



## Our new website is up and running!

We are glad to introduce you to our brand new website [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie).

The new site now offers a lot of useful information. Not only does it display the company information and work undertaken by Headstrong, but it is also a source of useful information and reference to resources for young people/ families and friends, youth workers and health professionals. Last but not least, our website is a new fundraising tool that incorporates online giving, event & community fundraising and campaign material.

It also allows us to relate to our users through blogs, RSS feeds, you tube etc. and other ways to get involved.

Please take some time to browse through the pages and send us your comments to [info@headstrong.ie](mailto:info@headstrong.ie)... We would love to hear from you!

Hi to each of you,

Thank you as always for your support for the work of Headstrong. Since I last wrote to you, there have been a number of exciting developments that have helped to advance our mission to change how Ireland thinks about young people and their mental health.

We secured support for Jigsaw from the HSE, and our many partner agencies in Roscommon for Jigsaw. On the basis of this the Board of Headstrong approved a grant of €400,000 to establish Jigsaw Roscommon over the coming three years. In these stringent times, it was not easy to get something like this off the ground, but I wish to extend our sincere thanks to all who contributed to making it happen.

We extended our My World research survey to include many marginalised groups of young people, whose particular needs are often not considered in national surveys. With assistance from CDYSB, YouthReach, traveller support agencies and the Deaf communities we completed our research survey with over 250 additional young people. As before, we found young people very open and eager to discuss their mental health needs and most appreciative of the opportunity to do so.

Headstrong's youth advisors spoke on their own behalf recently at the first Youth Mental Health International Summit in Killarney. The audience were largely from Australia, UK, Canada and USA. Members of our YAP made formal presentations and in the discussions that followed all the other YAP who were present were vocal and passionate.

Finally, As you can see, we have recently relaunched our website [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie). We hope you like the new site, and we look forward to hearing some feedback from you as to whether you feel it communicates clearly what we do.

Headstrong has achieved a lot in a small amount of time, but we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that every young person in Ireland has somewhere to turn to and someone to talk to. We would very much welcome your support along the way, whether you are in the position to make a gift to our fundraising appeal (see page 5), or you sign up to our 'One Voice for Change' petition to change the way mental health and wellbeing services are delivered in Ireland (see page 7). All donations and signatures will be very much appreciated. By coming together, I truly believe that we can bring about meaningful change, for the benefit of all of young people in Ireland.

*Tony Bates*  
Founding Director

## We have moved!

As of Monday 29th March 2010 Headstrong moved to its new warm and sunny premises at 3rd Floor, Block 5, Westland Square, Pearse Street, Dublin 2. Our main aim was to find a space to better reflect our organisational structure and the company we've grown into over recent

years. Everything is settling down nicely and the entire team is now working in a big open space. Our new telephone no. is (01) 4727 010 and our new address is 3rd Floor,



Block 5, Westland Square, Pearse Street, Dublin 2. Please amend your records accordingly. If you are coming to visit us please download our map from our website as the office is a little hard to find.

## Headstrong sign off on 5<sup>th</sup> Jigsaw demonstration project

Headstrong is pleased to announce that Jigsaw Roscommon is the latest demonstration project which we will support over the next three years with an investment of €400,000. This is the fifth demonstration project which Headstrong will invest in and represents a significant achievement in

Headstrong's development as an organisation given the focus of the last three years has

been to get the five demonstration projects to the point of implementation. Strategies within the Jigsaw Roscommon plan include:

- ✓ A comprehensive community awareness strategy to improve mental health literacy amongst young people, parents and the general community which impacts



upon the mental health and well-being of young people and the importance of early help seeking.

- ✓ Increase access for young people to generic counselling and support services in Roscommon through the up-skilling of those working with young people to better support those

at risk of emerging mental health problems, using effective problem solving and enhanced

communications strategies.

- ✓ Young people at risk of developing mental health problems in areas of Roscommon with limited resources will have greater access to and be able to avail of integrated and co-ordinated social and recreational activities that improve their mental health and well-being.

- ✓ Through systematic, cross-sector training and support, a number of front-line service providers (teachers, youth workers, sports coaches, scout leaders etc) with whom young people have regular contact, will enhance their skills in listening, being supportive, problem solving, recognising concerns and signposting to appropriate support.

The Jigsaw Roscommon plan has evolved over the past two years involving a planning team which consisted of Roscommon Integrated Development Company, Youth Work Ireland, the HSE, Mental Health Ireland, Foroige, D'Umberella Youth Café and representatives from General Practice and local schools.

Young people were central in the development of the plan through the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). They will continue to play a critical role during the implementation phase of the plan over the coming three years.

## Trinity Headstrong Day!

Congratulations to students of Trinity College on the success of the first Trinity Headstrong Day. The day was organised by Aine Travers, Aisling Ni Chonaire and Laura Lynham to raise awareness of youth mental health and to raise funds for Headstrong as part of Trinity Welfare Week.

On the day, Headstrong's Tony Bates was very well received by students when he spoke on the theme 'I'll See You On the Dark Side of the Moon'. A fundraising skipathon and hoola-hoopathon were held on the main square of the campus, and international boxers Kenny Egan, Paddy Barnes and Ryan Lindberg turned up to lend their support to the students. The day ended in Temple Bar with a Battle of the Bands competition. Over €1,400 was raised in total on the day – a fantastic achievement by all concerned.



# International Initiative for Mental Health Leadership, Killarney

## Citizens in Partnership - Inclusion or Illusion?

An international conference has heard praise for Ireland's community based approach to dealing with mental health. Over 500 delegates from countries around the world gathered for the event in Killarney, to share knowledge and experiences on how to improve services. They have visited 40 centres in Ireland, dealing with a variety of mental health issues.

Tony Bates delivered a key note address on the importance of the challenges associated with changing our thinking in relation to young people's mental health.



## International Youth Mental Health Summit

On Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May over 100 delegates from 8 different countries gathered in Killarney to consider an International Declaration on Youth Mental Health. Organised by the Youth Mental Health Special Interest Group of ACAMH (Association of Child and Adolescent Mental Health), delegates heard from a number of leading academics and practitioners who have been involved in developing new youth mental health services which have a focus on the 12-25 year age range.

Speakers from Australia, Canada, Ireland and the UK spoke of the need to move away from traditional methods of specialist service delivery to a more developmental perspective in providing early intervention services for young people. This is well supported by evidence which suggests that 75% of mental health problems have their onset before a young person turns 25. Some presenters spoke of the challenges that this

change in service provision would bring and the critical importance of gaining the commitment from all relevant agencies and of advocating for more resources to be focused on youth mental health.

One way of getting youth mental health on the international agenda is to develop an International Declaration on Youth Mental Health. Delegates at the summit were able to provide some input into a draft declaration which had been developed including the preamble which had been written by young people. Headstrong Director Pat McGorry, Founding Director Tony Bates and a number of young people from Headstrong's YAP and other Jigsaw YAP spoke at the Summit about developing an international youth mental health movement. There was strong support for an International Declaration on Youth Mental Health and it was agreed that more time and work is required to ensure the declaration has the impact we want it to achieve.

## Headstrong and Inspire host International Exchange

Ireland hosted the recent International Initiative in Mental Health Leadership which culminated in a two day conference in Killarney. Prior to the conference both Headstrong and Inspire Ireland hosted visitors from Australia, the U.S.A and Ireland for a two day exchange programme. The exchange titled *Youth Mental Health – An Interface*

*with Community and Technology* involved presentations from each of the participants including the host organisations. This was a great opportunity for all participants to learn what each of the different organisations is engaged with, some of the key challenges we are facing in our work and potential ways of overcoming these challenges.

Participants also discussed ways of potentially collaborating on shared areas of work.

The two days proved very valuable in allowing each of the participants to take the time out to learn from one another and share their respective learnings. It is hoped that it will provide a platform for the learnings to continue.

## Australian Ambassador to Ireland honours Australian of the Year

The Australian Ambassador to Ireland Mr Bruce Davis honoured the Australian of the Year and Headstrong Director Professor Pat McGorry at a recent reception at the ambassadors residence in Killiney. Family, friends and those connected to the work of Headstrong were present when Ambassador Davis acknowledged the special relationship which had developed between Ireland and Australia in the field of youth mental health. Professor McGorry paid tribute to many of those present

who had worked hard to put youth mental health on the national agenda and also acknowledged Headstrong's work to date in changing how Ireland thinks about youth mental health. Deirdre Mortell, Chair of the Headstrong Board, spoke about the significant role Pat had played in getting youth mental health on Ireland's agenda and his continual important role in bringing key leaders in the field of mental health on board and in shaping the thinking of developments in this field.



D. Mortell, P. McGorry, B. Davis

## Headstrong's Learning Network

The Headstrong Learning Network got underway in February this year with 27 participants representing nine different communities. This is a network, which will be offered through four modules to share the learning from Headstrong's own experience in project development. Essentially Headstrong aims to give a grounding to interested community representatives in best-practice around youth mental health, to facilitate relevant discussion, and to share learning and expertise in the process of developing sustainable initiatives to meet the mental health needs of young people.



It is hoped that each community group participating may be more equipped to

mobilise their local areas in working to develop an independent youth mental health plan of their own to provide more coordinated and accessible supports for young people. In addition, the HLN will provide all participants with the opportunity to share expertise and experience in relation to the building of a community coalition and to act as a mutual support network to each other.

So far the group have completed two Modules of the Learning Network in February and in April, and will be participating in Module Three in early July.

## 'Is Ireland on the Edge?' - Mental Health in Ireland

The first in the 2010 Pfizer Health Forum series in association with the Irish Times was held on 30th March 2010 in the Science Gallery, Trinity College Dublin, at which the topic of mental health was discussed by a group of leading commentators and experts. *'Is Ireland on the Edge?' - Mental Health in Ireland* was the focus of the evening discussion with panellists including psychiatrist Professor Ivor Browne; Dr. Tony Bates of Headstrong; Mr. Geoff Day of the National Office for Suicide Prevention and Mr.

John Redican, the National Service Users Executive.

Hospitals in Ireland spend too much time diagnosing mental illness and little time promoting positive mental health, Prof Ivor Browne told the Forum. Prof Browne, professor emeritus of psychiatry at University College Dublin, said the training of psychiatrists was one of the causes of this problem as they have little experience of psychotherapy.

"I don't think we have a mental health service here," he said. "I think we have

a mental illness service."

Speaking during the debate Prof Browne said he felt the over-prescription of anti-depressant drugs was deepening the problem by pushing people who had problems into positions where they were considered to have an illness. John Redican of the National Service Users Executive said mental health was in the margins in terms of health spending and was grossly neglected by politicians. He said the area should account for 8.2

per cent of health spending but only received 5.4 per cent this year.

"Mental health is central to well being," he said. "If you don't have good mental health you'll be impoverished."

Geoff Day, director of the National Suicide Prevention Office, said a lack of investment in the area had taken

Irish mental health services closer to the

edge. Mr Day said the Government's Vision for Change programme for the mental health sector was a good strategy, but that having the required funds invested was a major issue in the current climate. However, he said a growing public interest in the matter was a source of encouragement.

Tony Bates, Founding Director of Headstrong, agreed that the national conversation about mental health was overly focused on diagnosis and negative consequences when those with mental health difficulties and their families need to hear much more about recovery and hope.

The Forum series will include 6 events throughout 2010, in various counties across Ireland. They will present further opportunity for the general public to hear key opinion leaders discuss issues relating to health and they will stimulate interest in, and discussion on, various aspects of healthcare in Ireland.



*Fintan O'Toole, left, assistant editor, The Irish Times, with key speakers Mr Geoff Day, Mr John Redican, Dr Tony Bates and Prof Ivor Browne.*

## Please join Headstrong on our journey...

Through our *Jigsaw* programme, Headstrong is working to bring existing community supports and services together to better meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of young people.

*Jigsaw* Galway and *Jigsaw* youngballymun are now up and running, with three more *Jigsaw* projects in Kerry, Roscommon and Meath to follow. Headstrong's own journey and the stories of the hundreds of young people who have benefited from *Jigsaw* so far in these communities are inspiring, but it is still early days, and we have a lot more work to do. We want to expand our work to make sure that there is a *Jigsaw* in every county in Ireland. We want young people to have the resilience

and the support they need to face challenges to their mental health and wellbeing. And we need your help.

I am so conscious that these are difficult financial times for so many, but Ireland's young people desperately need our help today. Any support that you can give us in improving services and support on their behalf is very much appreciated.

Please join us on our journey to ensure that every young person in Ireland has somewhere to turn to and someone to talk to, by considering a donation to Headstrong today.

Thank you for your support.

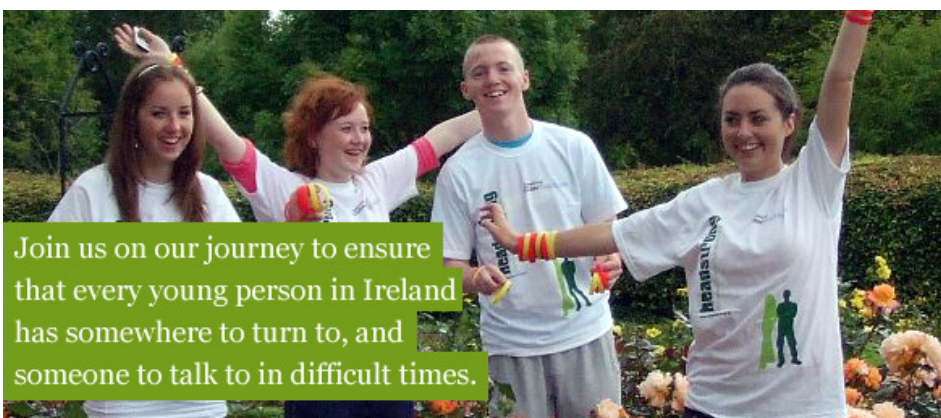
*Tony Bates*  
Founding Director

### Donating to Headstrong

- ✓ **Online:** At [www.headstrong.ie/appeal](http://www.headstrong.ie/appeal)
- ✓ **By Direct Debit:** Download our Direct Debit form on [www.headstrong.ie/appeal](http://www.headstrong.ie/appeal) or call us on 01 472 7047 to set up a regular direct debit
- ✓ **By Phone:** Call Headstrong Fundraising at 01-472 7047
- ✓ **By Mail:** Send cheque or postal order to: Headstrong Fundraising, 3rd Floor, Block 5, Westland Square, Pearse Street, Dublin 2.

## Youth Advisors' Video Workshop

Check out our new video blogs courtesy of Reachout on our website. Thanks to Vince, Ian from Inspire and Kevin from Bridge to College for a fun weekend where we got to be creative in getting our message across. We hope this is the start of many more video blogs to come. Check [www.headstrong.ie/about-us/YAP](http://www.headstrong.ie/about-us/YAP). Thanks also to ESB Electric Aid who provided grant aid to this video project.



## Fourth Jigsaw Learning Network meets in Kerry

Jigsaw Kerry was very proud to host the April Jigsaw Learning Network for the five Jigsaw sites and Headstrong. The first day began with a very in-depth look at the Jigsaw Schools Programme presented by Caroline from Jigsaw Meath. This led to a long discussion on how to lead out the Schools Programme in the different projects. Information was shared on the formation of the Adolescent Health Teams in participating schools, the possible pitfalls and the positive strengths from Meath.

A discussion followed on the use of Youth Cafés in the different projects and how agencies work in partnership

to develop these Cafés. There was great learning on this topic and all agreed that a challenge is the sustainability of Youth Cafés generally.



Through some case scenarios smaller groups discussed how external callers may be supported by Jigsaw. This topic facilitated some discussions on the practical and ethical boundaries of staff when working with young people

who engage with the Jigsaw sites.

A presentation was given on the Youth Advisory Panels and how these may be structured and sustained. Jigsaw Kerry are currently putting together a YAP recruitment pack and this is to be shared with all projects.

Finally, the group had a discussion on what the Jigsaw website should look like, who it serves and what information it should contain.

This Jigsaw Learning Network was very beneficial to those who attended and again allowed the sharing of information and learning, and of course opened up more questions for future discussion. We wish to thank all who attended and openly shared your experiences. It is great to know the Jigsaw experience is similar in all projects!

## Team Development and Leadership Training for our Youth Advisory Panel

In September 2009 the YAP developed a new plan for the coming year. One of the pieces of work identified was to develop the strength of the group which had grown and welcomed in many new members over the course of 2008-2009. To continue to grow and develop the skills and abilities of the individual members and the group we opted to take training in team development and leadership skills. With thanks to an award from Dublin Bus, in January 2010 we gathered in Galway to embark on an exciting and challenging weekend. It was a fantastic weekend and everyone took a lot of learning from it as this quote from one of our members illustrates:

*“The weekend in Galway was thoroughly enjoyable. I think the group really appreciated having the chance to spend some time together and get to*

*know one another better. Aside from the social aspect of the weekend, the training and workshops were of huge benefit to us as a group. I think it helped us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, both individually and as a group. It allowed us to develop a clearer idea of what we want to achieve in YAP and how we can go about making it happen.*

*Overall I think it helped us to build confidence in our ability to work as a*

*group and it can only stand to us in the future. It was an invaluable weekend and it was just what we needed!”*

We'd like to say a big thank you to the YAP members, the Ballybane enterprise



Members of our Youth Advisory Panel at training

centre and our facilitators Jacqui Gauge and Peter Dorman for an engaging and exciting weekend which will build a strong future for youth participation in Headstrong.

## Jigsaw Facilitator Training celebration in Ballymun

Almost one year after Jigsaw youngballymun trained its first forty workers in the Jigsaw Wraparound Facilitator model and following the development of a new training programme, the second round of Jigsaw Facilitator training began in March 2010. Seventeen workers from a variety of organisations across the community participated in the seven-session training programme, during which they were trained in a strengths-based model to support young people. To mark the completion of the training programme,



Jigsaw youngballymun hosted a celebratory lunch on 20th May during

which each of the workers was presented with a completion certificate. We were delighted to welcome two new organisations as Jigsaw partners - Teen Between counselling service and the Ballymun Women's Resource Centre - during this round of training, adding to the Jigsaw network within Ballymun. A further round of training is planned for the autumn and we expect that our other Jigsaw sites will also be in a position to avail of the training programme later this year.

## Updates from the My World research

To help us understand how young people were experiencing their mental health Headstrong has undertaken some preliminary analysis of the data collected from the My World Questionnaire.

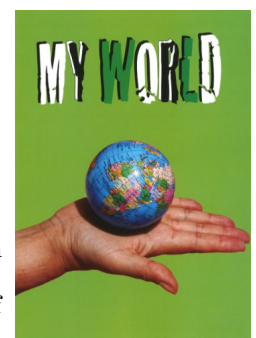
*Are Irish adolescents like adolescents in other countries?*

One of the objectives of our research is to look at Irish adolescents and see how they compare to adolescents from other countries. We found that Irish adolescents reported lower satisfaction with life, self-esteem, resilience, social support, personal competence, social resources, family cohesion, than adolescents from other countries such as the USA, Norway, Canada and the

UK. Their psychological distress was also significantly higher, with higher levels of depression, anxiety and stress. This suggests that Irish adolescents may be at an increased risk of psychological distress than their counterparts in other countries. They were comparable to other adolescents from other countries in terms of their social competence and school misconduct. However, on a more positive note, Irish adolescents scored more positively than adolescents in other countries in terms of their optimism. As optimism is highly predictive of resilience this is an important observation. International studies on optimism have shown that optimism can buffer against negative

psychological and physiological outcomes. Therefore, it is important to promote optimism and resiliency within the lives of our young people. Their rate of reported substance misuse and anti-social behaviour was also lower than their international counterparts. Again, a positive finding.

Phase two of the Research will focus on young people from minority groups and disadvantaged areas; data collection from over 250 young people was completed in May.



## Getting Involved

### One Voice for Change

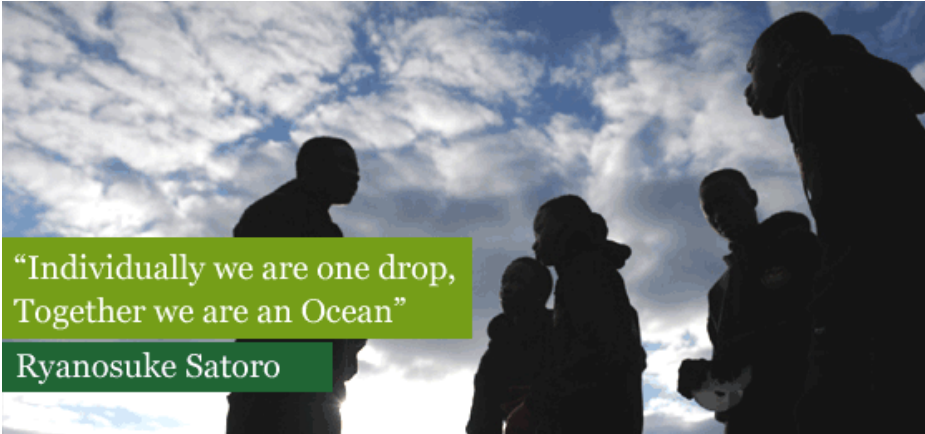
In Ireland today, the mental health supports that young people so desperately need are rarely available, and the few services available to them are often hard to access and seldom youth friendly. Through the Jigsaw programme of service development, we are bringing together community supports to better meet the mental health and wellbeing needs of young

people so that they feel connected to their community, and have the resilience to face challenges to their mental health.

We want to change the system to ensure that there is a Jigsaw in every county of Ireland by 2016, and we need to convince national leaders to lead this change.

If you believe the time for change has come, please add your voice to Headstrong's **One Voice for Change** online petition which we will be presenting to the Department of Health and Children and other national leaders later this year.

*"Individually we are one drop, Together we are an Ocean"* - Ryanosuke Satoro



**"Individually we are one drop,  
Together we are an Ocean"**

**Ryanosuke Satoro**

#### One Voice for Change

Together we are calling for a change in the way mental health and wellbeing services and supports are delivered for young people in Ireland.

We need a youth-friendly system that gives every young person in Ireland somewhere to turn to and someone to talk to in difficult times.

**Please sign the petition online at: [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie)**

### Youth Advisory Panel: We Want You!

The Youth Advisory Panel (YAP) are currently recruiting new members. If you have a passion for changing how Ireland thinks about youth well-being or have something to say about services and supports for young people please contact Nuala, our Youth Participation Officer, at

[nuala@headstrong.ie](mailto:nuala@headstrong.ie) about joining our Youth Advisory Panel. Our youth advisors are young people between the ages of 17 and 25 who are happy to share their wisdom with Headstrong and work with us to support our goals. To find out more see our website [www.headstrong.ie](http://www.headstrong.ie)



## Staff & Board Updates

### Pat Brosnan – Director

Pat Brosnan resigned as a Director of the Board of Headstrong. Pat became was appointed Director in 2006 and has been involved in Headstrong

since its inception. We would like to thank Pat for the time and effort he put into the role, his commitment and dedication are highly appreciated.

Pat's involvement in Headstrong's mission will continue at a subcommittee level.



### Orlaith Foley – Fundraising & Communication Intern

A big thank you to Orlaith Foiley who is working as a Fundraising and Communications Intern here in Headstrong over the coming months! Orlaith has just finished her finals in Trinity College Dublin where she studied BESS, taking Business and Politics as her majors. She has a huge interest in youth mental health and has worked as a Peer Mentor and Peer Supporter to students in Trinity over

the past 5 years. She also took a year out of her studies to take up the position of Welfare Officer of the Students' Union where she advised students on a wide variety of mental health issues as well as running a campus wide Mental Health Awareness Week Campaign. It's great to have her in the office with us and we hope that she is enjoying her experience!