

NewsPeople



Pictured at the International Women's Day event in Athleague on Tuesday were: Liz Billings, Philomena Hourigan, Phyllis Jordan and Ruth Wallace. Photo: Mick McCormack



Pictured at the International Women's Day event in Athleague on Tuesday were: Mary Frances Loftus, RWN, Lorraine Campbell, RWN Director, Mary McGrath, HSE, Lorna Kennedy, Kepak, Tiffany Walshe, Psychologist, Therese Hanley musician, Tina Adagun, Health Promotion Consultant, and Martina Hourigan, Project Manager, RWN. Photo: Mick McCormack

Roscommon Women's Network gather to celebrate International Women's Day 2022

On Tuesday, Roscommon Women's Network (RWN) hosted a gathering at The Angling Centre, Athleague to celebrate International Women's Day 2022.

Lorraine Campbell, Board Director of RWN, opened the event, explaining to the packed audience of mostly women (with a few men also present) that "this year's theme #BreakTheBias is a recognition of the gender bias that still exists in society, the workplace, and even subconsciously in the minds of many".

Other speakers included Mary McGrath, HSE Community Healthcare West. Mary spoke about the new West Be Well online information service.

Tina Adagun, African Women's forum, Monkland, in her address, encouraged women to practice self-reflection and to know and appreciate one's own value. Lorna Kennedy, Purchasing Manager with Kepak, spoke from the perspective of a woman working

in a male-dominated environment and praised the culture of Kepak in this regard.

Tiffany Walshe, Suicide Bereavement Liaison Officer with the HSE, spoke about the importance of wellbeing and mindfulness. Tiffany noted recent research that shows women benefit more from the practice of mindfulness than men, due to the multitasking expectations that society places on women. Tiffany also led the gathering in a short mindfulness practice.

The RWN Cycle Up social enterprise Manager, Martina Hourigan, along with Mary Frances Loftus, one of the talented textile upcyclers, spoke about how their enterprise trains women in the reuse and upcycling of waste textiles from the RWN Charity Shop. They produce high quality upcycled items for sale as part of the circular economy, raising awareness of textile waste and its damaging effect on the environment, creating flexible

employment while also effecting a local response to a global problem.

Other members of the RWN CycleUp team, Phyllis Jordan, Mary Frances Loftus and Philomena Hourigan, also contributed to the event by demonstrating how to make an Easter wreath using waste textiles and an old wire clothes hanger.

Therese Hanley volunteered her musical talent to entertain the gathering with her fiddle playing, including a beautiful rendition of Mná na hÉireann for the day that was in it.

To help cover the cost of the event a raffle was held and RWN are very thankful to the spot prize sponsors: €50 gift voucher from Radiant by Hannah Kelly, Ballymore, Co. Roscommon (Beauty & Body Clinic, beside Hodson Bay), a beautiful upcycled handbag, handmade by Mary Frances and donated by RWN CycleUp enterprise, Sweet Treat hamper from Le Petites Tartes,



Pictured at the International Women's Day event in Athleague on Tuesday were: Martina Hourigan, Laura Bachvarova, Clodagh Murtagh, James Derrig and Shauna Ryan. Photo: Mick McCormack

Athleague, relaxing Lavender pampering set donated by Conlon's Chemist, Athleague, and a bottle of Prosecco from

Keane's Centra, Athleague. *If you would like further information on the work of Roscommon Women's

Network please contact 094 9621690, email info@rwn.ie, visit our website www.rwn.ie or Facebook page.

We must continue to address the key issues faced by women

OPINION

EMER KELLY

In recent years, we have seen the issues faced by women highlighted to a greater extent than ever before. Although we have now entered 2022, we are still living in a world that has an opportunity to become more inclusive and gender balanced across all contexts.

International Women's Day provides us with time to acknowledge the achievements and successes of all the women in our lives and commend them for the endless, selfless work they do. From mothers who give their time to raise their children, to women taking the world by storm, each woman has admirable qualities that de-

serve recognition and thanks.

This year, I want to encourage women of all ages to reflect on themselves and make it their aim to work towards their goals in life regardless of their perceived prospects.

I think this year it is important for us to reflect on what we have experienced over the last twelve months, both individually as women and together as a society. The unjust murder of Ashling Murphy shocked all of us and highlighted the issue of violence against women. I hope this can be the year women finally begin to feel safe in our towns and villages, where we feel safe to walk home alone and where we can walk past a group of people without hearing sexist or rude comments.

While International Women's Day enables a day of celebration for women's

achievements, we must continue to express this beyond this week and continue to address the key issues faced by women, as well as acknowledge and support their achievements. I will continue to work to raise these issues and attempt to address them through raising awareness and supporting communities.



*Emer Kelly is an independent member of Roscommon County Council



Pictured at the International Women's Day event in Athleague on Tuesday were: Nora Fahy, Manager, RWN and Therese Hanley, musician. Photo: Mick McCormack