

Newsletter ~ June - July 2024

Geraldine Burns 36 Years of Service to WRDA



After 36 years of service to WRDA our Finance and HR Manager, Geraldine Burns is retiring. Geraldine came to work for what was then called the Women's Education Project in 1988 in the post of Administrator. There were only 3 workers and Joanna McMinn was the Director. The organisation went through some tough times in these early years and we are thankful Geraldine stayed with it.

In 1996 Geraldine was one of the first seven members of WomensLink, the first community based e-group in Ireland. This valuable resource was managed by Geraldine until 2019. Under Geraldine's stewardship WomensLink grew and she oversaw the transition to google groups setting the e-group on a secure footing for the future.

In 2009 Geraldine became our Finance and HR Manager. Her expertise in the development of financial management systems combined with her extensive knowledge of HR, government legislation and compliance contributed to WRDA obtaining its Bronze Investors In People Award in 2012. **Cont. P 2.**



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Geraldine Burns ~ 36 Years of Service to WRDA



We are grateful to Geraldine for her commitment to ensuring WRDA fulfils its corporate and legal responsibilities, promotes good practice and proactively manages the changing working environment to ensure WRDA delivers quality with equality. Geraldine has been working with Liz Cuttler, our new Finance and HR Manager, over the past few months to ensure a seamless transition.

Geraldine has big plans for her retirement including spending time with her growing number of grandchildren and visiting the Bahamas, Japan and India! The Management Committee, Director and staff team wish to thank Geraldine for almost 4 decades of dedication and we look forward to seeing all of her travel snaps!





Mas Hope and Connection events – After the Storm Campaign



The After the Storm campaign was inspired by the artwork of the Strathfoyle Mas group.

‘Our piece is called "After the Storm". It represents our journey through MAS, it shows the 3 stages from where we started to where we aim to be.

The first canvas represents the darkness, where it all began... our postnatal depression. The time where we felt the lowest, the loneliest and where we felt rock bottom.

The second canvas represents the hope and connection... it is reaching out for help. The rainbow is so important in this picture as the rainbow connect us from the darkness to the light. For us woman living in the rural area of Strathfoyle the Strathfoyle Women's Group was the pillar of hope for us. The centre offered us the MAS project in our darkest time, which introduced us to Fiona and connected us to each other where we together have built a support system and felt we could share our journey's without judgement and in a way build each other back up from the bottom. The girls at Strathfoyle have been our backbone in a way and we are all so grateful to have them in our community.’

Our After the Storm Campaign will continue, to highlight the necessity of community perinatal peer support. We will have a series of exhibitions, keep an eye on our WRDA social media in the coming weeks and months for further information.

[You can find out more about the project here.](#)

The Mas project had events in Belfast and Derry~Londonderry to highlight the themes of Hope and Connection and we launched our After the Storm Campaign. Women across the project presented their group art work, demonstrating the power of peer support and how it has brought hope and connection. There were contributions from Falls Women's Centre, Atlas Centre, Lisburn, Windsor Women's Centre, Ballybeen Women's Centre, Strathfoyle Women's Activity Centre, Women Centre Derry and the Young Mums Mas project at Atlas and Ballybeen. The women presented the meaning of their art works and shared their own experiences and the difference Mas has made to their lives.

‘Mas has helped me greatly in realising the thoughts and worries of motherhood are not only normal but very common. Am I good enough, do I do enough, should I be doing more?’

‘The Mas project has been an amazing opportunity to connect with other mummy's.. I was so happy to get involved with Mas because it meant I had people who understood what I was going through.’



Welcome to the Team!

My name is Meg Hoyt and I am delighted to have joined the WRDA team as the Women's Sector Policy Lobbyist Assistant. Prior to joining the WRDA I spent the last four years completing a PhD in the School of Law at Queens University Belfast. **My research focused on exploring the legal frameworks around misogyny hate crime in the UK as well as thinking more broadly about what it means to legislate as a feminist. One of the exciting aspects of joining WRDA is the opportunity to develop a more hands on practice and advocate for policy change through a feminist lens.**

I admire many feminist scholars and activists whose work I have been privileged to engage with during the course of my degree. **I have been particularly inspired by the work of Professor Crenshaw in articulating the erasure of Black women within single-axis anti-discrimination legal frameworks.** Her scholarship broke new ground and remains foundational to study and practice of intersectionality. I also have huge admiration for the numerous feminist scholars who have contributed to the Feminist Judgement Projects around the world. They lead the way in showing how feminist common knowledge can ground legal judgements.

In my spare time I love exploring Cavehill, crocheting, reading and cycling around Belfast.

Women's Policy Group calls out DWP's medical-model approach to the experience of disability

The green paper takes a medical-model approach to the experience of disability and to the lives of Disabled people. Focusing on how their disability may be "cured" or "fixed" through different interventions, ignoring the role of social security as social infrastructure, which removes barriers to the participation of disabled people in society. The introduction of any of the policies in this green paper would lead to even higher numbers of attitudinal, institutional, environmental and information barriers.

[Read more here.](#)



Join WRDA

We represent women at local and international level and have a diverse membership including community based women's groups, national organisations, trade unions, women's centres and individuals.

Membership is free. Find out more at www.wrda.net/membership