

MS Society Foyle Branch

Support Officers Report to AGM 16TH October 2007

Thursday Support Group

Our support group continue to meet monthly at FDRC. These meetings are still proving very popular and our programme varies from having guest speakers and presentations to lively discussions among ourselves. The evening is rounded off with tea and plenty of banter.

We have had some interesting speakers since our last AGM; examples of these being, Madeline Callaghan who is the facilitator of our Listening Ear service. John McGinty, MS Ireland who talked about the cross-border Tactics project and in February last we invited the Community Pharmacist who explained about different medications and also the delivery services, which most pharmacists provide.

Tuesday Club

From June until September our Tuesday Club members had fortnightly outings in our coach to various resorts around the North West and Donegal. I've been told that the highlight of these trips was taking the ferry from Rathmullan to Buncrana, why wouldn't it be, when you end up in the Inishowen Gateway Lodge hotel for afternoon tea. On all the other outings and picnics were organised by our volunteers.

From the beginning of this month the Club has resumed their weekly meetings at FDRC where activities include Quizzes and of course plenty of chat and banter. The afternoon is rounded off with tea, sandwiches and home baking provided by our volunteers.

Yoga

Yoga classes in Derry continue at FDRC every Tuesday afternoon. Marian Simpson is now our main facilitator with Madeline Callaghan filling in for Marian when needed. Marian and Madeline are both very dedicated and committed to our group. This Tuesday session continues to draw a large number of our members. Likewise our yoga sessions in Claudy, facilitated by Aileen McQuillin continue on a Friday morning in the Diamond Centre and are proving to be just as popular as Derry. As Terry has already mentioned, Yoga classes are commencing in Limavady tomorrow in LCDI premises facilitated by Ann Knocker. All our members are finding these

gentle exercises very beneficial for our MS as well as enhancing our general health and well-being.

Tai Chi – Qi Cong

Tai Chi/Qi Cong continues fortnightly at FDRC every other Thursday. This activity involves gentle exercise and breathing techniques, which can increase our energy levels and like Yoga, can improve our general health and well-being. Thanks to Danny Butterfield, Tai Chi instructor who facilitates this activity.

Physiotherapy Exercise Sessions

Since our last AGM we still have been unable to get a trained physiotherapist. One of our members, John Mallet, who was able to remember all the Physio exercises, now guides us through our paces. John has become a great asset to our Branch as he also helps out at Tai Chi classes when Danny is not available. Thanks to John.

Holistic Approach to Health and Healing

This was a 6-week course facilitated by Madeline Callaghan, 2 hours per week, designed to meet the expressed needs of people living with MS and their Carers. The course was a result of the Listening Ear Service and a group meeting held in FDRC. We talked and shared our opinions and experiences of the challenges that MS presented for us. We took time for relaxation, visualisation, breathing techniques and meditation. We identified there is a deep need for people to see past the disability, not only for our friends, family and society, but above all, those of us with MS.

Finally I would like to reiterate what Terry has mentioned earlier and that is to thank the drivers and other volunteers who have helped make our Branch a successful support structure for people affected by MS.

Moira Leitch
Support Officer
October 2007