Through our Eyes, the Power of Women's Leadership in Community Action

Showcasing the Leadership of Women through Photographs

Women play an important role in community action through grassroots movements, organising community events and policy/ programmme development that benefit their communities. Research has shown that when women are involved in leadership, they bring a unique perspective and approach to problem-solving, which can lead to more effective and inclusive solutions. Women's leadership serves as a powerful example and inspiration for other women and encourages others to become active in their communities.

There are several different types of women's leadership in community action, including:

- 1. Grassroots leadership: women involved in organising events, leading neighbourhood groups, or advocating for specific issues.
- 2. Advocacy leadership: women actively working to raise awareness about specific issues and advocating for change.
- 3. Professional leadership: Women who use their expertise to support community action such as serving on boards of non-profits, mentor young women, or support community-based initiatives.

All of these types of leadership involve women taking an active role in shaping the future of their communities and they all contribute to creating positive change. Through our Eyes, the Power of Women's Leadership in Community Action, is an initiative of Fingal County Council's She Leads Women's Leaders programme. It recognises and celebrates the leadership of women in a visual way and serves to inspire others to take an active role in their own communities.

The exhibition, as part of International Women's Day, involves 45 photos and stories showcasing the leadership of Fingal Women in Community Action. The exhibition will display in Fingal County Council, County Hall Swords and Fingal Libraries across March to May 2023.

The project was led by Fingal County Council's Community Development Office and the She Leads Advisory Committee. All photos were taken by a volunteer photographer, Monica Manzzi, a member of the advisory committee.

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Monic Manzzi, Volunteer Photographer

Monica Manzzi is a Uruguayan photographer living in Ireland for almost 20 years. She is also a Spanish/ English interpreter, journalist and self-taught artist. Monica is an activist and has organised many events in her community including fundraising, cultural events and vigils. Her causes include activism against female genital mutilation and helping oncology patients in need. She organised the Spring



in Balbriggan drawing competition and coordinated the Ireland Festival of Nations. She is co-author of Inspired *Migrant Women in Ireland, Diverse Voice and Perceptions* and has organised events within the Uruguayan community including *Ireland From The Inside*, an exhibition of photos of Ireland. Monica volunteers with different organisations using art, photography and many other skills. She is a passionate altruist and active participant of the Fingal She Leads Women's Leadership Programme.

Fingal She Leads, We Lead Women's Leadership Programme

Fingal She Leads, We Lead is an initiative of Fingal County Council. This programme focuses on strengthening Women's Leadership in Fingal and particularly explores the achievements, challenges and opportunities that women experience in community action. The programme commenced in March 2021 with A Conversation on Women's Leadership in the Community, a series of online conversations with women active in leadership in Fingal. In November 2021, Fingal She Leads, We Lead organised a nine week Women's Leadership Induction in Blanchardstown. This training was led by local women leaders in Fingal and introduced participants to leadership skills and resources. The programme supported women in their early development of leadership activities. A oneday Community Leadership Women's Programme was subsequently held in Balbriggan in June 2022, focusing on an introduction to leadership including types of leaders, communications skills, supporting volunteers and the challenges of working with teams. Finally in November 2022, Fingal She Leads, We Lead was joined by Dr Lucy Michael and AwakenHub co-founder Mary Carty in Swords to talk about women's leadership, the importance of networking and influencing decision-makers.

For more information go to https://www.facebook.com/SheLeadsFingal/ or email sinead.wiley@fingal.ie









Ann has been volunteering in the local area for many years including being a member of Blakestown Community Centre board of management for the past 10 years. Following her retirement from full-time work in 2021 she decided to take on a project in the community centre. She wanted to create an opportunity for women who, like her, were retired and not involved in community activity

to come together around an activity which they could enjoy. She started a "Knit and Knatter" group in the centre which has quickly grown to over a dozen women meeting together each week, for great fun and chat. They also knit items for charitable groups to use in their work.

Nominated by Blakestown Community Resource Centre CLG









Annette is a long-term member of Lusk AC and the Lusk 4 Mile Road Race Director since 2018. For the past six years she has managed every aspect of putting on this 4 mile road race through the village of Lusk. Annette spends numerous hours a week planning and organising the race that attracts over 1,000 athletes and consistently exceeds

expectations. Annette also mentors training groups, officiates and assists the club's committee with tasks throughout the year. She is leading the way for females in our club and community.

Nominated by Lusk Athletic club









Antoinette is a busy wife and mother of eight children. She is secretary of Swords ICA and produce promoter for Dublin Federation ICA. She is part of the Baptism team for St. Cronin's Church and still finds time to volunteer in the ADHD Charity shop in Balbriggan and has done so for the last 10 years.

Nominated by Swords I.C.A.









Bernadette is an active part of our community since the early 90's. She provides local history talks to our schools/ heritage groups to name but a few. With her Diploma in Local History, she has published many editions of Swords Voices where many locals have shared their stories throughout the years. Bernadette has also participated in

many exhibitions throughout the Fingal area and would not hesitate to provide memorabilia/photos etc to anyone who may need it for their projects.

Nominated by Swords Historical Society









Daphne along with her sister Sybil have been the torchbearers when it comes to animal welfare in Fingal. Daphne is the current chairwoman of the Fingal SPCA animal welfare charity. She leads an almost exclusive female volunteer team that has rescued 100's of animals

and rehoming numerous cats. Daphne works quietly in the background to make all of our local communities better.

Nominated by Fingal SPCA









Balscadden

Dinah began volunteering with St. Mary's Band and Majorettes (now St. Mary's Baton Twirlers) back in 1979. She is now one of the Club Director & Coaches at the Club. With her coaching skills, the club have won National Children's Day Parade in Dublin, St. Patrick's Day Parade Balbriggan & Dublin. Dinah has coached athletes to compete at National & International Competitions in

Europe with great success. 2019 saw St Mary's Baton Twirlers celebrate 40 years and Dinah was acknowledged for her continued commitment to the Club. She is looking forward to the club defending their National Champions Title in April 2023 and to competing at international level in July 2023 in Teplice in Czechia.

Nominated by St. Mary's Baton Twirlers









Doaa set up the Muslim Woman Together group 17 years ago. Her aim was to encourage women to find their voice in a new country, offer solidarity and ways to help woman integrate and coexist into Irish Society. For 15 years, the group have hosted an Annual Food Festival and raised funds for many Irish Charities. Last year the group raised

€6,500 for a local Spina Bifida group based in Castleknock Community Centre. Doaa is currently studying to be a counsellor. She has been the pin that has held her group together offering constant encouragement and advice.

Nominated by Castleknock Community Centre









Eileen is a true powerhouse within the Garristown community. She has dedicated years to serving as a cornerstone of the Community Council. Eileen goes above and beyond in her efforts to keep the community thriving, putting in the hard work necessary to secure grants, coordinate events and effectively manage the community centre. With her unwavering dedication and tireless work ethic, Eileen has become a role model for women

everywhere and an inspiration to all looking to make an impact within their communities. She truly embodies the spirit of community leadership and is a testament to the impact one person can have when they put their heart and soul into making a difference.

Nominated by Garristown Community Council









Glenda is the founder and chairperson of Swords Women's Shed which was established in March 2022. She has committed passionately to the development of the Shed and is an inspiration for all women. Glenda has shown that anything is possible when like-minded women come together to make a positive difference in each person's life.

Nominated by Swords Women's Shed









Jennifer volunteers her time between the Mountview Boys and Girls Football Team and the Mountview Fortlawn Community Youth and Sports Hub CLG. She supports the community by volunteering her time and assisting the team to run multiple community Initiatives in the centre. This work has a positive impact on those that attend and the greater community through building links between

residents, activities and services. She has become a vital part of the centre and the community. Jennifer is an empowering and amazingly strong supportive person. She strives to help everyone young old and adults.

Nominated by Mountview Fortlawn Community Youth and Sports Hub CLG and Mountview Football Club









Judie exemplifies Leadership in Community Action in Fingal. As a former steering committee member, Judie helped to get Castleknock Tidy Towns up and running in 2019, after an 18-year gap. As an avid gardener, she can

2019, after an 18-year gap. As an avid gardener, she can be seen out regularly across Castleknock, accompanied by her fellow volunteers with her signature green wheelbarrow. Judie is also a fine baker and she often supplies sweet

treats for the volunteers who enjoy a cuppa in Myo's after the Saturday Clean Ups. Judie is a leader who knows how to ensure volunteering together is enjoyable thereby fostering strong team spirit.

Nominated by Castleknock Tidy Towns









Kathleen is an advocate for the independent living movement. She has been a Paralympian who has represented her country in table tennis in many European competitions and the Beijing Olympics in 2008. Kathleen has shown leadership in mentoring many up-and-coming paralympic athletes. Kathleen has settled and raised her family in Mulhuddart. She has supported other disabled individuals who are living in the Dublin 15 area.

Kathleen sat on the board of Blanchardstown Center for Independent Living for a number of years ensuring that the lived experience was heard. Kathleen is a keen disability rights activist and a believer in the motto "Nothing about us without us".

Nominated by Blanchardstown Center for Independent Living









Lorraine is doing tremendous work in the Ukraine Donation Centre in the Swords Manor Mall. Along with a team of helpers, they have collected and packed essential items of clothing and food. She has organised at least five trucks of donations to Ukraine. Lorraine also works tirelessly for all of community in the Swords Manor area on behalf of the Residents Association.

Nominated by Swords Manor Residents Association









Leisha Heffernan demonstrates leadership in community action in Fingal in all she does for Castleknock. As a former steering committee member, Leisha helped to get Castleknock Tidy Towns up and running in 2019, after an 18-year gap. Leisha is gifted with plants and along with other volunteers, is out and about most evenings in spring

and summer tending the flower beds and borders. She gives tirelessly to help keep the village looking its best. Leisha is a role model and shows real leadership in the way she can inspire and motivate others to make a difference. *Nominated by Castleknock Tidy Towns*









Lisa is the senior training coach for Little Athletics in Lusk Athletic Club. She has been looking after the youngest members of the club and community for a number of years. She effortlessly gives her time and expertise to these young children week in, week out. Along with coaching, Lisa is the registrar and training coordinator; handling

hundreds of queries and questions each week. She takes on numerous admin tasks that enormously help the club's committee. This is all done on top of a busy working and family life.

Nominated by Lusk Athletic club









Liz is a very unique woman who has led the Community Parent and Toddler Group for over eight years in Huntstown Community Centre as a volunteer. She has used her considerable skills and expertise in running this group. She demonstrates strong communication skills, alongside her ability to inspire, show empathy and pride

in the community. Liz is a problem solver, getting people to work together towards a common goal. This goal is a successful Parent and Toddler Group that has impacted parent's lives and the community – a priceless value.

Nominated by Huntstown Community Centre









Margaret is a member of The Tower Singing Circle.

During the pandemic, the group was unable to meet so Margaret set up and paid for regular Zoom sessions with all members. This was a great method of keeping people connected. Through her enthusiasm, dedication and commitment, Margaret succeeded in keeping the Circle going for its members and succeeded in connecting with other people from South Dublin, Clare and even as

far away as Canada. There was a wealth of songs sung over that period and encouraged by Margaret. It was a fantastic support to all and really made such a difference. Margaret's commitment and energy was amazing, she truly made a difference.

Nominated by The Tower Singing Circle









Marian is a constant attendee in St. Colmcilles GAA Club. Whether she is helping out with the everyday running of the club, helping in the bar, helping out with the administration work for the men's GAA team, playing and mentoring the 'Gaelic4Mothersand Others' team, these are only a tip of the iceberg on what valuable supports that

Marian contributes to the club. She has been part of the furniture of the club for years and far exceeds her role as secretary. St.Colmcilles GAA would be lost without her.

Nominated by Applewood Community Centre









Marie is committed in helping woman in our community overcome loneliness. With a passion for English Literature she founded the Castleknock Community Centre's first morning book club. Soon after the success of this club, she oversaw the setup of the much needed second morning book club. Marie is currently involved in extending the new evening book clubs to four meetings a month. Marie has

encouraged the groups to continue to socialise beyond their monthly meetings and has helped establish some lasting friendships. Marie's love of reading and empathy for those feeling a sense of loneliness has brought joy to many woman.

Nominated by Castleknock Community Centre









Maura has been an unbelievable member of Oldtown community for many years. During the start of the pandemic, she handmade and organised the production of 600 masks to be given free to older people. She videoed art classes and put these on social media during the pandemic for children and adults to participate in. Maura

also organises our annual Christmas Market. These are just some of the wonderful contributions that Maura has made to our community.

Nominated by Oldtown Community Council









Mwanaidi is a very resourceful individual. She engages in various community projects in Balbriggan. She was chairperson of Balbriggan's Women's Development group and is an active member of the Fingal Ethnic Network. Mwanaidi is currently the treasurer of Balbriggan African Community . Her work is very visible in the community of Balbriggan. She is selfless and always ready to help

wherever and whenever called upon. She is seen as a role model within her community. Wherever she goes she always brings her expertise and experience along. She is fun to work with and enjoys showing off her fashion skills. Nominated by Balbriggan Women's Development Group and Balbriggan African Community









Nuala has been a leader in the local community sector for a number of years. Over the years she has been involved in Family Support, Cross Care and the St. Vincent de Paul. At present she volunteers in the Blanchardstown Centre Oratory and gives her time and support to a local food bank. Nuala has shown leadership in her roles working with and supporting local families in their local communities. Nuala has been a mentor to many and her knowledge of community development has supported and inspired other women leaders.

Nominated by Blanchardstown Center for Independent Living









Olanike is a lady with a lion's heart and is fearless. She goes after what will benefit people around her. She has organised meetings and workshops under the Bold Women Organisation where women gather to share their experiences and who aim to empower and provide support for: 'The Woman to be Bold, stand up for herself and be seen, living an impactful life for herself, her family and the community at large'. Olanike leads by example

encouraging others to participate in community work. She empowers women from different nationalities educating them spiritually, emotionally and psychologically. She has passion for women and has volunteered in this field for many years.

Nominated by The Bold Woman and Skerries Foroige Youth Club









Olufunmilayo is a resident of Dublin 15 and the founder of New Chance Global Initiative. Olufunmilayo has dedicated much of her time to supporting vulnerable, elderly, widowed and disabled people in Nigeria. Through this charity, Olufunmilayo has supported many vulnerable and disabled people both here in her local community and in Nigeria. Olufunmilayo is a current board member of Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living and an avid supporter and advocate for disability rights and equality.

Nominated by Blanchardstown Centre for Independent Living









Oonagh has been Secretary of Rush Athletic Football Club for almost 20 years. In this role she has organised 14 to 16 underage teams each year. Thousands of children have played football in Rush due to the selfless efforts and countless hours she puts in to the club. Oonagh makes it possible for over 300 children to play football yearly. She is a club legend in Rush Athletic FC and a fantastic role model to others.

Nominated by Rush Athletic Football Club









Sakinah is a progressive thinker, a proponent of inclusion, diversity, equity and belonging. She draws inspiration from real-life experiences to inspire others professionally and in her community. She has championed various organisations through education, mentorship, awareness creation and advocacy. She is committed to supporting the strategic aims of her organisation and that of other organisations by

engaging community and government dialogue on how to create viable solutions to problems facing the community. She is an active committee member of Dublin 15 Inclusion Forum, an initiative of Blanchardstown Gardai community policing.

Nominated by Al-Awal Islamic and Quranic Centre









Sarah Lowndes has been both the Vice-Chairperson and the Biodiversity Lead for Rush Tidy Towns for the last four years. In these roles, Sarah has been pivotal in the development and delivery of a variety of environmentally focused projects such as the creation a bee corridor within Rush, launching a Bird-Watching group based on Rogerstown Estuary, and the creation of a Sunflower Trail

around the town in 2022. Sarah also leads the Tiny Towns kids group, through education and leading by example. Sarah has been central to the success of the Let's Play Rush initiative through her inspirational ideas.

Nominated by Rush Tidy Towns









Sophie has led several community inititiatives involving young people in the Donabate area. She is a mental health and wellbeing advocate for young people and has involved them in promoting this in the community. She has brought groups of young people on Tidy Towns beach cleans and

forest walks and she has also brought youth counselling, outdoor nature camps, weekly well-being activities' to the area of Donabate.

Nominated by Donabate Portrane TidyTowns









Susan Mullen joined St. Mary's Band and Majorettes (now St. Mary's Baton Twirlers) when it opened in 1979. She has gone from being an athlete to one of the club director and coaches. After finishing performing at the club, she now coaches the athletes to compete at national and international competitions in Europe. In 2019 when the club celebrated 40 years, a presentation was made to

Susan for being a member of the club for 40 consecutive years. Susan is looking forward to the club defending their National Champions Title in April 2023 and to competing at international level in July 2023 in Teplice in Czechia.

Nominated by St. Mary's Baton Twirlers









Sybil has been active in animal welfare within Fingal for decades. She was the Chairperson of the Fingal SPCA for years and is currently it's deputy treasurer. She has been a driving force, along with her sister Daphne, in looking after the welfare of animals and in particular cats in our county.

Thanks to Sybil and her fellow volunteers with the SPCA, the lives of hundreds of animals have been saved and made easier.

Nominated by Fingal SPCA









Gretta is a truly great lady, always very helpful, very obliging and works endlessly for all the residents in the area of Swords Manor. Gretta is currently the secretary of the Swords Manor Resident's Association who look after the local community, both young and old of all nationalities

and who represents the interests of the residents. Gretta also helps out in the local parish church of St Cronin's.

Nominated by Swords Manor Residents Association









Teresa as secretary of Swords Tidy Towns has been exemplary in carrying out her duties and going way beyond what is expected of her. Her trojan work every year in coordinating the National Tidy Towns submission with a team she has brought together is phenomenal. Swords

Tidy Towns have achieved five National Silver Medals in a row and that is no mean feat. A lot of the plaudits must go to Teresa for her dedication and hard work.

Nominated by Swords Tidy Towns









Vera has been involved with Rush Senior Citizens for many years. Over the past five years she has run this group virtually single handed. She goes out of her way to ensure that all of the people attending the group are looked after and enjoy the time spent at the Monday group by organising trips, food (at each session), guest speakers and activities. She facilitates dropping and collecting of people

who do not have transport to the group meetings. Vera has recently established a small committee to help run the group. Vera is a great asset to the community in particular to the senior citizens of our town.

Nominated by Rush Community Council LTD









Wunmi Excel is a social care practitioner and a humanitarian actor. She has over 20 years experience of working with the deprived and under-represented groups especially children, women and the homeless. In the past 10 years Wunmi has channelled her time and energy to humanitarian services through Children4WorldChildren, the empowerment focused organisation that she co-founded with her daughter in 2012. Wunmi has

championed many noble courses. These include annual fundraising for children hospitals and deprived schools in different part of the world. She served as the Empowerment and Social Enterprise Officer in Fingal Ethnic Network for six years.

Nominated by Children 4 World Children









Jennifer is President of the Donabate ICA Guild. She is also Treasurer of the Dublin Federation of ICA. The Donabate Guild of the I.C.A. has a long tradition on the Donabate peninsula but had ceased to function until it was reopened in 2015. Under Jennifer's leadership its members have a wide and varied programme. The ICA's tradition of handcrafts continues with the members contributing to

exhibitions and craft fairs. Jennifer's keen sense of social responsibility has resulted in knee rugs made and donated to St. Francis Hospice and fundraising for different charities.

Nominated by The Bleeding Pig Cultural Festival









As a coach in a largely male-dominated environment, Helen develops and inspires Baldoyle United's schoolgirls football teams. Constantly self-developing through the Fingal child welfare course, the Fingal Council leadership programme and UEFA C coaching qualification, Helen also sets an example, both for her girls and other volunteers. She volunteers at a local school helping children and co-

ordinated the involvement of refugees training at the club. Following her participation in Fingal's Disability Awareness training, she ensured a child with Autism was successfully included in the club's Junior Academy. Helen leads a programme encouraging girls to get involved in football. *Nominated by Baldoyle United Football Club*









Lynne founded the Lusk Action Group in 2019. Under her guidance as chairperson, the group took responsibility for the Christmas lights in the town and organised the first Lusk Summer Festival in 2022. She is also a contributing voice in the Lusk 2030 group.

Nominated by Lusk Action Group









Maeve has led Skerries Tidy Towns for four decades. She has inspired and executed countless projects. She leads a hardworking committee and many teams of volunteers. She was instrumental in Skerries becoming the overall winner of the national Tidy Towns competition in 2016, receiving annual gold medals in 22 consecutive years and in 1996, winning the European Entente Florale. Maeve attends the Skerries Community Liaison Committee

meetings where she contributes to decisions about Skerries-based projects to be carried out by the Council. Her visual aesthetic and environmental awareness have helped to ensure that improvements to our town are both eco-friendly and beautiful. She is simply fantastic!

Nominated by The Skerries Community Association CLG









Margaret set up the litter picking group in Corduff. She is a founding member of the Lusk Community Clean Up group. Margaret was also very involved in the past with Lusk Athletics. She truly is inspirational.

Nominated by Lusk Community Cleanup Group









Alina is an Ukrainian woman who moved to Ireland in March and attended English classes at the Practical Language Service School. She became actively involved with the school and is currently working on a new project, using her previous training, to provide support and

therapy to Ukrainian pensioners who have arrived in Ireland. The project began in Dublin 15 with the intention of extending the service across Dublin.

Nominated by Practical Language Service









Penelope is an inspirational story of a young woman who has successfully built young ethnic minority girls into strong and refined young adults through her program in Ada Igbo Ireland. She works by projecting community values through cultural ethics in promoting youth mental health awareness via dance workshops, drama, fashion,

public speaking & counselling. Ada Igbo Ireland works with other well recognised youth mental health bodies and is a celebrated annual event in the history of new communities.

Nominated by Ada Igbo Ireland









Ayodele is the chair of Balbriggan Integration Forum and is an inspiration to people in her local community. She is a great speaker and represents the Balbriggan Integration Forum very well. Ayodele actively participates in many

initiatives in the area including the St. Patrick's Day Parade and at Tastes of Nations during Balbriggan Summerfest.

Nominated by Balbriggan Integration Forum









Helen is a volunteer with Howth Pathways since 2007 keeping Howth's rights of way open. She chaired the Howth Special Amenity Area Order Committee from 2015-2019. In 2017, she helped transition a defunct Howth Tidy Towns to its current state of a vibrant team of six active groups; Helen is the incumbent chairperson. Additionally, Helen is on the committee of Howth Singing Circle and an

active member of Howth Writing Workshop which will hold its first Story Slam in March 2023. Helen assisted on the Howth EIRE6 restoration project monitoring the regrowth and recovery of the heathlands around the site.

Nominated by Howth Tidy Towns









Mary is a selfless volunteer in Taylor Hill estate, helping to write projects, plan and execute a fantastic range of activities for the community, increasing the sense of placemaking and active citizenship in the estate. Mary works directly with Cluid Housing in order to coordinate actions towards our neighbours in affordable/social

housing, having been instrumental in our nomination as a best neighbourhood runner up in the great places to live 2022 competition.

Nominated by Taylor Hill Residents Association









Moira has volunteered with individuals and groups in Dublin 15 over the past 30 years to reduce inequalities, enhance mental health and improve physical well-being. Her volunteering efforts extend to supporting drugs education and prevention measures and to building up strong community supports for those who are bereaved, homeless or experiencing exclusion. Moira was involved in the Eradicating Poverty initiative and represented

Ireland in Paris. She volunteered on the National Active Citizenship Network encouraging women to register and vote. Moira continues to be influential in promoting biodiversity and ecological matters.

Nominated by Blakestown and Mountview Neighbourhood Youth Project





