



**'GROWING TOGETHER' – COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

*COLLABORATION FOR TRANSFORMATION*

**Mission in Action – Cultivating community one heart at a time...**

Together with grassroots, church, voluntary, statutory and business communities we are committed to growing 'The Mill Village' Community in North Belfast where people with disabilities transform the community through the gifts they bring. This will be a neighborhood within 2 square miles of the Carlisle Circus where the weakest and most vulnerable are at the centre and everybody, regardless of ability, age, race or religion has opportunities to care for one another and contribute their gifts to make it a place where everyone belongs.

**Our Aim:** - People with disabilities and others on the margins transform the community through the gifts they bring.

BY DECEMBER 2010 WE INTEND TO ACCOMPLISH THE FOLLOWING:

*We will have established 'Growing Together' as a network of interconnected local initiatives that include people with disabilities and involves people from grassroots, statutory, church and business communities planning and working together to re-generate their community.*

- The 'Window in the Wall' Garden: - A working organic vegetable allotment on Cliftonpark Avenue where 4 local people with people with learning disabilities will be supported by 6 young people from both communities to learn to grow food, fun and friendship together and share 'wee cups of tea' through a window in the wall.
- 'Root Soup': - A pilot co-operative 'Social Enterprise' between L'Arche and 'Open Door' Housing Association, producing organic vegetable soups from vegetables grown in local community gardens. This will be designed, managed and staffed by a team of people that include 3 homeless people and 3 people with learning disabilities and 6 others in support and training roles.
- 'Crossroads': - (A Community Housing Project): - By December we will have submitted an architectural plan to the planning department and have identified a funding mechanism for the conversion of a local Presbyterian Church into a mixed-use, eco friendly community and housing development for people of various ages, abilities and socio/economic backgrounds.
- 'The Loom': - A prayer space in a local youth and community centre welcoming people from diverse backgrounds for weaving relationships through prayer, silence and craft activities.
- The Kitchen House Café: - A collaborative partnership with a catering and training organization and a community regeneration organization to develop plans for a Community Café.
- The Soup Shanty: - A community 'Harvest Festival' in North Belfast in October that will be an opportunity to celebrate community and make new friends.
- The Treasury: - A team committed to generating £35,000 for the development of this project before March 31st 2011.

**Nurturing the seeds and cultivating community ....**

*The steps we need to take between now and the rest of the year?*

- Continue to nurture the existing community in its daily life in 'The Ember' and 'The Allotment'
- To develop and deploy current staff and volunteers so that we continue to be a solid foundation and

have the commitment and the resources to go forward and grow together. Ongoing

- Continue to weave relationships with people from different sections of the community to create a network of interconnected local initiatives that involves people with disabilities and others from grassroots, statutory, church and business communities planning and working together to regenerate their community – Ongoing.
- Convene a team who are committed to realizing the vision of ‘The Village’ to create a focused enrolment strategy and produce some written and other visual materials that can be used for enrolment in different contexts. – By May 31<sup>st</sup>
- Re-convene ‘The Soup Shanty’ team to confirm the date, venue and programme for the Harvest Festival - By May 31<sup>st</sup>
- Meet with Naomi Long to enroll her into the possibility of L’Arche being beneficiaries of the Lord Mayor’s dinner fundraising event within in the next 2 years. – By June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Enroll people with relevant, management and catering experience as members of the Management Team for ‘Root Soup’. - By June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Identify and enroll representatives of ‘Business in the Community’ N.I., Belfast Health and Social Services Trust, the leadership and congregation of the Presbyterian Church and the City Council. - By July 31<sup>st</sup>
- Identify and enroll ‘The Treasury’ team - By August 31<sup>st</sup>
- Identify and offer relevant training and personal development for those involved in ‘The Community Garden and ‘Root Soup’ – By Sept.30<sup>th</sup>
- Organize a relationship-building/enrollment event - By November 30<sup>th</sup>
- Set up 3 field trips to initiatives of a similar nature (U.K. R.O.I. and N.I.) - By Dec. 30<sup>th</sup>