

Presidents Report

August 20<sup>th</sup> 2009

To begin with I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the amazing work of our former President, Patricia Hayes Murray. We were all so fortunate to have Patricia take us through the past three years leading up to the International Conference in Cork. During this time Patricia did a great job of promoting IFDCO at every opportunity that came her way. She was very proactive, attending conferences and seminars connected to Child Care both locally, nationally and internationally and made sure that people knew what IFDCO was all about. Patricia was supported in her role by Child Minding Ireland and a team of local staff and colleagues who were able to assist her with the many tasks that a President is required to deal with. Without this help I am sure that the workload could have become much more of a challenge, so all of these people deserve to be acknowledged also.

The Conference at the University College Cork was a great success on many levels. The venue was the perfect setting for our purposes. The historic ambience and the beautiful environment helped us all to concentrate on the very interesting Keynote speakers and the great variety of workshops that were offered to delegates. The content of the Conference covered a truly international perspective.

The delegate accommodation was mainly in the student residential halls and B&Bs. These were all within a short walking distance to the University and gave everyone their daily exercise this surely couldn't have been a bad thing.

The social events including the theatre night in Dublin, the visit to the amazing An Cosan, the Rock of Cashel, Blarney Castle and Cobh were all very enjoyable. The Opening ceremony and the Gala Dinner were very special events for people visiting Ireland. I'm sure that everyone enjoyed every aspect of these planned events. Whilst International Conferences are designed to provide some formal aspects, I believe that the informality of the Cork conference made it all very relaxed and enjoyable. I congratulate Patricia and her team for producing a wonderful Conference in such a beautiful country. It will be long remembered and take a lot to equal.

I should introduce myself to the people who I haven't had the pleasure of meeting as yet.

My name is Grace McDonald and I have worked as a Senior Co-ordinator for the past thirty three years. My role is Manager of Bramble Bay Family Day Care, a service that covers sixteen suburbs on the north side

of Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. We have eight staff consisting of four Co-ordinators, a Playgroup Facilitator, a Toy Librarian and two Administration staff. We work with fifty Care Providers and two hundred and eighty children and their families.

During the years that I have worked with this service I have gained a Diploma in Childcare and Education, became a Quality Assurance Validator with the National Childcare Accreditation Council, completed a University Degree, Bachelor of Children's Services (as a very mature aged student), was awarded a Half Scholarship to attend a Conference and Study Tour of Children's Services in Las Vegas USA (Deferred) and became the Australian Representative to IFDCO at the Conference in Sacramento in 1999. a position I have held for ten years. I try to keep current with professional development courses and attend local, national and international Conferences when I can. I have attended IFDCO Conferences and Study Tours in Sacramento USA, Glasgow Scotland, Wellington New Zealand, Orlando Florida and Cork Ireland.

It may appear that I devote a lot of my time and energy to work which fortunately I enjoy very much. I seem to be committed to the theory of life long learning and believe that we can never learn enough or too much about children and their families. I am currently considering enrolling in a Masters degree, Masters of Learning and Development (Early Childhood) if I'm prepared to sacrifice my leisure time, a big decision to make.

However, I do have another life as well. I have three children and seven beautiful grandchildren, five little princesses and two young princes aged between four years and sixteen years. They all live on the Sunshine Coast a beautiful part of Queensland about an hour from Brisbane, where the weather is 'beautiful one day, perfect the next'

The next IFDCO Conference is being planned for Brisbane in July 2012 in conjunction with the Australian National Family Day Care Conference. We will all be doing our best to make this a Conference to remember and encourage you all to start a savings plan to attend.

One of my work colleagues Cathy Castelli is now the Australian Representative to IFDCO as well as the Australian Treasurer. Cathy can help with membership fees and other payments as required.

Please feel free to contact me on [amazingrace2@bigpond.com.au](mailto:amazingrace2@bigpond.com.au) if there is anything that I might be able to help you with.

Best wishes to everyone

Grace McDonald  
President IFDCO 2009-2012