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## Editorial

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## **Editorial**

**Dr. C. Niall McElwee**

It is with pleasure that I extended Fergus Hogan the opportunity of guest editing this dedicated volume of the Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies. Fergus was one of the first supporters of the journal back in the late 1990's advertising it with his colleagues in both social work and family therapy practice and in academia. I was particularly interested in Fergus guest editing as I know he has an interest in both social work and social care/child and youth care. I strongly feel that both disciplines need to come closer together for the benefit of all the people with whom we work. The opportunity to become directly involved in the IJASS is but one route for this to take place.

Early on in our deliberations, Fergus and I discussed possible areas where one might concentrate on for a dedicated issue and we both agreed that readers of the journal would like to see foster care addressed – but from number of angles. Foster care is certainly an area that is receiving increasing attention and I am delighted to see that Fergus was able to convince friends and colleagues to submit varied papers ranging from service users to foster parents themselves. All in social care deserve the right to be heard and this journal is uniquely placed to give voice to those 'from the coalface' so to speak.

Many of my social care students over the years have lamented the lack of a substantial body of literature around fostering as it is understood and practiced in Ireland. They mentioned the fact that there are few accounts from 'service users' and from 'ordinary' foster parents to be found. Happily, this volume makes a significant contribution to filling the gap.

Since our last volume, much has happened with contributors to our journal. I moved from the Centre for Social Care Research at the Waterford Institute of Technology during the summer and took up a position as Head of Department of Humanities at the Athlone Institute of Technology. The IJASS will now be published by SocSci Consultancy, with both colleges remaining partners of the journal. Dr. Kevin Lalor, one of our Associate Editors, was promoted during the summer to Head of

Department of Social Sciences at the Dublin Institute of Technology and his edited book *The End of Innocence: Child Sexual Abuse of Ireland* was published in October. All at the journal would like to wish Kevin well. Professor Harry Ferguson has moved from University College Dublin to the University of Bristol where he has taken up a research Chair in social work and we wish him the very best in his move. Harry's co-authored book *Keeping Children Safe* was published earlier this year. Although now based in the UK, I have no doubt that Harry will maintain a keen interest in Irish child protection and welfare. Susan McKenna has joined the IJASS team as practice book review editor. Susan is a graduate of the social care Diploma and Degree programmes at Waterford Institute of Technology and has worked in day care and community child care. She is presently lecturing part-time at the Athlone Institute of Technology and works with SocSci Consultancy. Professor Henry Maier of the University of Washington has joined our team as review editor from the United States of America and Dr Grant Charles has joined us from Calgary, Alberta. Finally, we had the pleasure of the company of Dr Thom Garfat of Montreal, Canada in October when he came to Drogheda to speak at the International conference of the Oberstown Boys Centre followed by a joint presentation with myself to student and faculty of both the Athlone and Waterford Institute of Technology's social care programmes. Thom and I are currently negotiating with various Irish partners in relation to a model of social care theory and practice we are developing (the EirCan model©) and we will explore this in detail in forthcoming issues of IJASS.

The next volume of IJASS is due for publication in early 2002 and will be divided into two sections. Section one will include a range of keynote papers from the Oberstown conference held in October 2001 with section two having a selection of papers on areas as diverse as title designations in social care, living with HIV in Ireland, residential child care, a commentary from community child care and aspects of education in care - to name but some. Continue to tell us what you want and please do send us in papers for inclusion in future volumes.

Finally, I would like to express heartfelt sympathy to our colleagues in New York and Washington who have been so badly affected by the terrorist events in September.