

ASPIRE

The Autism Spectrum Association of Ireland



Summer Newsletter 2024

A note from the CEO

June has come upon us quickly and it is now a time to reflect on the first six months of the year, and what a year it has been already!

Our Social Enterprise has gone from strength to strength, due to the dedicated hard-working Team, Management and Volunteers that are the driving force behind it all. Our market selling our beautifully designed cards and sensory items at St. Anne's Park has been serving as a community hub and social spot for all.

Our social groups have continued and we have been able to offer a number of new and exciting opportunities for these groups.

We were successful in securing the Workability grant, which has given us the opportunity to support many more individuals in their journey to employment success.

Our residential is just about summer ready, our Residents and Staff have been working hard on the garden, with summer planters and flower beds.

We have had a number of people fundraise for Aspire, including the recent Women's Mini Marathon and the in house Bake Sale. These are hugely beneficial for Aspire, as not only do they bring in much needed funds for our Charity but also raise our profile.

We at Aspire are so lucky to have such a dedicated and loyal community. We have many more projects, events and social gatherings planned for 2024, we hope to see you along the way.

Linda Blake
Chief Executive Officer



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag
an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the
European Union



government supporting communities

Aspire Designs



Aspire Designs continues to trade at the weekly St Anne's Park Saturday Market.

We are a Graphic Design Social Enterprise facilitating and mentoring autistic adults in gaining work and life skills

Finally! the weather has somewhat settled down (Spring gusts had the gazebo almost take flight!) and we now work in at least some sunnier and drier conditions.

Our Greeting cards are uniquely designed. We've expanded our Sensory range following customer patterns and demands, now stocking various Loop earbuds which greatly influence the issue of dealing with day-to-day noise, electronic pop-its, flow rings, liquid bubble timers and much more by way of calming, relaxing tools.

Kudos to our great Team! We recently welcomed Clare and Saoirse and are thrilled to be in a position to support this talented group.

We also welcomed a new staff member, Nisha, who joins us with a wealth of experience as a Mentor. Welcome Nisha!



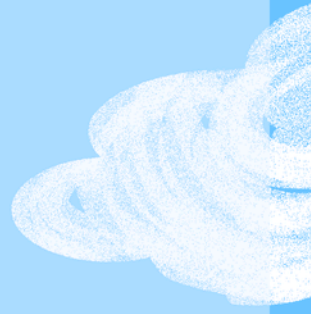
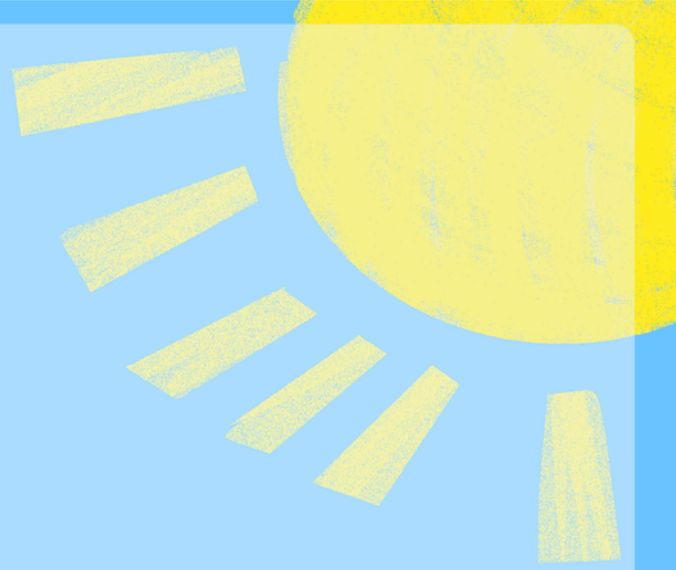
Teen Meetups

Teen Meetups is a weekly walking group that meet in various parks in Dublin. The group was established to combat isolation and create connections in the autistic teenage community.

Thanks to our volunteers who assist with facilitating the Meetups.

And a big shout out to Teen Meetup Group 2 who baked delicious cakes and organised the recent Bake Sale!





ASPIRE

Designs 

DO YOU LOVE ART?

**WE ARE HAVING A SUMMER ART
EXHIBITION TO CELEBRATE ARTISTS**

**THIS IS A CALL OUT FOR CREATIVE
AND IMAGINATIVE PEOPLE TO TAKE
PART AND SHOWCASE YOUR WORK**

**EMAIL: INFO@ASPIREIRELAND.IE
FOR MORE INFO**



Aspire Designs Art Classes for teens continue with David Rooney Artist in Clontarf every Thursday evening 6pm

To sign up drop us a line:
info@aspireireland.ie

David & Louise are organising our first Art Exhibition in Ballymun HQ on Friday 21st June 2024

All welcome to attend

A particular call-out to anyone interested in displaying their art work to get in touch

A relaxed, informal event is planned with teens and adults showcasing their work together with some refreshments

ASPIRE 
Designs

ART EXHIBITION



21 JUNE 2024 2PM



Come To The Event

Let's appreciate our Community's Artists

www.aspireireland.ie



**Unit 1-3 Ballymun Industrial
Estate D11 CVY6**

Teen Meetups were delighted to be a part of the RTÉ Creative Youth Network outreach series

This involved some of the youths attending RTE over five sessions to learn about the creative and technical aspects of television and radio. News and current affairs was one such session in Studio 4

In June, the group will get to focus on radio production and learn all about bringing radio programs to life with key figures from the media industry



Third Space

As you may have heard, Token is closing its doors mid-June and you might be wondering what that means for our monthly Social Group

Starting in July, we'll meet at a new location: the cosy Third Space Café, just around the corner from Token. We are renting the full café so everyone attending will be there for the meetup

Third Space will meet the **first Tuesday** of every month 6:30-8:30pm beginning **Tuesday 2nd July**

We look forward to seeing you in our new space and at our new time for more engaging conversations. You can buy your ticket by clicking the logo below. See you there!



Collaborations



WALK & Open Doors



Aspire Designs has made a number of great connections recently with old friends and new

We are now working closely with another charity called W.A.L.K. and establishing a partnership with Open Doors Initiative

Like Aspire, they have a supported employment model but also some really great mentorship programmes and opportunities for autistic adults

UCD

Aspire took part in the UCD EDI Neurodiversity working group which was established in 2021 to better understand the campus climate in relation to neurodiversity and to make recommendations that help make UCD a neurodiversity friendly environment for all in which to study and work

The launch of making UCD a neurodiversity friendly campus report took place in April 2024 on UCD's third annual neurodiversity celebration event

Aspires's CEO represented Aspire on the discussion panel on the launch day



Dublin City Council

Aspire Designs were delighted to be asked to advise and assist Dublin City Council on their Sensory Catalogue for all Dublin libraries.

Dublin City Council is soon to launch the Sensory Catalogue, which means that Autistic individuals and their parents or caregivers can 'try before you buy' by borrowing sensory items. Their collection enables an inclusive space where children and adults have greater access to a service that meets their needs.

We are lucky to have beautiful libraries in our city, and they can be a great resource for our community, offering lunchtime classes and groups as well as sensory hours for children, not to mention great book titles 📖.

A wonderful supportive initiative, and Aspire Designs is honoured to be a part of it.



Outside the Box Learning

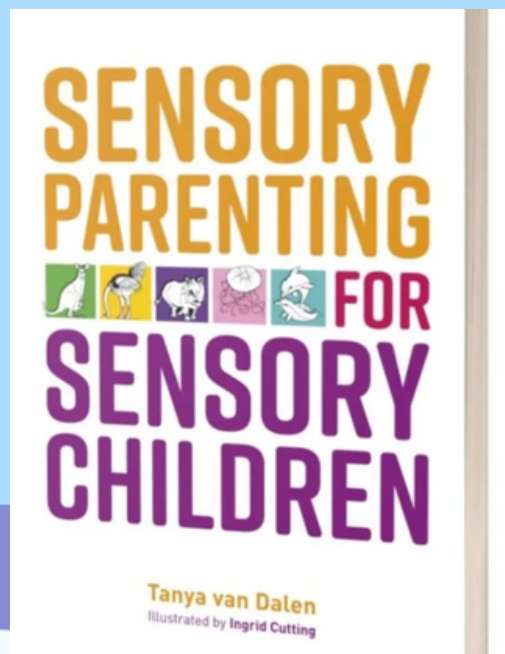
We are currently collaborating with Outside the Box Learning Resources, an Irish book publisher and distributor based in Kildare. We will have an Aspire page on their website with information and recommendations on resources

This month a member of the Aspire team read Sensory Parenting for Sensory Children by Tanya van Dalen, who is an experienced occupational therapist

Her book is full of great insight and techniques to understand your own sensory processing in order to be better equipped to help navigate and support your child in times of dysregulation. It gives a deeper understanding of how your sensory child can change how you parent. A key take away note is how science tells us that being emotionally connected to a human who understands what we need changes the way our nervous system functions

The book dedicates the last few chapters to creating a plan, building a sensory tool kit and using your body to regulate. Overall, it was a very enlightening book, helping the reader to better understand their own needs in order to be available to assist others

Pick up your copy form Outside the Box learning resources



Fundraising

On 27th April we held The Bake Sale to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month

Brownies, cookies, cupcakes and beautiful iced cakes were all sold on the day together with savoury items such as sausage rolls, homemade brown bread and the ever popular Blossom Cafe focaccia

Who knew we had such talented bakers in our Teens and Staff!

The sense of community and belonging during the morning was amazing. The Aspire Designs Team had their unique greeting cards for sale too and were on hand to advise on our sensory range

Kudos to the super Teens and their Parents for running this event, baking, selling, bringing the contents of their kitchen and gathering items such as coffee machines!

We were proud to see our young people engaging with each other and enjoying the event

It was a tremendous success raising over 2K and will become an annual event for sure!





Women's Mini Marathon 2024

A bunch of lovely ladies ran the VHI Women's Mini Marathon for Aspire on Sunday last 2nd June

Running 10km in scorching sun brought a new challenge to even the experienced athletes but the atmosphere was incredible with over 25,000 women (and some blokes!) taking part, including our very own Julie and Louise

It was empowering to see so many women raising vital funds for all the various charities. A massive thank you to the ladies who fundraised for Aspire, it is so appreciated

You can still donate by clicking here

[DONATE](#) ❤️





ASPIRE

The Autism Spectrum Association of Ireland



THANK YOU!

Aisling

Eleana

Jess

Karina

Laura

Caroline

Lisa

Samantha

Julie

Eve



Vhi

**Women's
Mini
Marathon**



Stories from the Spectrum

William Oliver

I have recently finished reading a science fiction novel called Last and First Men.

I am now reading another science fiction novel called Blindsight. The former is about the many biological and social changes that humanity undergoes throughout the many future eras. The latter is about the strengths and weaknesses of having a personality and consciousness and how people react when making first contact with advanced alien beings that function effectively well without either.

Blindsight is of particular interest to me because aside from being a science fiction novel, it also has quite a lot of horror elements to it. This is especially prevalent in the fact that vampires exist in the setting. They are not supernatural but are instead a fluke of hominin evolution. The aliens are also very off-putting, but I am only currently halfway through the book so I will have to wait and see how much more unnerving they can become.

We had a bake sale in our Ballymun residence last month and it was very successful. We hope to have an Art Exhibition in June in the same location and hopefully this will be successful too and if so we will have two excellent events under our belts.

Due to the better summer weather, we have been performing much better with market sales in St. Anne's Park. We have also expanded in our diversity of merchandise and so far, it has benefitted us very well. It should also be mentioned that our card designs have expanded to include a new variety of intriguing art designs, especially regarding the designs of one our newer members named Moira who has a deep interest in and fascination with old Irish folklore and mythology.

I have found my membership with Aspire Designs to be very fulfilling and it has helped my self-confidence to grow considerably. I have learned new skills such as the use of Canva for some of my new card designs and my ability to properly function in an office space environment. I look forward to how my continuing membership with Aspire Designs for the foreseeable future can and will allow me to further achieve my full potential.



Gustavo Lazarin



Reflections of a Late Diagnosed Autistic

Receiving a late autism diagnosis isn't all bad. I'm gonna share with you a few insights or “autism hacks” that I'd have in mind if my children were autistic. These are purely based on my own experiences and inspired by my journal notes.

1. The innate sense of right and wrong

I think some autistic individuals have an “inbuilt” system of knowing what's right or wrong, what makes sense or doesn't. They see the best way something can be, the most optimized form. They're fair, sometimes brutally honest, and have good judgment. They might not always know how to articulate what's going on inside them, but sometimes they will know exactly what they're looking for when they see it.

2. Importance of actively listening and understanding

It's important not to rush their process of assimilating and making sense of things. They're probably thinking 10 steps ahead of what you want them to understand now and making different combinations in their minds of the best path to take. That's why they might “take too long” to answer a simple question, or maybe is just the question that wasn't of their own interest

Listen actively. They will know if you're not truly listening, just like they will know when you're not being truthful. At the same time, we are naïve; it's like we have a heightened sixth sense. I see it as a protection mechanism. It's like one motor piece doesn't function very well while there's another to compensate and make the car run. This sixth sense is more like a knowing at first, but if encouraged, it can turn into a valuable skill

3. Handling task resistance

When they resist a task, it's often because it doesn't align with who they are, it doesn't make sense to them or is because it triggers a past trauma. Instead of ignoring their resistance, listen to why they're not doing what's asked. Sometimes it's just bad timing. Even if they must do something they don't want to do, don't dismiss their thoughts and emotions. Help them understand that sometimes you have to do unpleasant things, but this shouldn't be a rule for their lives. Instead of forcing them, ask how they would do it. Their ideas are still developing and always will be. When they share something, don't ignore it, no matter how absurd it might seem. Ignoring their ideas risks them stopping sharing altogether and hiding their true selves. Their ideas can contribute significantly to society if encouraged and valued. A saying I like goes, "a creative adult is the child who survived."

I see myself as a blend of naivety and strength, constantly working to balance this mix through practice, resilience, and faith. My autistic mind is always active, and I've had to learn to organize my ideas mainly through self-awareness, with the ultimate goal of reaching a more perfected self-expression.



Ross Kilbride



For the past few months, I have been working in Aspire, doing office work, working behind the scenes at home as a sort of agent to try and make Aspire the best I can to my ability, and at the market on Saturdays in The Red Stables, St. Anne's Park, where I am learning to sell, so when it comes to selling my own greeting cards, as part of my company I'm trying to build, I'll have more of the skills and expertise for doing so then.

I am enjoying working in Aspire. I've always had a business, but also, a personal relationship with the place. I started off in the Drama, then in the Cara Connect, then I started doing work experience there, then I became part of the Aspire Productions, as well as the Social Eyes, Token groups, and now, the Aspire Designs, as well as the additional work I do for them as well. I think I'm good at what I do there, and I enjoy it there, and am always trying to go beyond because I think Aspire is a great company.

I'm learning a lot, and picking up more skills along the way, but I also feel, there isn't too high of a burden on my shoulders about having to learn quickly, it's all very much at my own pace, and there never seems to be a whole big panic going on there in the office (at least not when I'm there, ha ha ha). But it generally always just seems to be 'business as usual.'

Working as part of the Saturday market is actually good fun, and overall, a pretty positive experience, it feels less like 'work' to me, and more like a good social outlet, but one that I'm learning from so I can advance my own career. It seems that since I started there, I'm back on track with my own company idea that I feel I'd lost sight of for the past 2 years.

In conclusion, I hope the best for Aspire Designs and with my help, and my knowledge, maybe I can take it to the very best place it can be. They are helping me with my own business in return.

Two good minds make a great one!

Steven's Update



DCU and Gheel Launch

In April a few of us from Aspire Designs went to DCU for Gheel's launch of Future Expectations -a qualitative exploration of the perceptions and expectations of Autistic adults regarding the IMPACT employment support programme

The launch was very informative and it was great to see an organisation like Gheel providing such quality support and such an emphasis on Autistic voices being heard

One participant stated:

The most exciting thing about the future? Well that's just hopefully having the, the financial stability I would say, having enough money so I can live, move out of the house, and to have a car, and build a very good resumé, that sort of thing, it's simplistic but, you know, life is, once you have your goals figured out"

Tips for coping with Hot weather

While I love the travel, parties and fun that come with summer I also have to manage my biggest sensory difference, Heat. I'm built for Irish weather, with around 16-18c as my comfortable temperature ceiling. Once it goes over, I get tired, cranky and maybe a little sweaty

Over the years I've learned several things that I can do to help manage my temperature and not leave myself feeling wiped out. The biggest is keeping myself hydrated I bought a water bottle that's big enough to hold my water for the whole day and can keep it

Another tip that I do a lot is if I'm having trouble sleeping I will take a quick cold shower or bath to cool myself down and usually then I find it much easier to sleep. The final tip I will give and this might not be available to all is I love swimming in the sea. Me and my mam like to travel to Howth to swim at Balscadden Beach and then get fish and chips as a treat after

Mindfulness by Nisha



The 5 Senses Grounding technique



5 things you can see around you (for e.g., a chair, a laptop etc.)



4 things you can feel (for e.g., your shirt, your hair etc.)



3 things you can hear (for e.g., traffic noise, TV etc.)



2 things you can smell (for e.g., perfume, soap etc.)



1 thing you can taste (for e.g., toothpaste, coffee etc.)

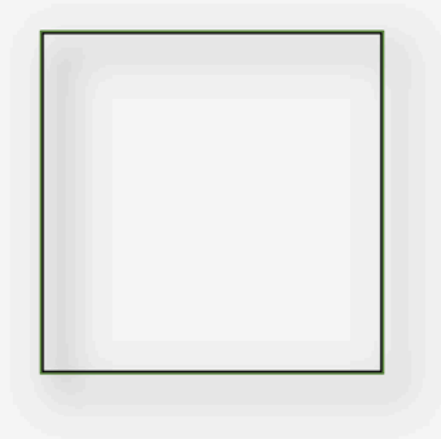
The benefits of 5 Senses Grounding Technique:

- ❖ Effective for relieving stress and panic attacks.
- ❖ Managing anxiety and overwhelming emotions.
- ❖ Improve emotional regulation and focus.

Box Breathing Technique

Inhale (count to 4)

Hold for 4 seconds



Hold for 4 seconds

Exhale (count to 4)

Box Breathing steps:

1. Breathe in through the nose for 4 seconds.
2. Hold Breath in for 4 seconds.
3. Breathe out from the mouth for 4 seconds
4. Hold Breath for 4 seconds.

The perks of box breathing:

- ❖ Calms the nervous system.
- ❖ Improve sleep, concentration and focus.
- ❖ Regulates blood pressure.
- ❖ Effective in dealing with anxiety, anger and stress.

Laura Masaraure

Student experience



My time in Aspire has been amazing. As a Masters in Applied Psychology student, I am privileged enough to work with Aspire Designs as part of my college research placement

Being part of this wonderful project has been an insightful experience. What I commend the most about Aspire Designs is their efforts to promote independence and social integration. The feedback from the surveys is evident of how the project has made a major difference in the lives of those living with ASD

Activities such as the bake sale are very interesting as they are highly inclusive, bringing together the teens, the parents, staff and all members of the community. I personally had a lovely time interacting with different people and it was refreshing to be in an environment where diversity is recognised and celebrated.

The ongoing assessments are also a brilliant idea as these create a platform for the participants to provide feedback on how they are finding the programme. This follow up is important as it serves as evidence of how effective the programme is

I am lucky to be a part of the research team and getting great feedback from the team members really uplifts my mood and brings a positive sense of fulfilment





MINDFULNESS FOR PARENTS

Thursdays 7.30pm Scot's Hall, Clontarf

Drop in for a taster class with David

ASPIRE 
Designs



WAYS YOU CAN HELP!



Donate!
to our Charity
[https://aspireireland.ie
/get-involved/donate/](https://aspireireland.ie/get-involved/donate/)

Purchase our
unique greeting
cards!

Volunteer at our Social Groups!

Why?

- Meet new people and make new friends
- Learn new skills and gain valuable experience
- Make a positive impact in your community and beyond

www.aspireireland.ie
CHY11438
CRO231996

Unsubscribe? Email: info@aspireireland.ie





Friends of Aspire

Thank you to all the incredible individuals and organisations who generously supported Aspire this year. Your kindness and dedication have made a tangible difference in the lives of many. We're also immensely grateful to those who have supported those we have referred to them, for their unwavering commitment and passion for making a positive impact in our community.

Pobal	RBK Accountants	Dublin City Council
HSE	CourCon/CCL	DWM Cards
Specialisterne	Get a Gardener	Phoenix Radio
Screen Ireland	In Good Co/McKenna	Cartoon Saloon
Tusla	Michael Bowe	Lighthouse Studios
Hiqa	Kilkenny Animated	DWF Foundation
First Aid Supplies	Token Smithfield	W.A.L.K
TTM Training	Sharp Group	IKEA Business Network
AslAm	Ausome Training	Alex Koster
ADHD Ireland	Employability	The Rediscovery Centre
Dyspraxia Ireland	Irish Cancer Society	Third Space Cafe
Dyslexia Ireland	Botanic Pottery	The Wheel
Inner City Enterprise	Google	AIB
South City Partnership	Yellow Harbour	DBS
Ultra Fusion Group	Carmichael	TU Dublin
Fiona O'Donnell Mindfulness	Snowflakes	Tesco Community Fund
Kennedy Health & Safety Group	Neuropride	Accenture
Middletown Centre for Autism	Ahead	Accenture Song
Innovate Communities Ballymun	Tennis Ireland	EY
Disability Federation of Ireland	Skerries Mills	Wolfe Group
O'Sullivan's Accountants	Chambers Pharmacy	Axis Capital
Killester Basketball Club	Little Fitness	PC Moore & Co Solicitors
Photo Museum Ireland	Spillane World Markets	David Rooney Artist
Market Pharmacy Smithfield	Your Local Pharmacy Ballinteer	Anne Weber

Back to website!

