

# WSAI News



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## Cian's College Life Cian Gibney

My name is Cian Gibney and I have Williams Syndrome.

What this can mean for me is that I see my sisters and my friends do things that people think I can't do. They went on from school to university and I always thought that this was not fair and that I should be allowed to go too. I wanted to go on with my school friends and to be the same as them.

When I finished in school I started in a day service called Weavers which is run by DOC Service. I liked it there. I was with my friends and got to do a lot of interesting and fun stuff but when I was told that I could go to college and be a student I was delighted. I asked my Mam and Dad and they agreed that they would help me get there.

The Course I wanted to do was in Institute of Technology Blanchardstown or ITB and is called "Employability Skills". Modules to be completed include Career Preparation, Personal/interpersonal Skills, Work Experience, Horticulture, Health and Fitness, Drama and Word Processing.

I was called to do an interview to see if I would be suitable for the 3rd level course.

I passed the interview but I was told that I would have to travel independently each day of the course. I was also told that I would get a degree at the end and that there would be a graduation

ceremony, just like my sisters had done. I would have a student card, me a real student. I was delighted and determined that I would manage the bus journeys, something that was a huge challenge for me up to then. I really didn't want to travel by bus but understood after they had explained to me that I would have to.

I'll tell you all again how I managed the travelling. It took time but I did it. Everyone was so proud of me.

I'm now almost finished the first year of the 2 year course and I love it. Sometimes it can be stressful, like when I have to do exams but most of the time it is great.

Highlights have been:

I did very well in my Christmas exams with good marks in all subjects.

I enjoy travelling on the bus, meeting people and feeling independent.

I've got my portrait painted by a real artist.

I enjoy working out in the gym.

I visited school children to help them with their sports.

I competed the horticulture



Cian at with Sam

module.

I'm taking part in a research scheme for autism and education.

Most of all I love being in college and spending time with the other students. I've made some good pals and we often go out together outside of college.

I'm looking forward to continuing it next year.

By Cian Gibney

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## WSAI Contact Details

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Dublin 7

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## New WSAI Contact Arrangements

### WSAI Committee

Following some changes on the Committee at the 2017 AGM some changes have been made to the contact arrangements for the Williams



*Carmichael House*

Syndrome Association of Ireland. Carmichael House is a non profit organization which provides shared services for the charity sector in Ireland and this organization will now provide postal services for WSAI. In addition we have arranged a new standalone phone number and email address for WSAI. These arrangements will enable us to put in place effective member rotation at Committee level in WSAI without the need for disruptive changes to our contact arrangements.

Accordingly the new address and contact details for WSAI are as follows;

#### Postal Address

#### Williams Syndrome Association of Ireland

**Carmichael House**

**North Brunswick Street**

**Dublin 7**

**D07 RHA8**

**Phone No: 087 6190213**

**Email: [info@williamsSyndrome.ie](mailto:info@williamsSyndrome.ie)**

#### WSAI Committee

The WSAI Committee for 2018 is as follows:

Carmel Daly (Chairperson), Helena Begley, Fionnuala Tynan, Debbie Brannigan (Secretary), Joyce Boggans, Tatiana Sierocka, Philomena O'Hagan (Treasurer), Tommy Moylan.

Over the last few years we have also appointed Associate Committee members. It is hoped that this arrangement will enable WSAI members to familiarize themselves with the work of the Committee without being on the formal WSAI committee from day one and also facilitate members who don't have time to be fully involved with the work of the Committee. For 2018 the WSAI Associate Committee members are as follows: Deirdre Graham and Ruth Heggarty

## WSAI Music and Activity Camp

### Carmel Daly

This years Camp will be held in from the 5th to the 11th of August. This Camp provides a social outlet for WS people over 16 years of age As camp organiser I, will be in touch with you well in advance of this date to take bookings. The dates for this year's camp are 6th to 11th August. The camp will be held, as usual in Share Holiday Village, Lisnaskea, Co. Fermanagh. It would be lovely to see some new faces there so if you are over 16 please think about joining us for a week of fun, friendship and music. If you think that the week might be a bit much for you we could arrange for you to attend for a few days or to visit us briefly to check it out. If you think that the Camp would be suitable in any way please talk to me. If your WS child is under 16 we would love for you to visit us while at camp so that you can see the camp in progress and consider sending him or her in the future

Unless you have seen it first hand, it is difficult to understand just how worthwhile the annual music camp is in terms of improving confidence, positive image, self respect, friendships as well as developing music ability. Even those that are not particularly

musical gain such fun and confidence from the experience that at the end of the week, they get up on stage and give as much as any professional entertainer. Looking around at the faces of parents, watching their offspring on stage and realising, maybe even for the first time, that their child is a happy, whole, beautiful individual, capable of so much.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to work at this camp as a volunteer teacher or helper, please complete the application from which is available on the website [www.williamssyndrome.ie/](http://www.williamssyndrome.ie/). If you are

accepted as a teacher/helper, your accommodation and meals for the week will be provided. You will find that it is a very worthwhile and rewarding experience to work with Williams Syndrome people many of whom are musically gifted despite the fact that they have a mild or moderate learning disability. Please give me a call if you want to discuss without committing yourself or I can get one of our previous volunteers to talk to you for a first hand account.

**Carmel Daly**



**Music and Activity Camp 2017**



## Rebecca's Work Experience

### Rebecca Conroy

My name is Rebecca Conroy and I am 23 years old.

When I left school, I went to Step Enterprises which is part of John of God brothers. I did classes and work experience for a couple of years and I have a key worker called Alanna. My dream was to get a job so I did some work experiences in the past in Tesco, Dunne's and Supervalu, mainly packing bags, but I wanted to stack shelves as well and do beauty products which I love, but I didn't get the experience of doing this in those shops. I also worked in 'My Local Pharmacy' which was my favourite as the girls were lovely to me and I enjoyed doing beauty products there. I also worked in McDonalds head office doing post and folding letters into envelopes, filing, labels and answering the phone with a lovely girl called Ambily. Then last May, I started work in Londis in Sandyford which is near my house, 2 mornings a weeks for a few hours. It was supposed to be for 8 weeks, but then my boss Michael asked to speak to my key worker, I thought something was wrong, but he actually said that he was so pleased with me that he wanted to offer me a job. He said that I was so friendly to the customers that he would like me to be part of the staff. I was delighted but I had to think hard about it as I was also offered an internship in Tallaght Hospital at the same time as the job, so it was a hard decision to make. I decided to stay in Londis as I loved the job and it was near my house and suited me. I work mainly in the Insomnia part of the shop, where there is a little café and I keep the tables, the floor, the toilets clean and I also go on the till when its

busy. I also do the cigarettes and the lotto but this is a challenge and I ask for help with this. I also keep the tables tidy in the seating area outside and I fill the napkins, the lids, the sugar, the spoons, change the bins and everything. I have a list of jobs which I do every day and if deliveries come, I help putting them away also. In my shop there is the Insomnia, Subway, a deli and the main supermarket. It is very busy there as there are lots of offices around it and all the workers come in. I work 21 hours a week and I start at 9 o'clock every morning, sometimes I finish at 12 or 1pm and a late day I finish at 3pm. Its called the wage subsidy scheme and it is very good for people with disability. I love the staff in Londis and the structure to my day and I am up at 7.30am to be there on time. Sometimes I walk there or get the bus. I have to clock in and clock out when I finish work. It was a dream that I hoped for to have a job and I'm really glad that it has happened for me and I have come this far. Some parts of the job are hard for me like dealing with difficult customers and when I need help with the till or if I make a mistake or they try to change my hours but I have help from my key worker and my mum and I can manage things ok. Recently my boss called Michael left to go to another shop and he didn't say goodbye to anyone and I was very upset about this, especially as he gave me the job and this opportunity. I really miss him and find it hard. I have made a friend called Marcella who is from Brazil and she has asked me to go to Disneyland Paris with her and 2 friends for a long weekend, which I am very excited about. She also came to my house for dinner to meet



Rebecca from Insomnia

my family and I like her a lot., because she looks out for me and is caring. It means so much to me to have a job and to earn my own money, to get out of the house and meet people and save for what I have to pay for, like a holiday, a yoga class or clothes and the things that I need and like. My family have been so supportive, we all have the right to work, and it can be hard to find work when you have a disability but hopefully the new law will help us and give people a chance to work. I am very thankful for my job and the chance to be independent and learn new things. I feel happy going to work every day and I am thankful for everyone who has helped me.

## Notice for Picnic in the Park 2018

### WSAI Committee

This year we are planning to hold our Picnic in the Park on Sunday the 24th of June in Newbridge House and Farm, Donabate, Co Dublin.

Newbridge House has a beautiful park with plenty of green open areas to enjoy and of course the highlight is to see all the different animals who live on the farm.

This is a fun day out for all the family and we hope that as many of you as possible will come along and support it.

It is open to everyone and anyone so bring

along all your family, friends neighbors. Entrance is free and there will be lots of fun and games and we will do everything we can to make it as much fun as possible.

We will be writing to all the WS families shortly with details of the Picnic.





## Report on Weekend Break 2018

### Hodson Bay Hotel—The Pictures Say it All Really!

This year's WSAI weekend break was held in the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone over the May Bank Holiday Weekend. We had a great turn out and the weather was lovely—what more could you want! A big thank you to Debbie Brannigan for organising another great weekend and many thanks to Joyce and Carmel for the great photos.



## WSAI Web Site Donations Page

### WSAI Committee

We are very pleased to announce that we have set up a page on our website which can be used to make donations online. The website uses our own WSAI PayPal Account to allow the instant transfer of funds using your credit card or your own PayPal account. This provides a fully secure method for financial payments. Users who click on the 'Donate' button are automatically transferred to PayPal for completion of the transaction. Banking details are handled by PayPal's own security systems.

This web page can also be used to transfer funds to WSAI when booking WSAI weekends or placing Camp deposits with us.

This Page also allows the payment of members annual subscriptions again using the PayPal System. Users who click on the Subscrip-

tion button are also transferred to the WSAI PayPal account which has been set up to handle annual subscription payments for WSAI. In this case users who want to pay their membership will be prompted to either use their own PayPal account (if they have one) or will be assisted to set up their own PayPal account for future use. The user's PayPal account will then handle the subscription payment. Members will be automatically billed annually for their subscription unless the subscription is cancelled in the meantime. To cancel a subscription members should log onto PayPal, view their subscriptions and cancel the WSAI subscription.

Another key advantage of this system is that all money transfers are recorded electronically in PayPal and the system will greatly assist accounting for funds received as well as provide a full audit trail of all financial donations

, subscriptions and money transfers.

The Financial Payments web page provides a simple explanatory text as to how the system works but we would welcome members feedback in order to improve the usability of the site.



## Notice WSAI Junior Camp 2018

### Fionnuala Tynan

The junior music camp in 2017 was a great success. We had 9 children over four days attending. This year Fionnuala and her team are planning to build on last year's event and further enhance the value of the Camp for parents of younger WS children. We are very fortunate to have Fionnuala and her team working on specific educational supports for WS children in Ireland and we hope that as many WS members get an opportunity to avail of the support provided.

The WS Junior Camp was set up last year by Fionnuala Tynan ably assisted by Deirdre Fitzgerald. This year Fionnuala is planning to enhance the Camp experience for our younger WS members based on the success of last year. This year's event will be held again at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick in July 2018. All WS members with WS children under 16 will be notified well in advance of the event with full details of this year's Camp. We strongly recommend that parents avail of this wonderful opportunity to learn about ways to improve educational outcomes for WS children.

This year's Junior Camp will be on from the 30th of July to the 3rd of August.

This year's camp will again focus on a range of activities including art, fine-motor skills, gross-motor skills, circle time, music and music therapy.

Individual education plans will be drawn up for each child attending and a camp report will be provided to parents. These plans will provide a solid foundation for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) in school for the children.

This year it is hoped to include workshops for siblings of WS children as it was evident last year that this is an area that can also benefit from support.

Fionnuala will be in contact with all eligible WS families well before the date for the Camp with specific details for Junior Camp 2018.

## Articles for Newsletters 2018

### WSAI Committee

I hope that you agree that the stories provided by our WS people are inspirational and that they highlight the wonderful things WS people experience and achieve right across the country.

We would very much welcome contributions from more WS people and member families and are sure that there are lots more fantastic stories out there about how people are coping with WS on a daily basis.

All we need is an email or letter with some photos if possible and we will do the editing and presentation from there. If you would like to contribute then just get in touch with any member of the committee or just send your material to our email or postal address.

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