



Mayo Volunteer Centre

Ionad d'Obair Dheonach Maigh Eo

Winter 2021 Newsletter



Manager's Letter

So, this is Christmas and what have we done? Well, when we reflect back on 2021, we have done quite a lot! Let's take a look at a few of the positives:

1. Vincent McHale joined us in January 2021 as our Placement Officer based in Castlebar. He has become a very valuable member of our team and contributed hugely to the success of the Volunteer Centre;
2. We are guided by a voluntary Steering Committee and Lorraine Toner from the Irish Community Air Ambulance joined us in August. Lorraine has settled in well and is already making a difference;
3. In September, Kathy Rowland came back from maternity leave to return to the role of Manager of the Mayo Volunteer Centre on a part-time basis. Kathy and Lesley Moore (who was Interim Manager) now job-share the role;
4. Zoom cafes: early in 2021, we were not able to meet our volunteers in person due to Covid restrictions and so like everyone else, we resorted to using Zoom. We set up our 'Zoom cafes' which were very popular and we had some guest speakers popping in for a chat too. It was an opportunity to keep in touch with volunteers and understand their concerns about volunteering in difficult times;
5. Covid 19 has changed volunteering in many ways but one of the positive outcomes has been virtual volunteering. There are many roles available that volunteers can do from the comfort of their own home and not necessarily all on Zoom. There are telephone befriending roles and other administrative and marketing roles that can be done in your own time. Virtual volunteering has opened up a wide variety of roles across Ireland;
6. In October, brave souls from Mayo Volunteer Centre and Sligo Volunteer Centre joined forces with staff from Coca Cola to do a beach clean in Enniscrone. It was a wild, wet and windy day but they all managed to collect a huge number of bags of rubbish from the beach. Great work by everybody.

It has been a strange year again and one thing we have missed is meeting our volunteers and not-for-profit organisations as much as we would like. One of our aims for next year is to reach out to as many people across Mayo as we can by using hubs across the county. We still have our main base in Ballina but look out for us "popping up" all over the place to bring volunteering to every corner of Mayo.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and a healthy 2022.

Manager, Mayo Volunteer Centre
manager@volunteermayo.ie

10 New Volunteer Roles Now Available

(Click on the links to learn more about the roles)

1. ALONE - Telephone Support & Befriending Volunteer

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000IYyRn>

2. ALONE - Visitation Support & Befriending Volunteer

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000n0ypg>

3. Volunteer Support - Irish Girl Guides North West

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000IZPP6>

4. Ballina Community Centre - Meals On Wheels Volunteer Cook

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000IZkBd>

5. Ballina Community Centre - Meals On Wheels Volunteer Kitchen Assistant

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000IZkCb>

6. NCBI Connection Network - Client Engagement Role

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000la6CS>

7. NCBI Connection Network - Befriending Role

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000la6Cc>

8. AWARE Telephone Support Line Volunteer

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000la54N>

9. AWARE Support and Self Care Groups Facilitator

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000la56x>

10. Music Tutor - Song/Piano/Accordion/Other

<https://www.i-vol.ie/volunteer-opportunity/?ID=a004G00000laAwf>

Volunteering for Christmas

Many of us feel a surge of adrenaline as we jostle with one another to splash the cash in the weeks leading up to Christmas, and then instantly feel a pang of guilt as we haul our spoils past those less fortunate on the way home from our festive sprees. While many of us are lucky enough to have friends, family, and a warm home in which we can celebrate the holidays, others are not so fortunate. It's important to remember that Christmas should be a heart-warming season that is all about goodwill and giving back.

Benefits of Volunteering

Putting some effort into volunteering at Christmas can have a hugely positive impact on many people's lives. Apart from the obvious benefits to the community, volunteering, in general, can help you connect with others and boost your self-esteem as well as physical and mental health.

Volunteering may also provide you with some perspective. If you're a little blue around the holidays, perhaps because you're missing a loved one or are stressed by all the preparations, think of how hard the season is for families experiencing homelessness or barely making ends meet. You might also make some new friends with other volunteers.

If all these benefits aren't motivation enough to volunteer this Christmas, considering taking on a project or challenge to set a good example for your loved ones. It's the easiest way to show them that Christmas isn't just about a large feast and presents. And who knows? Maybe you'll like the experience so much you'll decide to volunteer all year round.

Volunteering Ideas

If you don't volunteer regularly, then there's a high chance that the idea of doing so crosses your mind more frequently as we approach the festive season. Christmas is an important fundraising time for a lot of charities, with carol singing, bag packing or a challenge like a Christmas Day swim, you could also help out at your local Meals on Wheels initiative, help out at a local food bank or St. Vincent de Paul, or take on a role as a telephone befriender from the comfort of your own home to chat with those who have no one else to chat with or maybe you can even drop into the local hospital or nursing home and visit with some of the patients.

Some roles we have right now which you could get involved in are:

Balina Community Centre is looking for cooks for the Meals on Wheels Service; AWARE, NCBI and ALONE need people for telephone befriending. Further information can be found by following the links above in this newsletter.

There are also many challenges to take part in and here is a great one - The Goal Mile. It can be done virtually or as part of an organised event in Ballina & Castlebar (both Christmas Day), Westport (St. Stephen's Day) and Claremorris (New Year's Day).

See the Facebook page for more information. <https://www.facebook.com/GOAL-Mile-Ballina-Co-Mayo-1510610762555909/>

Enjoy!!

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