

**Mrs Smyly's Homes**

**and**



**smyly trust**  
services

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2010**

***Mrs Smyly's Homes  
And  
Smyly Trust Services***

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**CENTRES**

**Glensilva**, 95 Monkstown Road, Co. Dublin, with which is incorporated the **Birds' Nest**, the **Boys' Home**, the **Elliott Home** and **Children's Fold**.

**Racefield House**, 3 Lower Mounttown, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

**Aftercare**, Northumberland Chambers, Northumberland Avenue,  
Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin

**TRUSTEES**

**Mrs Smyly's Homes**

<b>Mrs. J. Flegg</b>	<b>Mrs. A. Irvine</b>
<b>Mr. M.R.H. Varian</b>	<b>Mr. G. Knaggs</b>
<b>Mr. A.R. Dunwoody</b>	<b>Mr. R. Fry</b>
<b>Mr. A. Buttanshaw</b>	

**Members of the Board of Directors  
Smyly Trust Services**

<b>Mrs. A. Irvine</b>	<b>Ms. P. Rooney</b>
<b>Mrs. L. McMullan</b>	<b>Mr. A.R. Dunwoody</b>
<b>Mrs. A. O'Neill</b>	<b>Mr. R. Fry</b>
<b>Ms. C. Murphy</b>	<b>Mr. P. Abbott</b>
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**Secretary & Treasurer**

**Mr. W.K. Gillanders**

**Director of Services**

**Mr. A.J. Moore, M.Sc. (econ)**

**Centre Managers**

Glensilva – **Ms. H. Buggle**  
Racefield House – **Mr. H. Byrne**  
Aftercare – **Mr. A. Hendrick**

***Contributions will be gratefully received by the  
Secretary and Treasurer,  
Mrs Smyly's Homes, 15 Rock Hill, Blackrock, Co. Dublin  
Telephone No. 01 288 6760 Fax: 288 7531  
e-mail: [info@smylytrust.ie](mailto:info@smylytrust.ie)  
Registered Charity Number: CHY 2581***

## *Chairperson's Report*

Smyly Trust Services have had another challenging year both in terms of caring for the children and young people and in adapting to the financial restraints placed upon us due to the downturn in the economy.

As always, the children's needs are paramount and the quality of care that they have received in the residential units has not been unduly impacted, but as can be seen in the aftercare report, the challenges the young people face when they leave us are much greater than previously due to depleting resources in the community. We continue to support the therapeutic work and were able to showcase this to a wider community in our conference "Understanding and Developing the Therapeutic community" in September. This was received extremely well and thanks are due to Ruth for her organisational skills, Tony for his leadership and all the staff members who participated in their various ways. This was so successful that it is hoped to run another one in 2011.

Our researcher, Catherine Carty, who has been studying the impact of the therapeutic approach, has given us a preliminary report and we await the final product very shortly. She has already given us constructive comments and it is hoped to improve our services on the basis of what we will have learned.

We have been fortunate to retain all of our dedicated Board members, all of whom play an active part both in attendance at monthly meetings and in other aspects of the governance of the organisation. Without their voluntary contributions, where would we be?

Tony continues to skilfully lead his team of managers and care workers in a highly professional manner. We are very fortunate to have such a committed team of staff who always go the extra mile in the interests of the children.

We are also fortunate to have Ruth and Ken in the office, who manage the finances and all other administrative tasks not only efficiently, but with good humour and goodwill.

**Anne Irvine**  
Chairperson  
Board of Directors

## *Director of Services*

The current economic climate does not auger well for voluntary organisations dependant on state funding. For the third consecutive year, our grant from the HSE to run the services has been cut, with a further cut indicated for next year. Savings have been made and we will continue to be prudent in how we use the grant we receive. However, it is increasingly difficult to provide the same level of service for less and less and now impossible not to come in with a deficit at the end of the year. We will seek to address this in a meeting with our funders in the final quarter.

Referrals to all services continue at a steady rate and our occupancy rate is on par if not higher than similar services in the sector. It is over 3 years now since a HSE plan to rationalize the referrals process, with the introduction of a Central Referrals System, was mooted. While this seems to remain on the agenda, the implementation of the plan is awaited.

Apart from financial concerns it has been another busy and productive year. Productive in the sense that plans were made, objectives set and goals were achieved. This is true of the young people and service users that we look after and also the staff and managers that do the front line work. This may seem a somewhat detached description given the nature of the work which is often complex, fraught and messy. It is, however, precisely because the lives and relationships of many we work with are in turmoil and crisis, where progress is slow and setbacks frequent, that we need certain structures and frameworks to identify and measure progress in a difficult task. Developing and implementing such frameworks, through experience and over time, allows us to step back from the daily challenges and pressures of the work and take some comfort from modest achievements.

Well done once again to staff and managers in Aftercare, Glensilva and Racefield for their continued commitment and successes in their work.

Racefield held a memorial evening in June for their recently deceased staff member Paul Humprey. This involved the opening of Racefield's Zen Garden in which the centrepiece was a stone cut bench, inscribed and dedicated to Paul's memory. It was a wonderful and a moving event with some fine and fitting tributes from colleagues, family and friends. For a fuller account of the day, I recommend a visit to our Latest News column on our website [www.smylytrust.ie](http://www.smylytrust.ie).

The Registration and Inspection Service completed their scheduled inspection of Glensilva in December. Glensilva have also had a Peer Review of their therapeutic community by a visiting team from the Community of Communities. Both of these events involved a process of assessment of the quality of the care provided against an established set of standards of care and therapeutic care. These exercises went well and the feedback contributed to the improvement and development of the work. One of the ways in which this occurs is the attention and focus it brings on to our procedures and guidelines for practice, as well as policy development across a wide range of professional and personnel protocols. This is a central part of my work with Managers.

Over the past two years we have been engaged in a research study, the final report of which will be presented in June 2011. The researcher has already given us some substantial feedback which has been useful in getting an objective perspective on our practice and highlighting a number of

areas to address in terms of improving and refining practice. We will be giving attention to this over the coming months.

Though challenged by financial constraints, we continue in our commitment to staff development and training and staff members have been active on a number courses and events over the year. Our child care consultant, Damien McLellan has maintained a steady and reliable presence in our monthly consultation sessions. His support and challenges to our practice are invaluable and greatly appreciated.

Smyly Trust Services hosted a conference entitled “Understanding and Developing Therapeutic Communities” in the Royal Marine Hotel, in September. Damien was one of 3 keynote presenters. This was well attended and was an agreed success all round. It is timely here, to congratulate Ruth for her organisational skills and *panache* on the day.

The Managers’ Reports in this Annual Report provide strong testament to the great work of Helen, Harry, Alan and their staff. Thanks to all for their personal contributions and their input to the development of the services. Thanks also to the members of our Board of Directors for their unflagging interest, commitment and good governance. Finally thanks to Ken and Ruth for their efficient work and attention to finance, administration and other matters that ensure the smooth running of the organisation.

**TONY MOORE**  
**Director of Services**

## Glensilva

Someone recently said to me that 2010 was a year of examination and reflection and that certainly seems to be so. We had engaged in a number of different training days and formal inspections which have helped us to reflect on, and to make better, our practice. As I was busy with the everyday life of the community, I hadn't taken stock at that point as to what that meant for me personally or professionally, or indeed what it meant for the staff team and the young people with whom we live and work alongside. I am grateful for the time now to be able to pause a while and to share with you just some of our journey over the last twelve months.

When living life with teenagers, you really are living it in the fast lane, your time is often dictated by the ever moving school terms and everyone knows that reduces your year by at least three months! Teenagers' lives happen in the moment, on a whim and with passion, to be able to continue to relate and communicate you need to think outside the box, to be flexible, less self-assured and willing to give up control and power, while remaining the ever needed secure adult. Not an easy task as parents but even more challenging with other people's children who have some very poor experiences of the grownups in their world.

So how was 2010? As always it was a busy year. The young people took on more age appropriate responsibilities, whether it was learning to cook or taking a flight on their own, it all became part of their program of care. Early on in the year we decided to do our own version of "Teens in the Wild", closed up the house and took to the garden, building two magnificent Yurts (Mongolian tents) and spending the night under the stars cooking and telling stories. It was a fitting way for me to celebrate my 21 years of working in Glensilva and I would like to thank the young people and the staff who shared the experience with me for making it a special twenty four hours, and a most rewarding 21 years.

The group also spend a lovely week in Wexford and travelled over to Wales to Oak Wood Theme Park. Holidays always provide the opportunity for fun and that extra bonding experience, even if it is by way of sumo wrestling or dodge ball games where the young people get to throw things at the staff and not get into trouble!!

During the year, two of our young people moved on, a beautiful young lady took her leave of us after a very positive six year placement and has started the next part of her journey. She doesn't live too far away, so it is easy for us to keep in touch and it was lovely to have her back for Christmas Day. One of our boys moved to foster care - saying goodbye is always difficult but we were delighted to hand him over to a very excited and loving foster mum. We wish them both many happy years together, and ask them both to remember we are only a phone call away if we are ever needed. While people move on we also welcomed our new teacher to the team and hope she will continue to find her new role satisfying.

Many of the young people in Glensilva accomplished new skills and engaged in new ventures. Drama, horse riding, independence training, football and trips to Croatia and the UK were just some of the activities our young people undertook, while also studying and engaging in developing meaningful relationship both inside and outside the house.

As a community we underwent our bi-annual Community of Communities review. Independent reviewers from the UK came to join us in in-depth discussion and exploration of what it is we do in

Glensilva, helping us in evaluating how we engage and live with one another. There are certain standards which we have agreed to live by and once a year we spend a day discussing if we have managed to uphold these and where there might be room for improvement. It is a day of honest exchange and self-examination on an individual and group level. All voices are given equal weight and each person's opinion is as important as the next.

We also underwent the Registration and Inspection Service inspection. This is another in-depth inspection of all areas of practice and management within Glensilva. It was conducted over four days and was evidence based, looking at how we turn policy into practice and how we create a Therapeutic Community environment. In-depth interviews were conducted with staff members, management, social workers, therapists, teachers and any other relevant people with whom we work. Observations of all in-house practices and participation in in-house routines such as meal times, community meetings, staff meetings, consultancy sessions all form an integral part of the inspection, along with meeting the young people and receiving written confidential answers to a detailed questionnaire from each person, young or grown up, who lives and works in Glensilva. This process, while it can be an anxious time for all concerned, is seen as an essential part of how we need to keep our young vulnerable people safe while in the care of Smyly's and in the care of the State. Having your practice, your beliefs and your attitudes put under the scrutiny of professional advocates for children can be viewed either as an opportunity to measure their effectiveness for the benefit of the young people we work with, or it can be seen as a time to put up the barriers and become defensive. I am happy to report that in Glensilva, I feel that we take the positive opportunity to measure our performance and to use the observations and feedback from inspectors to make changes and improvements for the benefit of the young people. I always think it is important to remember that inspectors and child care professionals are on the same side, that of the child and that while dealing with very troubled young people and their presenting and challenging behaviours, we need all the help we can get to continue to be vigilant and objective as we strive to make meaningful relationships with the young people, relationships which are physically emotionally and mentally demanding and where child care workers are always working on the edge of their intuition and their theoretical knowledge in order to address the un-met needs or the deep hurts of the inner child.

So yes, 2010 was indeed a year of reflection and evaluation but it doesn't end there. Now comes the action which needs to follow any period of appraisal so it's back to the grind stone and all heads down as we move in to another year of work. Before we can do that I must not let the opportunity pass without publicly thanking the Trustees and Board of Management of Smyly Trust Services for their determination and commitment to the on-going development of the service in the face of economic adversity. Without them, many young people would not have their hurts acknowledged and would not have people willing to share their sad and difficult journey with them. To Ken and Ruth, I also extend my thanks for your efficiency in dealing with administrative issues which I just couldn't get my head around and I am grateful that you are always at the end of the phone to sort me out.

To all the nameless people who through the year give donations, to 'Santa' (she knows who she is) and all her little helpers, I am forever grateful. Without these thoughtful gifts we could not provide the special childhood memories of opening up the surprise package under the tree or the memories of the night out at the Panto; things that so many of us take for granted but for children in care they can mean so much. Thank you.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Tony, our Director of Services and my boss who keeps me on the straight and narrow and who has always provided the guidance or the push to do better and to stretch beyond what I thought was all I could give - thank you.

Finally, to the Glensilva team, I wish to extend my thanks for their continued trust and support over the last 21 years both as their co-worker and as their manager. The team in Glensilva is one in a million; their genuine commitment and courage to go beyond basic care and to create a loving and holding environment where young people's pain can be endured and healing can be facilitated, is second to none. Thank You.

Of course to the young people who live in Glensilva today and to all those who I have had the privilege to know over the past twenty one years, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks for teaching me so much.

**HELEN BUGGLE  
MANAGER**

## *Racefield*

I spoke previously about the cold economic winds blowing our way and the enormous challenges facing both the young people and the staff team of Racefield House. This year we seem to be in the eye of the storm, with a tsunami of economic difficulties washing over us and even bigger struggles and challenges bombarding both the team and the young people. Despite all of the gloom facing them in their lives, the young people of Racefield continue to fight their challenges and struggles bravely. They have to contend with the hurt and trauma in their lives and the attachment deficits they have developed, as well as having individual plans, therapeutic tasks and community living in Racefield to deal with. Add into the mix having to experience adolescence, being separated from their families and living in a residential unit and you will see that they have a good deal on their plate. To their credit, they are all still maintaining their placements in Racefield and are working on their respective therapeutic tasks at the year end. While they are on the road to a healing process, the road ahead continues to be a perilous one especially for the young people in our care, the most vulnerable in our society.

Again this year, I believe the team have raised the bar in terms of their professionalism, support and care of the young people. The year is littered with examples of the team's spirit and energy in keeping the bar raised.

During 2010, we continued our development as a therapeutic unit with Damian at the helm guiding us as astutely as always. His sessions throughout the year were instructive and enthralling and in the course of the very robust discussions, the team showed an ability to challenge each other, to be challenged and also to challenge the views put forward by Damian. One challenging suggestion put forwarded by Damian for a young person in danger of losing his place, and to give him an opportunity to reconnect with us, was that 3 staff would go hiking over the Dublin mountains with him for a couple of days. The entire team volunteered for the three places to do the hike which was a great success. The young person is still with us, which is also a tribute to his tenacity of spirit and a credit to the staff who accompanied him.

In the autumn, Smyly Trust Services organised and hosted a one day Conference entitled "Understanding and Developing Therapeutic Communities" to promote an interest in the development of therapeutic communities in Ireland. Tony Moore was MC for the day and he performed his duties with consummate ease and the day flowed effortlessly. With the line-up of excellent speakers and workshops and Ruth's excellent organisation of the day, it was a great success. I was very proud of Racefield participation in two of the workshops - Ed and Aileen presented a workshop entitled "What is closest to the heart is closest to the mouth (Exploring language and its use as a way of articulating feelings in the community)", with the support of the staff team. Denis co-presented one of the other workshops with Lindsey from Glensilva, entitled "Keyworking in a Therapeutic Community". These two workshops were a big part of a very successful day.

We constantly strive to be a normal household to the young people in our care but because of the nature of running a residential unit and the issues of safe guarding and child protection, we can at times be seen as institutionalised or becoming too institutionalised. Ian, a member of the staff team, was the main instigator of providing the internet in a non-institutionalised way to the young people of Racefield. In his research of the safe provision of the internet in schools and youth organisations, he came up with a system to allow young people to have regular use of the internet without constantly having staff to sit with them or have to wait until a member of staff is free to monitor their internet activities. This was achieved through having an effective firewall to monitor and control the web sites, supported by guidelines, a safe internet use pack, signed contract and a signed consent form. This system is now fully operational and has the approval of both young people and staff.

Ed, who I already have mentioned in connection with our conference, was also busy outside of work as he and his partner Shauna are now the proud parents of a baby boy called Ethan, who we all had the pleasure of meeting. Ed's band 'Vickers Vinny' gave birth to their first album - is there no end to this man's talent!

Every year we give a placement to a third year Dublin IT student. This year was a one of exception in that we gave a place to a Waterford IT student as well. Both Helena from DIT and Áine from WIT were exceptionally good with the young people, excelled in their placements and did themselves and their colleges proud.

This year two staff members were delighted to shed the role of student. Aideen achieved her Masters in Therapeutic Child Care and Ian his Degree in Social Care. Our congratulations go to both.

On a beautiful day in June, an event took place that for me encapsulated all that makes Racefield an exceptional residential unit to work in. It was the combination of various elements from the Board right through to the young people, past and present, which made the event extraordinarily special. The event in question was the Memorial Day for Paul, our colleague who died suddenly at the end of 2009. We also officially opened our Zen Garden as a tribute to Paul and dedicated a stone bench to his memory with the words "a good friend to all, a loyal colleague, one in a million" inscribed on it. Ian was the driving force behind the Zen Garden, as he was with a number of events and projects this year. A special mention for Ed and Denis who contributed enormously to the garden as did the whole team. Joyce from Racefield and Alan from Aftercare organised the event and made sure the day ran smoothly. Joyce's thoughts sum up a wonderful day:

*"For me the day marked his enormous selfless contribution to young people experiencing difficulties in their lives. A true reflection of Paul was borne out by the fact that all invitees felt privileged to have been asked and all attended. My mind was also drawn to Hilary Kendlin a former colleague and friend who sadly passed away the day after Paul - may they rest in peace. That evening, I left Racefield feeling how fortunate I have been to have experienced working with*

*Paul and to continue working with an amazing group of people. I felt an inner peace that day which I had not felt in a very long time."*

All of our young people continued in school this year and kept our tutors Siobhan, Denis and Lisa, busy, with two of the residents successfully achieving their Junior Certificates. With a very enthusiastic staff team supporting the young people in their leisure activities, we had a year packed to bursting point with all types of events - from team members going to support the young people playing with their various clubs, to playing rugby hurling and soccer with them, to overnight trips, walking, running and cycling and going swimming in the forty foot with them all year round, even including a visit to Dáil Eireann. There were also two contrasting 3 day trips. One of these was to an adventure centre in Cavan where the young people participated in all sorts of indoor and outdoor activities. One young person reached the top of the climbing wall by the most difficult route, a feat only achieved by two other people. The other trip was to Alton Towers in the UK. Not alone did they have a fabulous time there, but of the group of four young people, the Liverpool fan got to visit Anfield and the other three Manchester United fans got to visit Old Trafford!

Finally we are, as always, very well supported in our endeavours by the Board, the visiting committee, our Director of Services (who is also an individual support to me) and by Ruth and Ken in Head Office who manage to keep everything ticking along nicely. My thanks to you all.

**HARRY BYRNE  
MANAGER**

## Aftercare

2010 was without doubt the year that Aftercare was given most prominence. Following the publication of the Ryan report in 2009, a number of recommendations specific to Aftercare were made. It stated that Aftercare needed to be an integral part of the continuum of care process for young people making the transition from State care to adulthood. While you could be forgiven for thinking that this already exists, I am afraid this is far from the truth. However, this prominence in highlighting the need for Aftercare provision has resulted in the preparation and publication of a National Aftercare Policy in Spring 2011. The launch of the National Aftercare Policy will coincide with the publications of the review of Deaths in Care Report, the new HIQA Standards and the report of State appointed special Rapporteur on Child Protection, Mr Geoffrey Shannon. You can see from the aforementioned that there have been a number of exciting developments in Aftercare over the past year and we look forward to even more exciting times ahead.

Back to our own Aftercare Service - there is no comparison to the report I made last year when we were able to state that we had the largest number of our service users attending third level education. This number has dropped significantly as a direct result of the downturn in our economy. Endless research has shown that one of the first casualties to be directly affected by a downturn is the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in our society. Unfortunately, for our service users they find themselves very much part of both these categories. However it's not all bad news for our service users as we had a number of positive experiences in 2010. We had our first service user graduate with a BA Honours degree in Social Care Practice from Carlow IT. All our service users secured suitable/affordable accommodation and are successfully managing this experience. One of our service users was supported in his preparation for travelling to Australia for a year or maybe two. This small glimpse into our success makes the sometimes turbulent journey with the service users an absolute pleasure to be a part of.

This year saw a significant increase in service users accessing our service, and prompted by this we took the decision to submit a proposal to the HSE to secure an additional worker for our Aftercare Service. We are currently still waiting for a response to our submission (fingers crossed). We adopted a creative approach to our staff shortage and implemented an in-house Aftercare training programme for three staff from each of our residential units (Racefield and Glensilva). The two main reasons for doing this were firstly, to give hands-on experience of Aftercare as part of the continuum of care process, and secondly, to create a pool of possible staff that could be called upon to help out in Aftercare at times of pressure in service delivery.

I think we would all agree 2010 was a difficult year at a macro and micro level, but we are all still here to tell the tale. As an optimist I prefer to concentrate on the little green shoots that we can all play our part in nurturing and building upon while looking to the future with positivity.

It now comes to that time in my report when I dust down my annual role of honour. As I have stated in previous annual reports it is the one time you get the opportunity to put in print the acknowledgement of support from the people whom contribute to the delivery of a professional Aftercare Service to the number of young people leaving state care in our catchment area. Firstly to my colleague Linda Nixon for her dedication and hard work to our service users, a lot of the time above and beyond what is expected of her, my sincere thanks. I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support we received throughout the year from Ms Linda Duggan and her staff

team at Aislinn Aftercare for girls. I am first to acknowledge that our service provision is only as good as the many people that support us and our work and they are Tony Moore, Helen Buggle and Harry Byrne and their respective staff teams.

I appreciate the valuable link provided by Anne Irvine, Roger Dunwoody and Carmel Murphy between our service and Smyly's Board of Directors. Thanks to Smyly's Board of Directors and Trustees for their continued support for the work. I would like to extend a special word of thanks to Ken and Ruth for their relentless administrative back-up.

To the readers of this Annual Report, thank you for your kind support throughout the past year, and we look forward to that same support for the coming year.

**ALAN HENDRICK  
MANAGER**

## **WEBSITE**

Please visit our website at [www.smylytrust.ie](http://www.smylytrust.ie) at your leisure, where you will be kept up to date with news items and developments in our Centres.

You will also find our Annual Report on the website.

## **THANK YOU**

We are truly grateful to all those who send donations year after year in support of our work at Mrs Smyly's Homes. As you will have read in the Director of Services Report, cuts in our Grant funding are taking their toll and any contribution, no matter how big or small, assists us greatly in defraying the shortfall and in sustaining a level of service that our children and young people deserve.

Thank you most sincerely.

***Mrs Smyly's Homes***

***Registered Charity Number: CHY 2581***

*I have pleasure in sending enclosed gift of*

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*towards the support of the Homes*

Name .....

Address .....

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Date .....

Please make cheques payable to:-

**Mrs Smyly's Homes**

And forward to:

**The Secretary,  
Mrs Smyly's Homes,  
15 Rock Hill,  
Blackrock,  
Co. Dublin**

If you do not require a receipt, please put X in the box

## **LEGACIES**

*Important Legacies intended for Mrs Smyly's Homes have miscarried owing to incorrect titles having been inserted in the Wills. The Trustees, therefore, would call attention to the following wording:-*

### **FORM OF BEQUEST**

I bequeath to Mrs. Smyly's Homes the sum of € .....Euro, free of duty. I direct that the receipt of the Secretary for the time being of the said Homes shall be a sufficient discharge for the Legacy which is to be applied to the general purposes of the said Homes, or that the said Legacy may, at the complete and absolute discretion of the Trustees for the time being of the said Homes, be invested in the purchase of or at an interest upon the security of such stocks, shares, funds, securities and other investments of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situate as the Trustees for the time being shall in their absolute discretion think fit.