

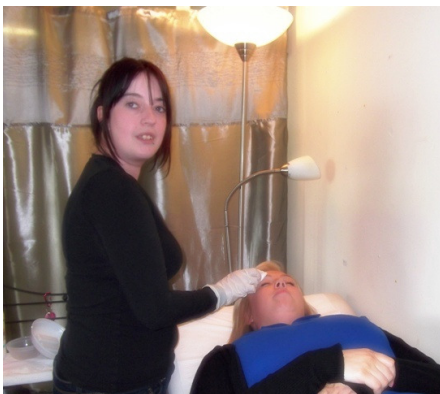
The Live & Learn project continues to have a positive impact on women's lives. Some of the success stories are highlighted below. In the coming months we aim to promote more of our positive outcomes through the evaluation report, website and the Lottery PR Department. If you have a story you'd like to share, please contact Kelli Boyles at WCRP.



LOTTERY FUNDED

ATLAS WOMEN'S CENTRE

Atlas' Live & Learn project focuses on "increasing personal levels of confidence, self-esteem, and enhancing future employability". Courses at Atlas this year have included: Women's Studies; Confidence Building; Health, Hair & Beauty; Angels with Attitude; and Personal & Professional Development Stage 2.



Through the Live & Learn programme Shannon has been able to set up her own business. "I was going nowhere and in the benefits trap. I've always had an interest

in health and beauty and I needed a job with flexibility so I could work around my children's needs. I participated in 'Unemployed to Self Employed' last year. Through the course I've gained a qualification in waxing and I've started my own small business. Now in it's second year I have a space where I see clients and my business is slowly growing. Atlas staff has been very supportive. I'm very thankful for the mentoring they provide. Without the Live & Learn course and Atlas I would not be where I am today. My confidence has grown and it's still growing."

Shannon has built links with another self employed young woman supported by Atlas. Both women are working jointly to build up clients. Shannon says, "I'm working alongside a nail technician and we're developing pampering packages. I'm really happy with how things are going and Atlas provides continued support for me!" Shannon first started attending Atlas three years ago when her youngest child was in nursery. At this time Shannon lacked in self esteem. Shannon's first course at Atlas was a confidence building course. She then progressed to numeracy and literacy. It was only through Live & Learn that Shannon had the opportunity to progress to setting up her own business.

CHRYSLIS WOMEN'S CENTRE

Chrysalis' Live & Learn project focuses on "increasing personal levels of confidence, self-esteem, and enhancing future employability". Courses at Chrysalis this year have included: First Aid, Word Processing (Medical), ICT, Digital Media Training, and Certificate in Employability.

Through the Chrysalis Women's Centre's Live & Learn programme Agnieszka was able to gain accreditation in Essential Skills Literacy Entry Level 3 (City & Guilds) and a Certificate in Community Tutor Training, Level 3 (Open College Network).

Agnieszka moved to Northern Ireland from Poland in 2004. She found her qualifications weren't recognised and her English language was weak, therefore, it was difficult to gain employment. Agnieszka comments, "The women's centre is very welcoming and understanding of my particular needs. Chrysalis is very welcoming to the Polish community and our Polish group meet there once a week to give each other support, encouragement, and to share information. I was able to do some voluntary work at Chrysalis which helped me gain work experience. I've been able to build my confidence, and when a job came up for a Bi-lingual Family Support Worker (maternity cover) at Splash Sure Start, Chrysalis Women's Centre supported me through basic job application writing skills. When I got a job interview Chrysalis set up a mock interview for me so I could gain experience in this area. I was delighted when I got the job in August 2010! My work as Bi-lingual Family Support Worker involves providing Polish families with information on crèche, parenting education and family support such as how to access key services in NI. I have been able to give back to the community as



Agnieszka received her qualifications at Chrysalis Women's Centre

I have facilitated conversational English classes at the women's centre and I am active in volunteering. If it hadn't been for the qualifications I gained and the support from Chrysalis Women's Centre and the Live & Learn project, I probably would still be looking for a job and struggling. I am now in a position to help others and I am in the process of applying for a permanent job with Sure Start."

STRATHFOYLE WOMEN'S ACTIVITY GROUP AND FWIN

Strathfoyle and FWIN Live & Learn projects both have a focus on “support to improve mental health”. Strathfoyle Women's Activity Group in association with Foyle Women's Information Network held a Health Pamper Day on 6th April 2010.



Women who participated in the Health Pamper Day.

Forty eight women of all ages attended the event and availed of a variety of health checks such as BMI check, blood pressure, diabetes check, pulse, weight and blood sugar level. Women also had the opportunity to pamper themselves and de-stress on the day. They enjoyed sessions in reflexology, massage (head and back), hand massage, and angel card readings. An information display provided participants with the opportunity to try out healthy food and learn about healthy lifestyles.

The health day was followed by a second event in May with the Action Cancer Big Bus. A mobile Cancer Unit arrived to Strathfoyle to carry out checks such as Breast Screening, Cholesterol, Lung Capacity, Facial Skin Analysis, Blood Pressure and Review of Lifestyle. Deirdre from Strathfoyle commented, “These events not only support prevention and early detection but encourage women to consider a healthier lifestyle — very important to both our physical and mental wellbeing. The events have also been successful in attracting new women to our courses. Courses this year have included: Weight Management & Healthy Eating, Jewellery Making, Positive Ageing Complimentary Therapies, and Sow and Grow.”



FALLS WOMEN'S CENTRE

Falls' Live and Learn project focuses on “promoting social inclusion of ethnic minority women”. Activities at the centre this year included: Lipstick & Money, Cookery & Food Hygiene, Intro to Computers, Driving Theory, Jewellery Making and Arts & Crafts. The following is an example of the life changing impact of one of the women at Falls.



Women enjoying the activities at Falls Women's Centre.

Ellen left school at aged 14. Thirty years later she has returned to learning. “I have six children. I couldn't help the kids with homeworks growing up as I couldn't do it myself,” Ellen comments. “It's only now that my kids are grown that my daughter suggested I look into the local women's centre. At first I wasn't very comfortable going where I didn't know anyone but I soon found that the people there were like me in that they needed support and things like a smaller class and women-only really helped. The tutor went at a pace I could follow. Most of us in the class have poor reading or writing. The staff at Fall's are also very supportive and this makes a big difference to me and the other women. For example some of the women need childcare to be able to come to class. The first course I took was called ‘Lipstick and Money’.

I'm interested in being self employed so I found this course interesting. Today at Falls I took the first exam I have ever taken in my life and I am so proud of myself. I only started here last winter and I feel I have come a long way. I can't believe I just did my first exam and will get a certificate in Health and Safety/Cookery. I would now like to do Maths and English. I couldn't do it without the women's centre and I'm excited about learning for the first time in my life.”

Nancy Graham, the Live & Learn worker at Fall's Women's Centre comments, “**Many of our courses bring together women from ethnic minority backgrounds with local women. This is important as it helps create a sense of ‘community’ and the women are a great support for each other. We have quite a demand for courses to improve literacy from women who left school at an early age and from asylum seekers we work with. We hope to offer this to the women in the coming year.**”