



Media Release

6<sup>th</sup> May 2011

PRESS RELEASE

# **‘Strictly Come Dancing’ event contestants taking it seriously!**

## TRAINING PROGRESSING NICELY INTO ITS SECOND WEEK

Organised by Dundalk Chamber of Commerce in association with the Nestling Project, the Strictly Come Dancing contest is now half way through the intense training required by the competitors.

All the contestants are now totally committed to training and none more so than Helena Mullins, a student, studying TV Journalist and radio through Irish in NUI Galway. Helena is sponsored by the Glen Gat Guesthouse which is also her family business. “When my Dad asked me if I would be interested in entering I was delighted” she says. “It is a great opportunity for local businesses to come together in a fun way supporting each other in what are quite difficult times not to mention the personal challenge.”

No stranger to the dance floor, Helena has taken part in many productions, in particular Le Mis with S.O.N.G. However she says this is totally different to anything she has done before and though training is very hard she is loving every minute of it. “I pulled a muscle the first night” she says “so I am paying more attention to stretching and have even taken up Yoga to help ease the pain”.

Like all the contestants, Helena says that the atmosphere is fantastic and though no-one will actually admit it, the whole thing is being taken very seriously. “There is a definite ‘feel good factor’ and the trainers are great,” she says. “People who thought they couldn’t dance are finding that they actually can”.

Helena had not heard of The Nestling Project prior to entering, but is delighted to be part of raising the profile of such an excellent programme. “Ageing is something most of us will have to face” she says, “and anything that eases the process is totally worth supporting.”

The Nestling project is based in DKIT which aims to make Dundalk and the North East a friendlier place to live for older people. The project includes a Volunteer Network which provides supportive, reliable, relationships to older people who would otherwise be socially isolated. There are currently 30 volunteers working on the Nestling Project and the numbers are continuing to grow. Each volunteer is matched with an older person with whom they visit weekly to participate in a shared activity and support positive ageing.

A contestant who is definitely taking the contest seriously is Kevin Carthy, a Bar Manager at Brubakers Dundalk who is also his sponsor. Like many of the contestants Kevin has no previous dance experience and says that he was previously asked to take part in 'Strictly Come Boxing' and chickened out. “I took what I thought was the easy option” he says “I’m not so sure now”. Just before starting training Kevin injured a calf muscle, but whilst finding it tough is managing the steps and says “At least I’ll have a good excuse if I do badly”.

Dancing to Tina Turner’s ‘Proud Mary’, Kevin is partnered by Shandell Kelly from Good Time Charlie’s who, Kevin says, is extremely patient and supportive. They both chose the music for its fast pace and great energy. Kevin’s friends and family are not surprised at his taking part and are really looking forward to a great laugh.” I have no great aspirations for the title” he says “I’m just enjoying the experience and once I beat Phillip Kehoe from Ridley’s I’ll be happy” he quipped

He concluded by saying that one of the really good things about the competition is meeting new people and seeing a different side to the people that he already knows. “I see lots of people in my job and you think you know them” he said, “but interacting with them in this way makes you see them in a totally different light. I’ve made some new friends and that’s always good.”

There are limited tickets available from Dundalk Chamber of Commerce priced at €20.00 and all VIP tickets are sold out. Sales are going well, so if you want to be there get your ticket now.

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