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2012

## "Tea and Friends" - Celebrating 21 Years of Home-Start, Blanchardstown.

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### Recommended Citation

Fitzpatrick, Anne, ""Tea and Friends" - Celebrating 21 Years of Home-Start, Blanchardstown." (2012). *Posters*. 33.

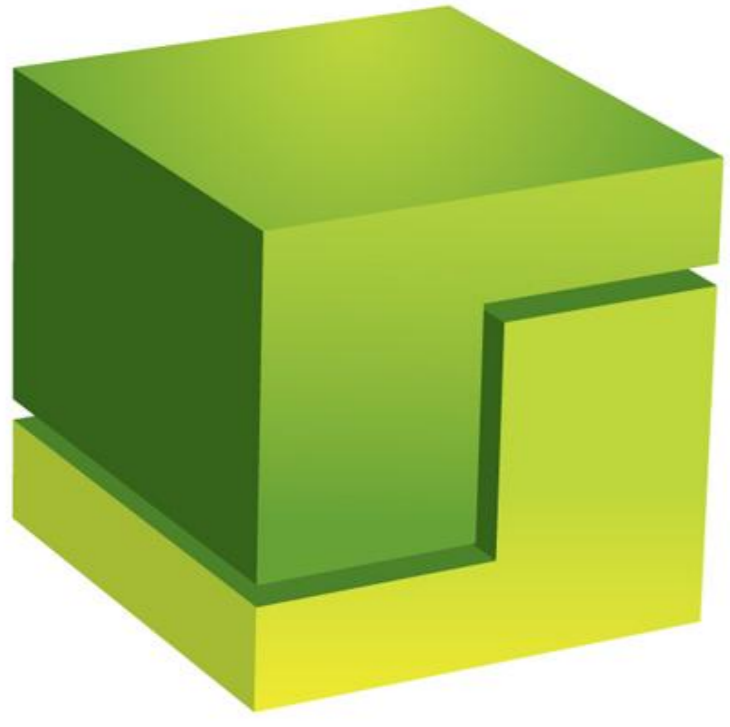
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students learning with communities

# “Tea and Friends”- Celebrating 21 years of Home-Start, Blanchardstown



Students Learning with Communities



## Home-Start, Blanchardstown

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families with at least one child under five, by visiting them in their home, by helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown and by emphasising the pleasures of family life.

### DIT and Home-Start

To celebrate 21 years of Home-Start Blanchardstown, the final-year students of the DIT BA Early Childhood Education worked with their lecturer, Anne Fitzpatrick, and the staff of Home-Start to produce a book entitled “Tea and Friends” Celebrating 21 Years of Service, Home-Start, Blanchardstown. The book documents the stories of mothers, fathers and volunteers involved with Home-Start over twenty-one years.

### Collecting the Stories

As part of the module “Working with Families”, the Home-Start Coordinator and a volunteer gave a moving presentation on the work of Home-Start, following which students prepared a questionnaire as a means of collecting the stories. The stories were collected during an enjoyable celebration in Blanchardstown. The students later edited the stories with the help of Karl O’Doherty, a final-year student on the DIT BA Journalism and French course. Tony Bates, Founding Director of Headstrong (The National Centre for Youth Mental Health) agreed to write a foreword for the book.

Finally, the book was designed by Gina Honeyman as part of her course work on the DIT MA Professional Design Practice.

### Book Launch

The book was launched in the Dráiocht Centre in Blanchardstown by one of the fathers currently using Home-Start. Lynn Sullivan spoke on behalf of the students of the BA Early Childhood Education about their experience of the project. The launch was attended by many past and current volunteers and parents, as well as local professionals and politicians. The following week, Tony Bates wrote a very positive article about the project in his column “Mind Moves” in the Irish Times.

### Some comments from the students about their experience

“You could really feel the warmth and goodness that Home-Start gives.”

“It was great to be able to put theory into practice. Although it was good to hear about home visiting in the lectures, it was great to hear from the mothers how it really works.”

“Self-worth is what everybody gets from this project.”

[www.homestartireland.ie](http://www.homestartireland.ie)

