



Dublin's North Inner City Community Aims to make Halloween less scary for Vulnerable Children

More than 400 primary school children from Dublin's north east inner-city will get together for the first time since 2019 to celebrate the coming of Halloween with a Monster Party in Mountjoy Square Park on 27 October. This will launch the five-day Big Scream Halloween Community Festival in the area, the first full-scale event since Covid.

This year, as well as the traditional scary events, there will be a special focus on adapting festival activities for children with additional needs for whom Halloween can cause anxiety and distress.

Gentle workshops, sensory hours at the two-day funfair, tailored competitions, and a sensory bus which will be present at events including the Monster Party in Mountjoy Square will enable children to enjoy activities in a safe space.

"Before Covid, children with additional needs and their families were among the most isolated and vulnerable in this area of high disadvantage," said Peter O'Connor, chairman of the festival committee. "The lockdowns had a hugely detrimental effect on our young people, but for children with additional needs, disrupted routines and isolation have had a catastrophic impact on their social, emotional, and physical well-being. Many of these children who need intensive support, live in confined conditions where access to safe outdoor spaces can be extremely challenging."

The Big Scream is a massive community project which is run, managed, and delivered by the community. It was established to deter anti-social behaviour and over the past five years, there have been no reports of criminal damage on Halloween night. The emphasis this year is on helping children with additional needs to enjoy Halloween.

"This year, record numbers of children and young people have taken part in our six-week programme of workshops and activities to inspire creativity and educate them about harm reduction around Halloween traditions" said Noel Wardick, Chief Executive of the Dublin City Community Co-Operative. "I am heartened to see that the efforts of people on the ground are making a difference to this community which historically has experienced so much disadvantage and neglect. The groundwork has been done so let's now hope that the scariest thing we'll experience this year is the spookiest haunted house ever!"

Full Big Scream Festival Programme

<http://bigscream.ie/big-scream-2022/>

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