

Scenes from
*Boats on a
Brightening Stream*



Film Festival Fever

There may not have been Hollywood A-listers, but the red carpet was rolled out for the cast and crew of RehabCare in Dún Laoghaire, Dublin, who hosted the inaugural Shorts Film Festival in October this year.



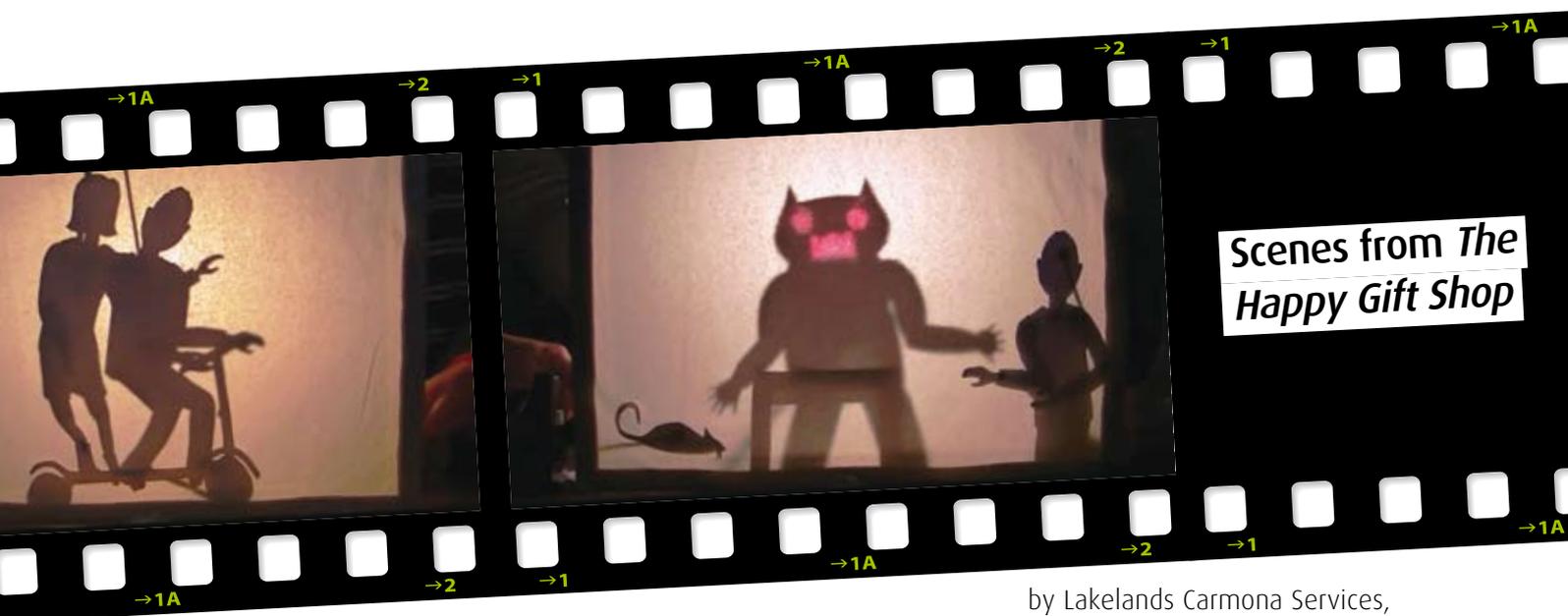
Features

THE FESTIVAL WAS part of Social Inclusion Week run by Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, with a range of social and community groups from the local area taking part. Months of scripting, filming and editing paid off when each of the 15 short films received high praise from viewers.

The Shorts Film Festival was created from the shared vision of two local disability services, RehabCare Dún Laoghaire and Lakelands Carmona Services. It aimed to promote film-

making as an accessible art form and to celebrate social inclusion, ability, multiculturalism and diversity. Shorts were submitted from 11 different organisations and the films varied in style from comedy to documentary and covered a range of themes such as social issues, disability and diversity. The launch night was attended by many local dignitaries, including staff from Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council, who praised RehabCare's innovative contribution to Social Inclusion Week. All who attended were very impressed with the quality of the films and the thought-provoking content.

The highlight of the week-long festival was the first screenings of *The Happy Gift Shop* and *Boats on a Brightening Stream*, both made by people who attend the RehabCare resource centre in Dún Laoghaire. The two films were successfully shortlisted for the Digital Media Screenings at the Oska Bright International Short Film and Digital Media Festival 2011 in Brighton, England in November. The films were screened at its launch so festivalgoers there also got the opportunity to view them at the prestigious three-day event.



Scenes from *The Happy Gift Shop*

Francine Winters, Community Services Manager at RehabCare in Dún Laoghaire, said, "Shorts Film Festival really showcased the creative abilities of the people who attend RehabCare's service here. The films illustrated what they do with their lives and who they are as individuals. This project opens so many doors to the wider community by allowing people from different backgrounds the opportunity to express themselves through a common medium. Having our films screened at the Oska Bright festival was such a terrific experience. It is a real testament to the work of our amateur film-makers here in the centre. It was a fantastic

achievement to have their work recognised and we are so proud of them."

Rachel Treanor, puppeteer/writer on *The Happy Gift Shop*, attends the RehabCare centre in Dún Laoghaire. She told us of her experience. "I loved making the short films. I learned so much, like how to operate the shadow puppets and how long it takes to make even one minute of film! I loved seeing my film on the big screen and all my family and friends being there too made it really special. It was hard work but I loved every minute of it!"

Bhevana Gungadin-Byrne, Instructor at the Lakelands Day Centre run

by Lakelands Carmona Services, said, "The festival showed clearly how film-making promotes self-expression, dedication and interaction amongst one and all. As a result, our service users were able to develop unique interpersonal skills that strengthened their ability to choose for themselves and plan for the future with the help and support of their family and friends."

The Shorts Film Festival was a big hit in the area and all those involved were delighted to hear the audience praising the films. It's hoped that the film festival will become an annual event. So any budding Steven Spielbergs out there should get their creative thinking caps on! ■