourdes was organised for six days with 25 members participating, and in October a group travelled to Wexford for a five-day break on the sunny southeast.

A First Aid, CPR and Fire Safety training for staff took place in April. In August a Wellness Workshop on positive emotional health was provided for staff and members by the Suicide or Survive organisation. A number of meetings were held regarding the wellbeing and welfare of Summerhill's CE staff members.

The Third Age choir opened and closed the year with a performance on Newstalk's Global Village programme in January and a Carols by Candlelight recital in December in Summerhill.

## ONGOING PROGRAMMES

### Health for All

The successful **Health for All** initiative, which began in 2013, continued in 2014. Open to members and non-members, this eight-week course emphasised prevention, early detection and positive attitudes to health, highlighting both conventional and alternative treatment approaches. Delivered through a series of information sessions, exercise, workshops, exercise classes and practical demonstrations, the content was supplemented with handouts and group supports.

Topics covered include health promotion and disease prevention, foot care, falls prevention, eye care including eye testing for glaucoma, wills and will preparation, end of life issues, signs and symptoms for cancer prevention, exercising for health, nutrition and healthy eating, emotional and social health.

'**The Way We Were Programme**' continued during the year. In this programme, Third Age members exhibit over 200 artefacts from earlier times in schools and nursing homes in Leinster. In April the group was invited to present its exhibition at the National Museum of Country Life, Castlebar, Co Mayo.



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**The Intergenerational Knitting Project** continued in 2014. Within this popular project, Third Age members teach knitting to children in Dangan National School. This regular contact during the academic year encourages the generations to work together in a way that is spontaneous, enjoyable and fulfilling for both.

**Fáilte Isteach** classes continued to be held in Summerhill on Tuesday evenings throughout the academic year.

In January, Third Age presented to students a Lismullin Hospitality Centre. Lismullen, Navan, Co Meath provides participants with an opportunity to reflect on a wide range of personal, spiritual and community issues.

Third Age also presented to the Canal Community Partnership, to a group of Community Health Nurses in Co Meath, and to Irish Rural Link seminar in Ennis, Co Clare on Rural Isolation in Ennis. This seminar heard from experts in the field. Its main purpose was to seek proposals on alleviating the problem of rural isolation, and develop policies to target the problem.

In October Third Age attended the International Parkinson's Empowerment Summit in Dublin. Jointly organised by Move4Parkinsons and the Davis Phinney Foundation. The event was designed to provide information and motivation to people and families living with Parkinson's disease, by helping them to understand and manage their symptoms more effectively and to hear messages of hope and inspiration.

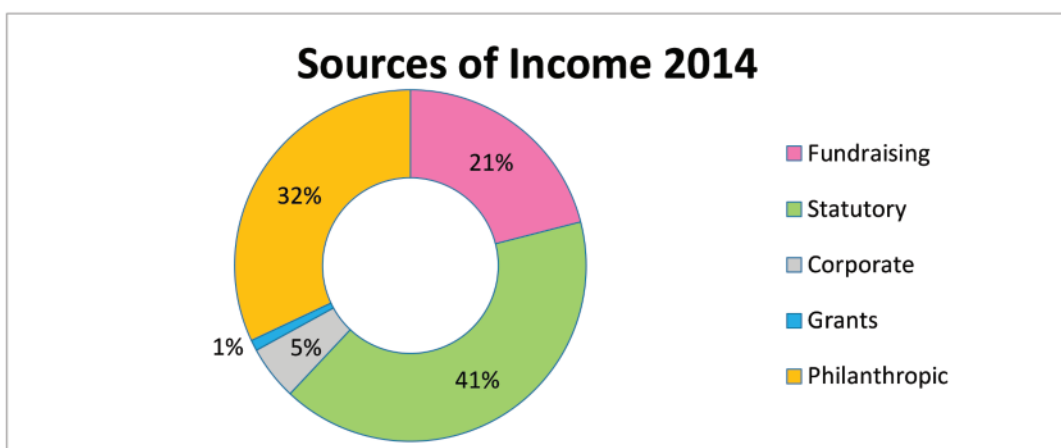
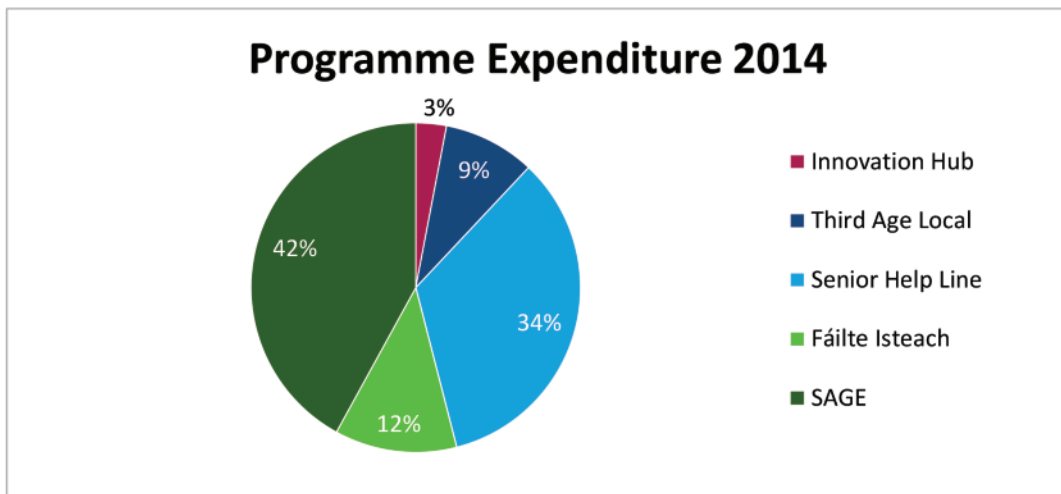
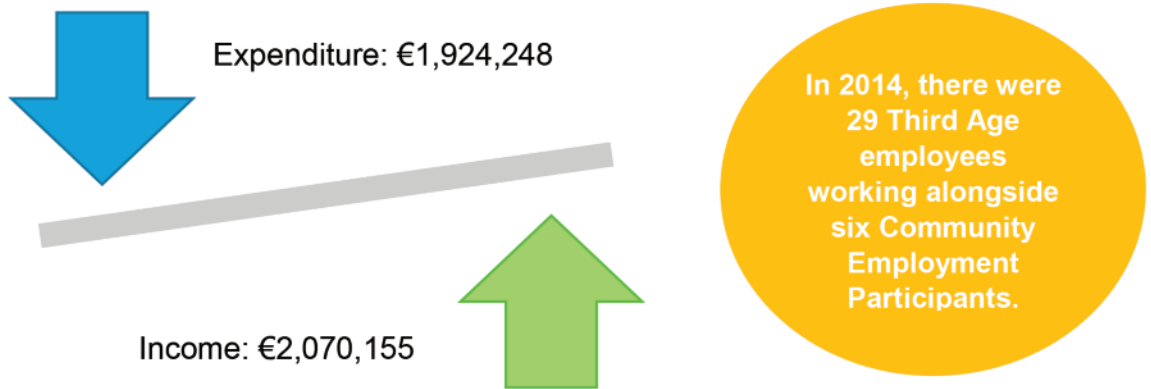
Mary Nally held a number of significant meetings during the year including those with the Department of Communication, Energy & Natural Resources, with the Home Instead organisation, with Ashoka, with Social Entrepreneurs Ireland and with Lord David Puttnam.

## **Fundraising**

Third Age Summerhill organised a number of successful fundraising events during the year. These included a table quiz, coffee morning and cake sale, annual raffle, as well as fundraising entertainment provided by Brendan Shine, TR Dallas and Susan McCann. In addition, Third Age benefited from the Moynalvey Gardens open to the public, and from a June Garden Party hosted by the Moran family, Moynalvey, loyal supporters of Third Age.



## Third Age 2014 in Numbers



Full details of the Audited Accounts and Financial Statements for both Third Age Foundation Ltd. and Senior Citizen's Help Line Ltd. can be obtained from the Companies Registration

Third Age Foundation Ltd.

Company Number: 414509

CHY 16647

Registered Charity Number: 20060459

Senior Citizen's Help Line Ltd. T/A Senior Help Line

Company Number: 414508

CHY 16756

Registered Charity Number: 20061104

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NOTES: