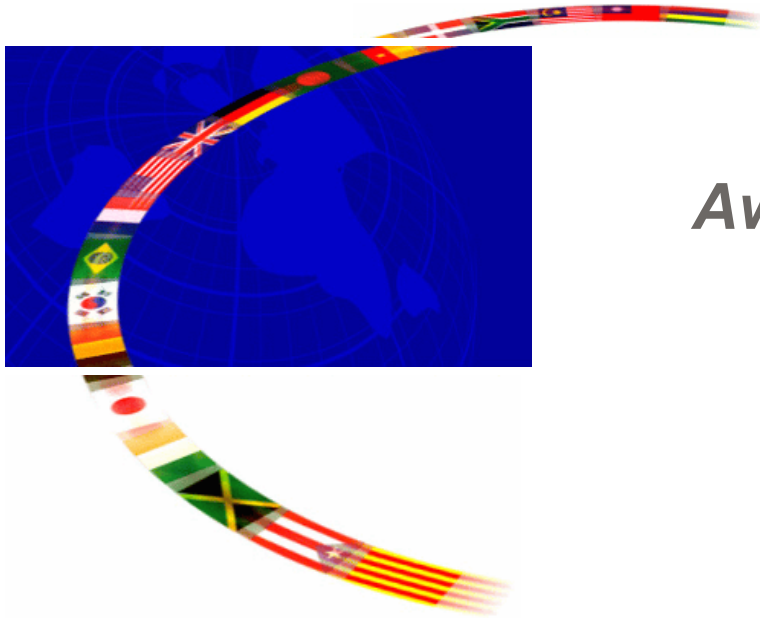




Junior Chamber International
Worldwide Federation of Young Leaders and Entrepreneurs



Awards Entry

2005 National Convention
Celebrating Limerick's Cultural Diversity
Jci Limerick
Best Community Development Program



Junior Chamber International
Worldwide Federation of Young Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Entry Information

Award Program: 2005 National Convention

Category: best community development program

NOM Information

National Organization: Junior Chamber Ireland

National President:



James Corcoran

E-mail: corcoranjames@yahoo.com

LOM Information

Local Organization: JCI Limerick

President:

President Email:

Status of Scrapbook

Scrapbook Approval: **DONE**

Basic Information

Duration: 4 months

Staff: 15

Sponsors: Local Govt, Various local businesses

Budget: E60,000

Profit / Loss: Break even

Who is benefited?: Limerick community

Objective: To create a multicultural event that created awareness of the diversity of the community while showing participants and onlookers positive aspects of multiculturalism.

Overview: JCI Limerick partnered with Limerick Co-ordination Office to drive and co-ordinate the St Patrick's Day Spring Fest for Limerick. JCI Limerick provided the parade theme which reflected their objective - "One City, A World of People", co-ordinated the creative activity for the day, organised marketing and public relations, liaised with sponsors and had hands-on involvement in all aspects of the St Patrick's Day march.

Results: The event was widely perceived to be a success with kudos from participants, onlookers and the press who labelled it "(Limerick's) best St Patrick's Day Parade ever". Almost 1,600 people participated in the parade with over 60 groups/floats representing a broad spread of Limerick's community. Over 40,000 people watched the parade.

Actions Taken: 1. Creative direction 2. Project management 3. Public relations & marketing 4. Liaison with and management of sponsors 5. Organising and provision of: band, goodybags, helium balloons, face-painting, country information 6. Marshalling of parade participants 7. Invitation and support to parade participants

Recommendations: Several key lessons arose from this experience which could be useful for other chapters:

- When there is no event management experience in your chapter, if at all possible secure an event partner to share the risk and, where possible, from whom you can learn.
- Start with clear goals regarding what you would like to achieve.
- The support of a 'critical mass' of chapter members is vital – it will help buoy confidence when the event seems overwhelming, creates a fantastic atmosphere during the event and will ensure that future activities are well supported.
- Ensure that you have ample time to prepare for the event (the amount will depend on the scale of activity you are undertaking) and within this prepare a structure which allows you to: secure sponsorship, book performers (if necessary), prepare and evaluate safety and logistical plans and to establish a marketing and public relations strategy.

Award Category criteria

1

Survey

1. Introduction Recent years have seen a dramatic change in the profile of Irish society. The economy improved in the 1990's resulting in the "Celtic Tiger". Having absorbed underused Irish labour in the first few years of this economic boom, the economy experienced labour shortages in many sectors in the late 1990s. Consequently, Ireland pursued an active policy of encouraging immigration, and Irish state agencies established a programme to promote Ireland as a work destination abroad. This policy reversed a tide of emigration that had been in place for 200 years, with ex-patriot Irish and foreign nationals alike now immigrating to Ireland. While Dublin, as the capital city, was the first port of call for many of the people from the gamut of nationalities who responded to economic changes, a truer picture can be gathered by looking at life 'beyond the pale' as the area outside of Dublin has been described. Visitors to the country as recently as four years ago would have seen a society which, judging by physical appearances, was largely homogeneous. As one member of JCI Limerick commented "When I first arrived in Limerick three years ago, my olive-skinned complexion really made me stand out. People commented on my 'exotic' looks which seemed quite funny to me as I certainly didn't stand out from the crowd in Melbourne." Today, however, the faces in the crowd of many Irish towns and cities are pale and dark and the accents are Irish, Indian, Latvian, Spanish, Chinese, and Nigerian among others.

2. Recent changes in the immigration profile of Ireland Comparative figures on the recent changes in Ireland are difficult to obtain. One could say that there is as yet a lack of data on the sociological influences of the change because the extent of change is only just beginning to be understood. The figures obtained by JCI Limerick are derived; the Census, the Garda Siochana (police force), with whom non-European nationalities are required to register, and data from refugee organisations assisting asylum seekers in Ireland. In Limerick, the main organisation assisting refugees is Doras Luimni ("Open Door"). The figures of the Gardai and refugee organisations are a subset of the total figures of foreign nationals residing in Ireland and do not include Europeans who have settled here. Hence, the 1996 Census reveals that from 1986-1996 foreign-born persons living in the state increased from 5.9% to 7% of the population (source: www.ssis.ie/journals/98-99/demog_and_socioecon_char_of_migr.pdf) Between 1996 and 2002, the population in Ireland increased from 3.6 million to 3.9 million people (Central Statistics Office 2003). Immigration reached 66,900 in the twelve-month period leading up to April 2002. Data from the 2002 census indicates that six per cent of the population living in Ireland was non-Irish. This includes 23,105 people from European countries other than Ireland; 21,779 Asians (5,766 Chinese; 3,742 Filipinos; 2,881 Pakistanis; 2,462 Indians; 1,647 Malaysians; and 4,768 other); 19 20,981 Africans (5,766 Nigerians, 4,113 South Africans and 7,613 other.); and 11,384 from the US living in Ireland (Central Statistics Office 2002). (source: <http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/viemig.pdf>). More recent figures, provided

to JCI Limerick by the Limerick Garda Siochana and Doras Luimni add perspective to the 2002 findings. Doras Luimni's clients included people from countries as diverse as Nigeria, Moldova, Zimbabwe and the Ukraine (as well as many others) while, in 2004 alone, the Gardai had over 105 non-European nationalities registered in Limerick a city with a population of (approximately) 200,000 people. Chinese 474 USA 455 Pakistan 365 Philippines 188 Peru 188 Indian 171 Zimbabwe 159 Belarus 140 Bangladesh 132 Australia 95 Malay 88 Ukraine 87 Romania 86 Japan 68 New Zealand 53 Sudanese 40 Congo 37 Bulgaria 35 Egypt 33 Bosnia 31 Korea 28 Iran 22 Iraq 14 South Africa 10 Plus 86 further countries 9 or less (Note: figures taken from Limerick Garda registration for 2004 and do not include people; with dual nationalities naturalised citizens from outside Ireland or; European nationals) 3.

Media Coverage of Racism in Ireland in 2004 Unfortunately, the changing face of Ireland has not been welcomed by everyone as has been evident in the increased number of racist attacks reported in the media. In the second half of 2004, the following incidents were reported in the national press: Dec 9, 2004 Irish Times Asylum seekers treated badly Asylum support groups have alleged intimidation, moving of complaining residents, staff spitting in food and assaults by security staff at state-funded accommodation centres. Formal procedures were not followed. The Dept of Justice is set to investigate. Oct 18, 2004 Irish Independent Online Foreign workers enslaved An employer-led permit system allowed greedy employers to import cheap labour and treat them as a form of bonded labour. A more humane approach to economic migrants was needed. Oct 5, 2004 Irish Independent Online Libyan brutally assaulted in Dublin A Libyan man was savagely beaten by two men in the Temple Bar area on 04Oct. A witness describe how blows continued to rain down on his head although he was helpless. Two men were later arrested. Oct 3, 2004 Irish Independent Lithuanian fights for his life after attack A Lithuanian man, 48, who had just arrived in Ireland was savagely beaten bear the Binns Bridge in Drumcondra. He is fighting for his life at Mater hospital, Dublin. Two 18-year olds have been charged. August 22, 2004 The Observer Two Portuguese families attacked at home Two Portuguese families were forced to leave their homes in Portadown early yesterday after their doors had been kicked and battered. The Police Service of Northern Ireland moved the families from three apartments in Moeran Park around 1.30am. Police officers arranged for temporary accommodation for a Portuguese couple and their two children, aged four and six, who were living in one of the apartments. The brother-in-law and two sisters of the couple were also moved. Commenting on the attacks, Trimble, the local MP, said: 'One is appalled about these attacks. It is worth remembering that these immigrant workers are shoring up vital industries in this part of Northern Ireland.' August 3, 2004 The Guardian African and Indian suffer racist attacks Two healthcare workers were targeted in a weekend racial attack in Northern Ireland. Police confirmed that houses in Co Antrim, belonging to a South African woman and her four-year-old son and to an Indian woman, were singled out by thugs on Saturday. In the first incident, windows were broken at the home of the South African woman at around 1.20am. Later, it was discovered that a window of the Indian woman's unoccupied home had been smashed. Police had warned ethnic minorities in Belfast to be vigilant after they received intelligence that an attack was being planned. 4. Objective of Project On learning of the incidents of racism in the community, JCI Limerick members felt moved to act. After

some discussion on the possible approaches that could be taken. Chapter members were keen to be involved in an event that was overwhelmingly positive, (i.e. without focusing on negative issues) and would provide a forum for education about cultural diversity. It was suggested that one possible solution would be to create an event that created awareness of the diversity of the community while showing participants and onlookers positive aspects of multiculturalism and that this could be done with a multicultural festival.

Award Category criteria

2

Analysis

1. Identifying A Suitable Festival/Date JCI Limerick's starting point for festivals was quite low. In fact, none of the members had any involvement in festivals beyond attending them! With this in mind, the Chapter realised that the event would a1) need to be kept to a manageable level, b) adequate preparation time was critical and c) the event would need the support of existing bodies within the community (for example, the arts council). Another factor for consideration was Irish weather which is notoriously damp even in warmer months! So, July or August were proposed as the months most likely to yield fair weather.

2. Partnerships Preliminary research commenced to find a suitable partner for the event. Contacts were made with various bodies including the both the Limerick City and the Limerick County Arts Councils. While the response from each party was enthusiastic, we struck a problem regarding the timing of the event as most of these bodies had already allocated funding and resources for the year. One vital lead arose from our early efforts. The Limerick City Arts Officer suggested that the Limerick Co-ordination Office (LCO), which in recent years had organised the St Patrick's Day Parade, may be a suitable partner for an event. We met consequently with Andrew Mawhinney, manager for the LCO in early December and learned that the LCO had been looking for a theme for the St Patrick's Day Spring Fest – an event which runs over 10 days but is focused on the St Patrick's Day Parade and Limerick Marching Band competition. At the meeting between JCI members and Andrew Mawhinney, we brainstormed ideas about Spring Fest which had been run by the Limerick Co-ordination office for two years. In this their third year, they welcomed the enthusiasm, new ideas and the multicultural theme for the festival brought to the table by JCI Limerick. In the course of the meeting JCI Limerick was invited to partner with LCO and to drive the activities for this event. Balancing the consideration that St Patrick's Day was a mere 4 months away (!), with upwards of 30,000 people attending and in the notoriously soggy March weather, against the resources that would be available to us through the Co-Ordination Office we accepted and we began planning in earnest.

Award Category criteria

3

Planning

1. Developing a Festival Theme & Event Outline Over the course of early meetings, chapter members came up with a theme which we felt reflected the objective of our original discussions. To put forward the notion of a single community which included people from a broad spectrum of countries, we settled on the theme “One City, A World of People”. While the theme would be carried throughout the Spring Fest period, it would really come into play on the day of the St Patrick’s Parade when participants were invited to explore the theme with their floats, costumes or performance. In recent years, the parade has finished at King John’s Castle and we realised that this was a great opportunity to carry on the festivities. Chapter members brainstormed and put together a proposal for a “Carnival at the Castle” which included; live music, story tellers with tales from around the world, face painters, street performers and food stalls. We also wanted to create country information sheets as a resource for participants.

2. Team Commitment From the outset, this project had a high level of support from all members of the Limerick Chapter. This was carried through from the formation of the event committee (with fifteen volunteers), right to the week of St Patrick’s Spring Fest. Once we had an agreed format for the day we were able to identify areas where volunteers could be utilised. We made an early call for volunteers across a number of areas (described in more detail under ‘Membership Participation’.

3. Meetings with the Festival Partners & A Formal Appointment of JCL Member The proposal for “One City, A World of People” theme and the accompanying “Carnival at the Castle” was well received and given the support of the LCO. To facilitate planning and execution of the event, the LCO appointed JCI Limerick’s PRO, Jessica Colleran, as Festival Director and liaison between LCO and JCI Limerick. The creative elements, sponsorship, public relations and activity co-ordination were to be managed by JCI while the budget, printing (brochures & signs), and health and safety elements were to be managed by the Co-ordination Office. We also met with Shannon Heritage in early January as they are the curators for King John’s Castle. We discussed the format and schedule of the post-parade event at the castle in the course of this very productive meeting. JCI Limerick agreed to take charge of the post-parade events in King John’s Castle, with Shannon Heritage providing facilities and staff for the occasion.

4. Sponsors We benefited from a legacy of local government sponsorship of the St Patrick’s Festival. The festival had the support of the Limerick City and County Councils, Shannon Development and Shannon Heritage. We also brought on board corporate sponsors, using contacts from within the Chapter as well as contacts provided by LCO. While some JCI members have had sponsorship experience, this was very limited and had been from the point of view of ‘being’ the sponsor so this again represented a learning curve for those involved. We found that some sponsors were happy to be, in effect, ‘patrons’ of the event and simply contribute a sum of money in exchange for acknowledgement in advertising material. This contrasted with another

(corporate) sponsor who placed some very stringent requirements on the sponsorship package to ensure that they had maximum exposure for their spend. One issue we faced in this regard was that a major sponsor which had been secured by the Limerick Co-ordination Office prior to JCI Limerick's involvement withdrew their commitment a month prior to the event due to a change in their marketing policies. This was of course quite a blow and resulted in a flurry of activity to gain sponsorships from other businesses, but nonetheless provided some valuable lessons regarding contracts and sponsorship lead times. Each of the meetings that we took part in took us a step closer to a successful project. Ideas were exchanged and plans drawn up which lead us to being as prepared as we could be for the big event, the St. Patrick's' Spring Fest!!



Award Category criteria

4

Action

1. Inviting the Parade Participants Invitations were sent to schools, boy scouts and girl guides groups, sporting organisations, previous parade participants, theatre groups and groups which we felt may have a special interest in the multicultural theme, for example, Doras Luimni Refugee Assistance Centre and church groups. Over 60 groups responded positively, encompassing over 1600 individual participants. The groups were as diverse as the theme for the parade, and in addition to the previously mentioned groups included: street performers (stilt walkers, fire eaters and 'giants'), search and rescue organisations, youth groups, returned veterans groups, marching bands, elderly citizens, organisations for the disabled, a visiting circus (complete with showgirls, horses and elephants) and ethnic groups. We also had a great deal of interest from local businesses who were happy to participate in the multicultural theme. And, as one of our local politicians is the defence minister we were also able to successfully request a military fly-over for the day of the parade.

2. Nominating the Grand Marshals It is usual to have just one Grand Marshal, but this year we invited two – one local fashion icon (Celia Holman-Lee) to represent Ireland and an expatriate Australian (Jim Williams) who had recently captained the Munster Rugby Team and is well known and highly regarded in the Limerick community. Fortunately both accepted and we were privileged to have them leading off our parade.

3. Organising a band With a little research and some good advice from the University of Limerick's ethnic music department we were able to locate the ideal band to play at the "Carnival at the Castle". World music band "De Jimbe" has played in festivals in New York, Japan, France, Germany and Cuba, and creates a fusion of traditional Irish, Caribbean and West African music. Their mix includes djembes, congas, dununba, talking drum, buguraboo alongside traditional Irish instruments such as uilleann pipes, flute and bodhran. We couldn't have imagined a better band to bring together our multicultural theme with the quintessential 'Irish-ness' of St Patrick's Day.

4. JCL's Pre-event Activities Action is a good title for the first event that JCI Volunteers took part in, the Goody Bag Packing! On the Monday the 14th of March, twelve people packed 1,500 goody bags for distribution to parade participants at the Castle. The bags, containing chocolate, crisps and drinks, were 'assembled' in the garage of a JCI member and so hectic was the activity, that it drowned out the sound of the music being played by lonely CD player in the corner (which nearly was covered in finished goody bags!). We were fortunate enough to have had some training on face painting from professional face painters from the Janzo Street Performers who joined us at the close of one of our JCI Limerick monthly meetings.

5. Media Launch The media played a significant role in attracting crowds to the parade. We worked with the Mayor's office on the official launch of St. Patrick's Spring Fest Limerick at the Mayor's Office in City Hall which was attended by several members of the Chapter. The event was very successful with coverage by the press and attendance by the key sponsors

and parade Grand Marshals. JCI provided the country research handouts for the event as well as the figures on Limerick's multicultural profile and these were very well received by all who attended. 6. Bleary eyed Balloon Blowers Next all the volunteers were up early on St Patrick's day the 17th of March (a public holiday in Ireland). The team working in the Castle went with a borrowed van and jeep to pick up the 1,500 goody bags to bring to King John's castle while another JCI Limerick team went to the Limerick Co-ordination office (the centre of activity for the parade) to begin the Balloon blowing and distribution. The team risked life and limb (well, finger nails and skin) to blow up over 3,000 helium balloons and attach strings to them for distribution to the crowds. The resultant sea of orange balloons made a huge visual impact and added to the festive spirit of the day. 7. Marshals, Face Painters, Goody-Bag Distributors and a Stray Elephant in the Main Street of Limerick Another activity JCI Limerick were involved in was marshalling. Volunteers were also in action at the 'front line' marshalling parade groups into position. This role was accompanied by unexpected risks. One Chapter member, who had been removing some of the marshalling notices from a railing, looked up to see an elephant reaching for leaves from the tree just above his head! The elephant (part of the circus group) had been waiting patiently for it's turn to march in the parade and had evidently decided that this would be a good moment to break for a snack. The parade travelled from the Crescent at the start of O'Connell Street (Limerick's main street) to King John's Castle. Starting at approximately 11.30am, the first parade participants arrived in King John's castle at by 12 midday. This was when the next challenge began, the Goody Bag distribution to the children taking part in the parade. It takes a brave person to face hundreds upon hundreds of children who want their goody-bags. JCI Limerick did just that, and did a fine job of it as well. We even had a customer care station where children could ask for a swap if they didn't like what was in their bag. Shannon Development, who had of course witnessed goody bag distributions from previous years commented that "The service was very well organised and went much more smoothly than we've experienced before". Before the participants arrived at the castle, a face painting area was set up, with barriers to help form an orderly queue and while the goody bags were being handed out, the face painting also began. The children got to choose one of the following to be painted on their cheek: a shamrock (Ireland's national emblem), an Irish flag, a butterfly, a flower, a butterfly or a heart. By limiting the range on offer, it meant that the number of children who could be painted was increased, at one point the queue for the face painting was impressive but we got through them all! This hugely successful exercise was very well received by delighted children. One little boy was even heard to say "This is the best day of my life, ever!" You can't get much better than that. 8. An Extra Day for Luck The following Sunday marked the Limerick International Band Parade and Recital Competition. A number of JCI Volunteers again got involved, marshalling at the start line, escorting the marching bands and distributing treats and drinks to the Band Parade marchers. This day was much less intensive, but just as successful as the St Patrick's Day March.

Award Category criteria

5

Evaluation

1. Feedback from the Community We relied on informal feedback from parade attendees and participants. The feedback included comments which were from people who were unaware the people they were speaking to had been involved in organising the parade and therefore spoke without bias. Without fail, the comments were positive. People of all ages were delighted with the parade. Notably people commented on the variety of colour, the level of enthusiasm and effort from participants and the inclusion of unusual features such as the military flyover and circus elephants. The latter two features, combined with the face-painting at the “Carnival at the Castle” were highlights for children. People who attended the Castle event were also very impressed with the standard of music provided by world music band “De Jimbe”. 2. Feedback from the Press The press coverage received for the event was very high, with reports by 9 publications, local radio stations and numerous online (Internet) news services. When evaluated against equivalent advertising costs, the value of the PR for this years events reached €19,398 . Value of Spring Fest Press Coverage 2005 (includes pre-event, event & post-event coverage*)

Media	Number of pages mentioned	Euro Value**
Limerick Leader	7	€ 4,250
Limerick Post	7	€2,448
Irish Times	1	€1,579
Irish Independent	2	€2,416
The Sun	2	€433
The Star	2	€600
Business Limerick	1	€1,000
Irish Examiner	2	€627.5
Limerick Event Guide	3	€1,500
Limerick Live 95FM (8 minute i/view w/Ed Myers – excludes sponsored advertisements)	n/a	€944
Sub-total	€12, 722	€6,675.50
Total combined value		€19,397.50

* Only includes monitored press ** Based on cost per column centimetre (articles & small pictures) for articles & small pictures, and page or ½ page cost where relevant. Equivalent advertising costs provided by each publication/medium. The media reports leading up to and following the event included complimentary statements such as: “This year’s St Patrick’s Spring Fest promises to be the city’s biggest party yet, with nations from all over the globe getting involved”. (Limerick Leader- March 5, 2005) “(Limerick’s march),,, declared to be the best St Patrick’s Day went off without a hitch” (Limerick Post - March 18th, 2005) “An estimated 40,000 people lined the streets of Limerick yesterday for way was described as the city’s ‘best ever’ St Patrick’s Day parade”, (The Irish Times – March 18th, 2005) “Around 40,000 people witnessed Limerick's 'best ever' parade. The theme for Limerick's parade was One City, A World of People. Over 1,000 people and two elephants from the American Circus took part. The Irish Aer Corps also provided formation fly overs during the parade.” (Ireland.com - March 18th 2005) 3. Feedback from Parade Participants We knew that we had hit the right note with our parade theme on the actual day of the parade when we realised an extraordinarily high proportion of participants had made the effort to play out the multicultural theme. This contrasted with previous years where comparatively less groups tended to carry out the theme. People were genuinely inspired by the theme and we saw people dressed in international costumes, carrying flags from different countries or

dressed as characters from children's stories from around the world. We had a number of groups ringing and requesting the country information sheets that had been prepared by JCI Limerick or asking if they could be put advised about costumes, props or how to organise a float. On the day itself, many participants commented on how well organised the parade had been and the improvements that had been made with the distribution of goody bags. There were two areas that we feel require further evaluation for future events. The first relates to the 'Carnival at the Castle' event where, while Shannon Development reported an increase in numbers at King John's Castle (compared to previous years) more could be made of this event, with an increase in numbers and in particular, a shift in crowd profile to include not just family groups (who form the majority of onlookers at a St Patrick's Day parade) but tertiary level (university) students and others between the age of 18 and 35 who don't have children. The actual crowd profile on the day could be attributed to two key factors; community expectations that St Patrick's Day parade itself is mostly a family event and the culture of celebrating St Patrick's Day afternoon by having a family meal or having a drink with friends in the pub. For future events we will need to discuss the merits of either; attempting to change community perceptions to make the event more inclusive for individuals or creating a new event which isn't locked into traditions and long-standing community perceptions. The other area which requires evaluation is that of how to ascertain our success in communicating our message. We do know that parade participants and onlookers were very receptive to the day's theme. We also know that the information we provided to the press (regarding the multicultural profile of Limerick) was frequently published during the event and in fact, articles have since appeared featuring profiles on migrants who live in Limerick. For future events we may need to consider whether to include quantitative as well as qualitative measures.

4. Feedback from JCI Limerick All of the volunteers for the event have commented on how much they enjoyed themselves. A newly joined member commented how he "had never realised before how much fun being involved in community activities could be" while others have said that it was the most enjoyable St Patrick's Day they had experienced. A member who had recently immigrated to Ireland also commented that by participating in the event "I finally feel like I'm starting to fit in to life here". The satisfaction of members with this event was reflected in the days following the events when various individuals were already discussing how they would like to be involved the following year.

5. Costs and timing: The budget for the overall festival came to 60,000 Euro – still a surprisingly low figure for such a large scale event. While our activities were constrained by the budget, accountability for the budget rested with our event partner, Limerick Co-ordination Office. Costs were covered through local government and corporate sponsorship. From the point of view of JCI Limerick, costs were minimal, as all members gave their time, vehicles and storage areas voluntarily. A total of 80 Euro was spent by JCI Limerick to cover the costs of face paints, brushes and associated items. Timing was a more critical issue. As noted earlier, we had wanted a much longer lead time to organise a multicultural event. However, when balancing this against the opportunity of partnering with Limerick Co-ordination Office, we felt that we could still achieve our objectives. While the event was roundly regarded as a great success we feel that a scenario where 4 months to co-ordinate and pull together an event of this scale is not to be recommended! We would suggest to other Chapters

contemplating a similar activity that under ideal circumstances decision making and planning commence at least 9 months in advance, with sponsorship secured and clearly understood by all parties by the third month before the event date. 6. Risks and uncertainty: The risks and uncertainty were significant, as it was the first time JCI Limerick were involved in an event the scale of Limerick City's St. Patrick's Day Festival. However, by partnering with Limerick Co-ordination Office JCI Limerick was spared the brunt of the financial risks and was able to put substantial effort into creative and logistical matters. The risks and uncertainties associated in these areas were overcome by the conviction and hard-work put in by the JCI members involved. As pointed out already, much of the stress and/or risks associated with organising this type of event can be mitigated with ample forward planning and ensuring that adequate resources can be committed to the event. 7. Conclusion: Overall the event was a very positive experience for JCI Limerick and was widely perceived to be a very successful event. The St Patrick's Day Spring Fest in Limerick represented a tremendous learning curve and considerable stress but the experience gained and the enjoyment of working together to pull off this challenge was more than worth it. Several key lessons arose from this experience:

- When there is no event management experience in your chapter, if at all possible secure an event partner to share the risk and, where possible, from whom you can learn.
- Start with clear goals regarding what you would like to achieve.
- The support of a 'critical mass' of chapter members is vital – it will help buoy confidence when the event seems overwhelming, creates a fantastic atmosphere during the event and will ensure that future activities are well supported.
- Ensure that you have ample time to prepare for the event (the amount will depend on the scale of activity you are undertaking) and within this prepare a structure which allows you to: secure sponsorship, book performers (if necessary), prepare and evaluate safety and logistical plans and to establish a marketing and public relations strategy.

This year was JCI Limerick's first involvement in such a large scale event and all those who participated are very proud of their involvement. Members have already started talking about possible themes for next year's parade, and how we could build on the success of the parade and festival in 2006. Picture below: 1. Jessica Marks-Colleran, JCI Limerick PRO at launch of parade Grand Marshals 2. Michael Scott, JCI Limerick President at Mayors Launch of St Patrick's Spring Fest 3. Sample of 'Fact Sheet' used as press release in lead up to the parade



Award Category criteria

6

Membership participation

1. Project Team Members The project team was lead by Jessica Marks-Colleran who also acted as key liaison with our event partner. The team was comprised of Michael Scott (JCI Limerick president), Ita Browne, Michael Colleran, Brenda Cribbin, Fiona Donoher, Pauline Duggan, Hopewell Dube, Angela Gaine, Helga Hartmann, Kiggundu Frances Jacob, Michelle McNulty, Pat Murnane, Rose Ann O'Brien, Brendan O'Donohue, Dierdre O'Donohue, and Declan Sexton. This team represents 80% of JCI Limerick Membership.

2. Project Activities

- Project administrators – A core group of 3-4 people were involved throughout the project planning stage, when early arrangements were being agreed on with our event partner. One key liaison was appointed as an intermediary to co-ordinate the implementation of activities.
- Country researchers – Four people volunteered to be country researchers, got to work immediately and searched the internet for data on countries, providing a story, recipe & country information for 12 countries. This information was distributed during press launches and to community groups who wanted background information to help them with their floats.
- Goody bag packers - A sponsor had provided soft drinks, crisps & sweets for each parade participant. So, on a dark night in a suburban Limerick garage, 12 chapter members gathered to pack over 1,500 bags!
- Goody bag distributors – These brave souls faced the hundreds of children and quite a few adults who had participated in the parade.
- Parade marshals – The marshals worked at the start of the parade to ensure that each parade group was in order and that they moved off at regular intervals to ensure a consistent flow in the parade.
- Face painters - JCI had bought face paints in primary colours and of course green white and orange to provide a free face painting service for children during the Carnival at the Castle. And, closer to the date, as a result of a last minute sponsor request, we found also had a need for volunteers to blow up and distribute balloons to the onlookers.
- Balloon inflators & distributors – Imagine 4 helium cylinders, over 3,000 balloons and 12-15 bleary eyed volunteers. With a 08.30 start this crew heroically took matters in hand and soon were standing in a room completely decked out with helium filled balloons. Next time we'll remember to supply band-aids! There was further fun for the people who ventured out into the crowds to hand out the balloons – needless to say they were very popular and made short work of the task.

3. Individual Development The project contributed to the individual development of members particularly with regard to exposure to the issues surrounding event management and the benefit of hands-on interaction with the community with (for example) face painting and balloon and goody-bag distribution. Declan developed his leadership skills further in his role of co-ordinator of volunteers during the Carnival at the Castle, while Jessica had the opportunity to practice public speaking at public relations events (including a request to speak at the Soroptomists Society) and to develop her leadership skills in the capacity of project manager. For some of the newer members the event provided a great forum for learning that

community participation can be a highly rewarding experience. The fact that involvement in the St Patrick's Spring Fest came about after suggestions from a new member also provided some inspiration for all members that JCI can serve as a forum for high level, major events. Quite simply, we are limited only by our imaginations and our courage to put our ideas forward. Pictures below: 1. Some of the team take a well earned break after the parade & Carnival 2. Helga Hartmann & Rose Ann O'Brien making children happy with their face-painting service 3. Tip Sheet prepared for Parade Participants by JCI Limerick



Award Category criteria

7

Benefit to the community

The response to St Patrick's Day was overwhelmingly positive. Close to 1,600 people participated in the march which was watched by crowds of more than 40,000 people and covered by 9 newspapers as well as local radio stations. The theme of "One City, A World of People" had been very well received by the press and at least one regional newspaper has since included several stories with a focus on immigrants who have settled in Limerick. The media reports leading up to and following the event included complimentary statements such as: "This year's St Patrick's Spring Fest promises to be the city's biggest party yet, with nations from all over the globe getting involved". (Limerick Leader- March 5, 2005) "(Limerick's march),,, declared to be the best St Patrick's Day went off without a hitch" (Limerick Post - March 18th, 2005) "An estimated 40,000 people lined the streets of Limerick yesterday for way was described as the city's 'best ever' St Patrick's Day parade", (The Irish Times – March 18th, 2005) Feedback from numerous participating groups indicated that the event was regarded as being well organised and this view was supported by our partners from Shannon Heritage (King John's Castle) and the Limerick Co-ordination Office. One of the best indicators of the success of our event objective was that an extraordinarily high proportion of participants made the effort to play out the multicultural theme. People were genuinely inspired by the theme and we saw people dressed in international costumes, carrying flags from different countries or dressed as characters from children's stories from around the world. The crowd turnout for the day was higher than had been the case in previous years and, again feedback was very encouraging. In addition to the official feedback from the media and members of the public who spoke to us on the day, in the days following individual members of JCI Limerick heard many positive comments from people who were not aware that they had been involved in the day. Feedback from the general public has included appreciation of; the colour and variety in the festival, the air force flyover, the circus animals and performers, and the entertainment provided by the theatre groups. It was also noted by some onlookers that the spacing of the floats this year was very good and the parade didn't suffer from big gaps between marchers. We were very pleased with the response to the "Carnival at the Castle", particularly as this was a new event for the St Patrick's Day festivities. Everyone present in King John's Castle enjoyed the opportunity to tour the facilities and marvel at the panoramic view of Limerick City and the Shannon River from the Castle Walls as well as the entertainment JCI Limerick had provided. The highlight of the carnival (in addition to the goody bags and face painting) was the performance by world music band "De Jimbe". The band has played at festivals in New York, Japan, France, Germany and Cuba. The music created a fusion of traditional Irish, Caribbean and West African music. The whole community thoroughly enjoyed the music which was clearly evident from the faces of members of the public (and JCI members) dancing to the "Siege of Ennis". St Patrick's

Day is a huge event throughout Ireland and Worldwide. Limerick's Parade encouraged vastly diverse communities to participate this year. As a result of this multi-cultural Parade, everyone has gained a better understanding of traditions from other communities. The St Patrick's Spring Fest was a success with young and old people and gave us the chance to welcome old as well as new friends to our vibrant City. Pictures below: Various shots of the parade



Award Category criteria

8

Benefit to the organization

It could be said that JCI Limerick's involvement in Spring Fest 2005 and, in particular, the St. Patrick's Day & Marching Band Parades benefited the Chapter in the three focus areas identified by Junior Chamber International (JCI) for its sixtieth year, i.e. media, marketing and membership.

1. **MEDIA.** In accepting the invitation to partner with the Limerick Co-Ordination Office in the planning and execution of the Spring Fest Festival, JCI Limerick, along with the other public / private sponsors was guaranteed some positive media coverage. When the preparatory work was complete (surveys, analysis, parade participants, post parade activities, etc) details of the festival were presented to the local press at the festival launch in the offices of the Lord Mayor on Tuesday, 1st March. This, along with the announcement of the Grand Marshals was one of the first of many articles on the event. JCI Limerick was identified as a leading partner in the overall organisation of the mid-March events in both the speeches delivered at the launch and, more importantly, in the press coverage which followed. The JCI Limerick logo also featured in the festival brochure circulated to 10,000 households, on A3 posters around the city and on A1 advertising boards at the entrances to the city. The St. Patrick's Day Parade itself receives a generous amount of coverage both locally / nationally and Jessica Colleran, Festival Director and PRO for JCI Limerick was interviewed by many media outlets throughout the day. This year's events were covered by 9 publications and by local radio stations and covered the lead up to Spring Fest Events, coverage of the key days and post-event wrap-ups. When evaluated against equivalent advertising costs, the value of the PR for this year's events reached Euro 19,398 (refer to 'Evaluation' section for a breakdown of this figure).

2. **MARKETING.** The press coverage before and after Spring Fest was important in marketing the role of JCI in the city. It identified the Chapter and its members with a positive, city-wide, modern festival pointing to the abilities and commitment of its members. The success in executing this project, together with the experience gained from the organisation and management of sponsors provided invaluable experience for JCI Limerick Members which the Chapter can use as a template for attracting sponsorship and membership in the coming months.

3. **MEMBERSHIP.** The active participation of members in this project was crucial to its success. Tasks including research, surveys, etc were carried out early in the project while in the lead up to the Parades, goody bags were packed, face painting / story telling was arranged. These preparations drew on the different strengths of members, e.g. teamwork, planning, and time management. It was noted that the enthusiasm and commitment of all concerned was excellent and everyone enjoyed the event. It gave the Chapter membership cohesion and newer members a flavour of what JCI is about. For further information on individual development please see page 8 Membership Participation.

IMAGES (below) JCI Limerick members relaxing at the end of the big day: 1. Michelle McNulty & Fiona Donohoe 2. Pat Murnane, Ita Browne & Michael Scott 3. Declan Scott, Rose Ann

O'Brien & Helga Hartmann

