

FROM CRÈCHE TO CAMPUS, BOAT-BUILDING TO COMPUTER LITERACY, THE LIMERICK ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BRINGS DIVERSE BUSINESSES TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE LIFE OF THE LIMERICK COMMUNITY.

# Community Care *for Limerick*

*The Ireland Funds have made a long term commitment to Limerick through innovative programs that address the challenging economic climate in that area. Unemployment in Limerick is almost 30% higher than the rest of Ireland and support is needed now more than ever. In June 2011, The Worldwide Ireland Funds Conference will be held in Limerick as a demonstration of our ongoing commitment. Donors and supporters will see first-hand the work that is being done to make a difference in the community.*

**The Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership** *is one example of an organization working on the ground to address the challenges. Here, George Lee and Gerry Boland of LEDP tells of that organization's innovative approach to helping the people of Limerick through employment regeneration, skills training, education & community development.*



The Training Kitchen at Fáilte Ireland

LEDP Park is made up of Community Groups, Educational Bodies and Employers who all contribute to the life of the Limerick community.

#### EMPLOYERS

- UPC (TV Telephone Broadband)
- Medrex Systems (Irl) Ltd
- LEDP Business Quarter
- Let's Do Coffee Cafe
- Maldron Hotel
- Club Vitae
- Fine Wines
- Southside Pharmacy
- Subway
- Aldi
- Family Tree Creche
- Bamburys Turf Accountants
- Dr. Harry Comber
- Bowe Dental Clinic
- Proadjust Insurance Claim Consultant
- Hayco Ltd. The Meat Market
- Orange Fashions & Department Stores

#### COMMUNITY & EDUCATIONAL BODIES

- Fáilte Ireland
- FAS
- Blue Box Creative Learning Centre
- FAS Southill Jobs Club
- Limerick Community Based Education Initiative Ltd. (LCBEI)
- Attention Deficit Disorder (A.D.D.)
- Dyslexia Awareness Association
- UL Access Campus
- Limerick Enterprise Network Ltd. (L.E.N.)
- Family Tree Creche
- Limerick Southside Regeneration Agency
- Limerick Southside Ltd
- University of Limerick Access Office SIF Project
- FÁS Training Workshops
- A.K. Ilen Ltd.
- VEC

## COMPANY CLOSURES

at any time in any community are difficult socially, economically and personally. When they occur in an area like the Southside of Limerick, an area that is already economically and socially challenged, the additional pressures can be devastating.

This was the scenario which faced Limerick on the closure of The Krups Home Appliance factory in 1999. A large engineering company, Krups was one of the first wave of Foreign Direct Investment industries to set up in the Mid-West in the 1960s. Based in Roxboro it predated many of the local authority estates which subsequently grew up around it. But it was primarily from these areas that Krups ultimately drew its workforce. Between its opening in 1964 and demise in 1999 it employed generations of workers from the same families, predominately women with basic levels of education.

An extraordinary and unique answer was required to help maintain the facility for the community and through the vision and enthusiasm of three businessmen: Michael Tiernan a local Property Developer, Gerard Boland a Partner with Price Waterhouse and Liam McElligott CEO Krups, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership was formed.

From the outset Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership (LEDP), which is a public private partnership and charitable trust company, set out to advance Education and Training, Economic Development, Community Development and Intervention and Social Finance within the community.

Its purchase of the Krups factory, for the sum of IR£2.75m, was initially conducted on a wing and a prayer. The main challenge was to make the property income-generating which thankfully occurred with the letting of 60,000 sq. ft. to the TV cable company Chorus, a subsidiary of UPC. Once this occurred the project developed to involve a very unique mix of bodies which included the two Local Authorities in Limerick, the Roman Catholic Diocese, Shannon Development, The Foundation for Investing in Communities, PAUL Partnership and Limerick Enterprise Network, a private company. The property was seen as a resource and through prudent financial management and some property disposals, ultimately became debt-free and now generates a gross rental income of the order of €750,000 per annum and provides funding of €300,000 per annum in support of education and community projects in Limerick City and the surrounding area.

In order to be able to support these projects part of the property is let to commercial concerns while other parts are occupied by community and education groups including The University of Limerick Access Campus which is supported by The Ireland Funds.

## EXAMPLES OF BUSINESSES INCLUDE:

### UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK ACCESS CAMPUS

Located in LEDP, the Access Campus provides support for students from the area to access third level education through the provision of a homework study club which currently has over 60 participants and 120 volunteers helping out from 4 to 9pm each day. With a more than 90% success rate in placing students the service also offers comprehensive career guidance service in a friendly study-conducive atmosphere. Two third level scholarships are offered each year exclusively to students from the campus, one from LEDP and one from another source.

### THE FAMILY TREE CRÈCHE

The Family Tree Crèche was built from the ground up and now caters for over 50 pre-school children from the surrounding communities. It provides a warm, safe environment for children from 1 to 4 years and employs 15 people mostly from the surrounding area in an atmosphere that is responsive to the children's developmental needs.

### THE A.K. ILEN BOAT BUILDING SCHOOL

Located in a dedicated workshop on site, the "boat shed" facility caters to some of the most challenged young adults in the city. The facility teaches vocational skills of traditional boat building and puts these skills to work in restoring an historic Ketch from the 1920s. Because of the needs of the participants, support services are in place to ensure that any difficulties the young adults have can be addressed on site.



The A.K. Ilen Boatbuilding School

### FÁILTE IRELAND TRAINING CENTRE

The first statutory body to take up tenancy in the Park was Fáilte Ireland. With a fully equipped kitchen, bar, restaurant and teaching area they continue to provide training for hundreds of people involved in the hospitality business in front line, back office and customer service roles.

### FÁS

The National Training and Employment Authority are engaged in a number of projects in LEDP. Two main workshops for blockwork and carpentry are located on site with commitments also in existence for training courses in hairdressing, computer literacy and leadership through Arts and Sport.

### BLUE BOX CREATIVE LEARNING CENTRE

Using a unit on the campus as their base, this organisation works with children in schools with a counselling requirement. Much of their work is done through the medium of Art and Music Therapy with individual clients. Their work has greatly helped the special educational needs of many students across Limerick.

## LIMERICK COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVE

LCBEI provides third level education bursaries for students from Southill and Moyross attending the University of Limerick or Limerick Institute of Technology. It administers these from offices based on site and works hand in hand with students from the UL Access Campus amongst others.

## LIMERICK ENTERPRISE NETWORK (OPERATING UNDER THE REGISTERED TRADE NAME LEDP)

As part of its support for small businesses in the city, Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership under the banner of Limerick Enterprise Network operates a Social Finance Fund as a lender of last resort for many small businesses. Other work undertaken by LEN includes a professional time bank, mentoring services and revolving loan fund. Special assistance is also provided to prisoners who on release may wish to start small businesses or re-engage with the world of work.

## THE COISCÉIM CENTRE:

Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership has in keeping with their original vision engaged in partnerships for the betterment of the community. Through collaboration with the Salesians of Don Bosco, the VEC and the Department of Education and Skills we are currently putting in place an initiative called The Coiscéim Centre. The aim of this facility will be the identification and targeting of students in secondary school who are on the periphery and not engaging with the education system. The intervention will consist of a term of intensive work both on an educational and psychological level which will allow for the students' reintegration into the school system and ongoing monitoring throughout their school lives.

## THE PRE JUNIOR SCHOOL PROJECT

This project will cater for children and parents at this critical time in their development. This collaborative effort will be a comprehensive project engaging many state and voluntary bodies with a central goal of improving behaviour and living standards in the most challenged neighbourhoods. In keeping with its founding principles 11 years ago, the organisation has pursued its goals in a strategic, sustained and tangible way. Early on in its incarnation it presented a plan for the regeneration of the Southside of the city to Limerick City Council.

**IN CONCLUSION** Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership has always prided itself in being an organisation that brings public and private bodies together. It has actively and critically backed the Regeneration Agency acting as landlord to the Southside arm of the organisation and providing a director to the board. It has also been seminal in bringing together organisations through far-thinking initiatives. It has been central in conjunction with Limerick City Council to the establishment of [www.limerick.ie](http://www.limerick.ie), a website dedicated to giving those interested a "one stop shop" view of the city and region.

So it is fair to say the Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership has provided hope for and respite to a part of Limerick that desperately needs both. Overcoming social adversity has been critical to our role to date. There is no doubt that seismic global shifts have had their impact over the past years. *The company sees that in order for Limerick to overcome the social difficulties, we as a city need to generate upwards of 10,000 high calibre jobs over the next five years.*

It looks to the future boldly and sees that its main principles of the furtherance of Economic Development, Education and Training, Community Development and Intervention and Social Finance are as relevant today as they were 11 years ago at the company's formation. It particularly sees Economic Development as critical to the life of the locality, the city and the country and is determined to continue relentlessly pursuing this goal through its established partnership model.



The University of Limerick after school study club—a project supported by The Ireland Funds

— **George Lee and Gerry Boland**, *Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership*

For more information on the

Limerick Enterprise Development Partnership

visit [www.irlfunds.org/connect](http://www.irlfunds.org/connect)