carafocus magazine

special edition

issue 10

november 2017

10

celebrating ten years

a look back through the years

a national organisation providing a collaborative and partnership platform to enhance sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities.

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cara

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celebrating tenyears

our brand : is who we are

2007 :: our IDENTITY

2017 :: our BRAND

sport • inclusion • ireland

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foreword

We warmly welcome you to the latest and special edition of Cara Focus, as we take a trip down memory lane highlighting key developments of our work over the last 10 years, all which were aimed at increasing awareness of and access to sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities.

Thanks to the vision and motivation of key people within Sport Ireland and the Institute of Technology Tralee, cara officially opened its doors in November 2007 and over the years has developed as a leading national organisation in the area of sport and physical activity for people with disabilities.

One of **cara's** Guiding Principles is 'People at the Core' and while we are delighted to reach a 10 year anniversary with a number of key success stories, we remain grounded in the fact that these successes are only as a result of effective collaborations with key organisations and people. We take great pride in the collaborative nature of our work and of our direct engagement with people with disabilities in understanding their experiences, challenges and needs.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to our Board of Directors, staff (past and present), project working groups, patrons, steering committee, partners and supporters and we would especially like to express our sincere gratitude to Sport Ireland, the Institute of Technology Tralee, Hyundai Ireland, the HSE and Transitions Optical for their continued support in assisting us achieve our goals.

We look forward to 2018 when we will launch our strategy and anounce details of an exciting national project, the National Charter for Inclusion. Highlighting the experiences and needs expressed by people with disabilities, this Charter will provide guidelines for all sport and physical activity providers on adopting an inclusive approach and facilitating active and healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities. Stay connected with us to find out more!

We hope you enjoy this special issue.

Wishing you a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Niamh Laffey Pat Flanagan

In 2007



In 2003 and 2005, the Institute of Technology Tralee, supported by the Irish Sports Council (Sport Ireland) organised the first two National Adapted Physical Activity Conferences to be held in Ireland. These conferences highlighted three main issues -

- The low levels of participation among people with disabilities in sport and physical activity.
- The lack of information through-out Ireland regarding sport and physical activity opportunities available to people with disabilities.
- The lack of awareness within sporting and disability organisations with regards to the needs of people with disabilities.

In November 2007, supported by Sport Ireland and the Institute of Technology Tralee, cara was established to provide coordination and leadership at a national level to enhance opportunities for people with disabilities in sport and physical activity.



Well in the beginning we had Pat Flanagan in IT Tralee… dreaming. And Pat's dream was that people with disabilities would be more included in sport and physical activity in Ireland. That dream gave rise to cara.

Peter Smyth, Research Manager,
Irish Sports Council (Sport Ireland), 2009

2008/09

Sport Ireland secured funding through the Dormant Accounts to appoint 21 Sports Inclusion Disability Officers (SIDOs) across the country, with the aim to increase opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity within their local commnities.

cara was designated to provide coordination and support to the Sport Inclusion Disability Programme at a national level.

Over the last 10 years, the SIDP has grown and developed to such a widespread extent that in 2016 it delivered 10588 participation opportunities to people with disabilities throughout Ireland.

Since its establishment, the Sport Inclusion Disability Programme has been vital in both creating participation opportunities in sport and physical activity and on building awareness at a local level. It will continue to be fundamental in contributing to the lives of people with disabilities and their local communities.







also in these years

- 3rd National APA Conference was held in November 2008 'Building the Right Structures' (Cara 1st Conference in conjunction with IT Tralee and Sport Ireland)



2010

Coordinated by cara in conjunction with IT Tralee, the National Council for the Blind and Vision Sport Ireland, Camp Abilities was first held in Killarney from the 5th - 8th April 2010 and it was the first one of its kind in Europe.

Camp Abilities Ireland offers a week-long residential sport and physical activity camp for children with vision impairments. The camp takes place every Easter, providing a wide range of activities involving anything from outdoor adventure, multi sports activities, to arts and crafts, and everything in between.

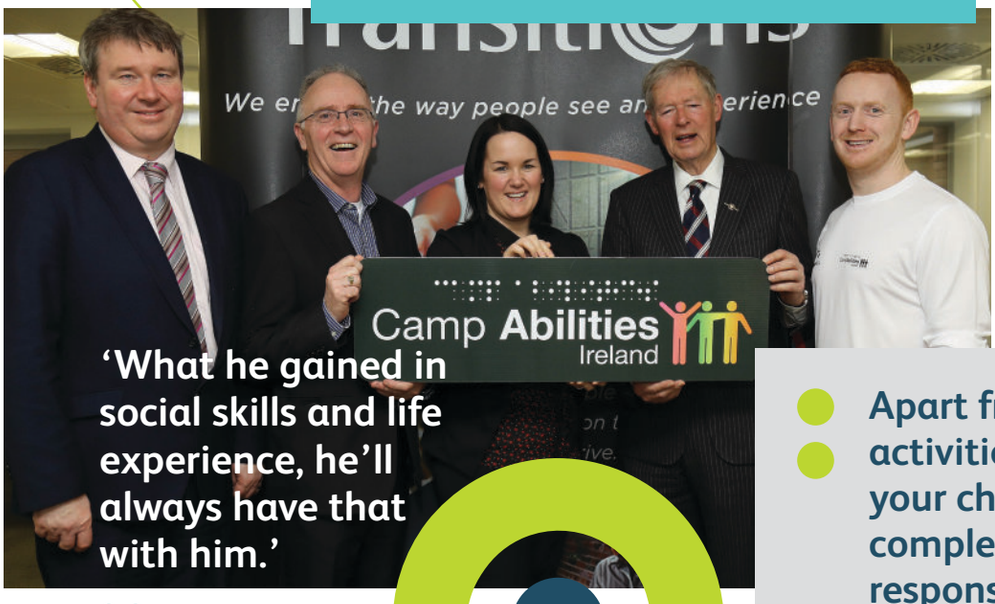
The main aim of Camp Abilities Ireland is to empower children with vision impairments to be physically active, encouraging and supporting them to continue to participate in sport and physical activity opportunities within their local communities. Volunteers come from numerous backgrounds with many of them from the Institute of Technology and the National Learning Network in Tralee, but the 8th annual camp in 2017 welcomed volunteers also from Scotland, Portugal, Spain and Greece as well as all over Ireland.

In 2017 Transitions Optical started an important partnership with Camp Abilities, funding a full time Camp Coordinator position and enabling **cara** to develop long term plans for the continued implementation of Camp Abilities across Ireland.









‘What he gained in social skills and life experience, he’ll always have that with him.’

Parent, 2017

Apart from all the great sports, activities, team building etc. your child benefits from having complete independence and responsibility of looking after themselves and making friends for life. Truly Priceless.

Parent, 2017

Through the support of the Department of Justice and Equality, **cara** introduced the first Xcessible Initiative (Xcessible Leisure Centres) with the aim of heightening the awareness of the benefits of physical activity, active healthy lifestyles and participation opportunities for children and adults with disabilities.

Implemented through the support of the Local Sports Partnership Sport Inclusion Disability Programme, the Xcessible Initiative is a nationally coordinated and collaborative project.

National Coordination = Local Provision

Over the years we have developed and implemented the following:

Xcessible Outdoor Initiative (2012)
Xcessible Youth Sport Athletics (2014)
Xcessible Youth Sport Rugby (2015)

Using the same approach, **cara** coordinated and delivered a hugely successful Fit4All initiative in 2017 focused on increasing awareness on the benefits of regular exercise and accessing opportunities within their local leisure centre/fitness facilities. Over 100 leisure centres and fitness professional participated providing opportunities at a local level in 26 counties to almost 400 participants.

2017









‘Being Active is more than just being fit. It’s a lifestyle.’

2012

Following a successful bid to the European Federation of Adapted Physical Activity, IT Tralee in conjunction with cara, Sport Ireland and the Department of Justice and Equality hosted the European Congress of Adapted Physical Activity 2012 (EUCAPA) 'Putting Practice Based Reasearch into Action' from the 6 - 8th May 2012 in Killarney.

3 days, 262 delegates, 28 countries and 130 video, oral, practical, keynote, guest and poster presentations.

In 2012 **cara** introduced the National Inclusion Awards with the aim of raising the standards and provision in the area of inclusion.

The Inclusion Awards recognise people and organisation throughout the country who enhance participation opportunities for people with disabilities in Sport, Physical Activity and Physical Education.





We're trying to highlight good practice, whereas in the early days maybe we were trying to encourage good practice

Pat, 2015

This was one of the best overall conferences I have attended in nearly 40 years in APA. The entire conference team deserves a 'well done'. I am very selective about the conferences that I attend and I can tell you that I will now be a regular attendee at the EUCAPA conferences

EUCAPA delegate



2013/14

In conjunction with key national agencies, **cara** has taken a lead role in coordinating and developing the National Inclusive Training and Education Framework.The purpose is to develop standardised and cost effective training and education courses across sport, fitness, education and outdoor/adventure sectors.

In order to ensure a national rollout of the courses, **cara** selected and trained a team of tutors to deliver the courses at a local level to coaches, instructors, teachers, students and volunteers in these sectors.

In 2013, Hyundai Ireland announced its support to the Framework and on 25th September Minister Michael Ring officially launched the Disability Inclusion Training course in Dublin.

Four years later, and with the support of Sport Ireland and the Dormant Accounts, almost 7000 participants attended this first introductory course and six more courses have been designed and are currently being delivered throughout the country.

Disability Inclusion Training
(2013 - present) - 6883 participants

Inclusive Fitness Training
(2012 - present) - 644 participants

Disability Awareness Training
(2015 - present) - 282 participants and delivered by the Local Sports Partnerships

Inclusive Adventure Activities Training
(2016 - present) - 96 participants

Inclusive Physical Education
(2017) - pilot in 2017 in conjunction with the Special Education Support Services

Inclusive Sport Coaching
(2017) - Sport specific with National Governing Bodies of Sport

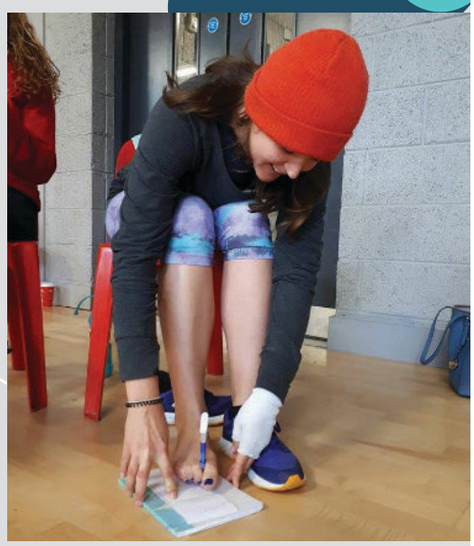
Autism in Sport
(Launch in 2018)



The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive and the trainers from cara were very engaging and knowledgeable resulting in a very worthwile experience for our staff.

Colin Moran,
Training Manager
IRFU Coach Development Department





2015

In 2015, through the support of Sport Ireland, **cara** was provided with an opportunity to have an office in Sports HQ at the National Sports Campus. This was a significant development for **cara** in obtaining a stronger presence nationally and developing close working relationships with key national agencies such as the National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs). Since then, we have worked very closely with the NGB Unit of Sport Ireland to develop an engagement plan clearly detailing the supports provided by **cara** to strengthen inclusive policies and practices within National Governing Bodies of Sport. As a result of recent briefing sessions with the NGBs, we are delighted to be in the process of supporting a number of these organisations through their inclusive plans.

As an organisation providing a collaborative and partnership platform to enhancing sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities throughout Ireland we strongly believe in the impact of working in partnership and continue to seek and develop stronger relationships with all key agencies within the sport and physical activity sector across Ireland.

Since 2007, **cara** has been very fortunate to develop, maintain and learn from close working relationships with many international organisations whose focus is similar to that of our organisation. Such organisations include, Disability Sport Wales, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, English Federation of Disability Sport, Halberg Disability Sport Foundation New Zealand, Australian Sports Commission, The Inclusion Club, SUNY Brockport USA, University of Alberta Canada and the University of Virginia USA.







In Australia, the Disability Education Programme (DEP) coordinated nationally and delivered through a state or territory based networks, meant that inclusive sport training was available nationally and within each state and territory for participating NGBs in Sports CONNECT. The approach of DEP was very similar to cara's Disability Inclusion Training. Having this resource readily available, with a network of trained presenters, gave tremendous credibility and momentum to NGB programs.

Peter Downs,
Australian Sports Commissions Disability Sport Unit

2016

On Friday 2nd December 2016, Jason Smyth, the fastest Paralympian on the planet, gave an incredible speech at our National Seminar for Inclusion to launch out latest national campaign.

The purpose of this campaign is to truly capture the voices of people with disabilities and to heightening awareness of their lived experiences.

Through collaboration with the nationwide Local Sport Partnerships, focus groups are being held throughout the country with both active and non-active individuals, to gain a better understanding of the barriers, solutions and the impact that sport and physical activity have on their lives.

Through the analysis of the information gathered from these focus groups, **cara** will develop the National Charter for Inclusion and will encourage organisations to adopt the Charter and commit to be inclusive of people with disabilities in their organisation.



If people are telling you to stop playing a sport because you're different, you're not different, you're the same as everyone else. If you've a passion for it keep going and never give up.

Jordan Lee





2017

In line with previous initiatives, **cara** has formed a new partnership with the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Focusing on the action 29 of the Healthy Ireland National Physical Activity Plan, we conduced an in-depth review specific to Health Promotion programmes and initiatives designed for people with disabilities and developed the National Physical Activity Awareness and Education Programme.

The new project aims at increasing awareness amongst people with disabilities on the benefits of sport and physical activity, as well as sharing information on where people can access participation opportunities.

It will be delivered within disability organisations and services throughout Ireland in early 2018.







As both a parent and as Minister for Disabilities I see far too often how someone's disability can isolate them socially, and it pain me to see this. Sport and physical activity can bridge that gap and I would passionately advise all persons with a disability to get more involved. Don't say: 'I'm too old' or 'I wouldn't be able to do that'. Let cara advise you. It will open up a whole new world for you. A world of new friends and better health. That is why I am looking forward so much to continuing to work with cara to improve the quality of life of people with disabilities through sport and physical activity and to encourage my Government colleagues to play their part too.

Mr. Finian McGrath
TD, Minister of State for Disability Issues





our vision

Active and healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities.

our mission

To increase the participation of people with disabilities in sport and physical activity throughout Ireland.

our principles

We believe that people with disabilities should -

- **Have access to lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.**
- **Be facilitated to participate in physical activity/sport of their choice, be that in a segregated or integrated setting.**
- **Have access to participation opportunities irrespective of the nature or severity of their disability.**

our values

People with Disabilities at the Core of our Work

The voice and needs of people with disabilities must be at the core of our engagement, decisions and actions.

A Shared Vision

Through collaboration and partnership greater access to sport and physical activity for people with disabilities can be achieved.

People Make Places

Volunteers and champions of the cause of inclusion are the key facilitators to increasing sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities.

Strong Organisational Governance

Effective operational systems delivered through a democratic person centred work place where transparency and efficiency are valued.

the future

our goals

goal one

To increase community sport & physical activity participation opportunities for people with disabilities.

goal two

To engage directly with people with disabilities and disability service providers to facilitate their voice and represent their needs in relation to access to sport and physical activity.

goal three

To improve quality sport and physical activity provision for people with disabilities.

goal four

To ensure effective organisation capabilities to meet the highest standards of our organisation through open, transparent and visible operations.

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