

Roscommon Young Carers featured on Winning Streak show

Karen Downey

The Roscommon Young Carers group was featured on last Saturday night's Winning Streak programme on RTÉ One.

Ahead of the programme being aired the members of the group enjoyed a day out at the cinema, followed by lunch at the Hodson Bay Hotel on Saturday.

Each week the programme features a group that benefits from National Lottery funding and the slot featuring the local group was filmed around Athlone and showed the young carers enjoying a day out at The Planet, Athlone.

Speaking on TV, Maureen Connelly, Young Carers Project Manager, said: "This project was first established by the Roscommon LEADER Development Company in association with the Roscommon Carers Association. These young children are carers and it's to give these young carers a break from caring."

Bernie Dowling of the Carers Association said: "These young children would either be looking after parents, they may well have a sibling or there might be grandparents involved and

you would be amazed at the work that young carers have to do."

Maureen and Bernie organise monthly outings for the group, from kayaking to cinema trips and bowling.

Brid McManus, whose daughter Eimear is a member of the group, said: "I have Parkinson's now for ten years. They can see when I need help. They don't actually have to be told because they've grown up with it."

Her daughter Eimear said: "In the morning I would help Mam with the breakfast and help my brothers get ready and I would do the dishes after everyone has breakfast and then, of course, I go to school and I come home and I'd have my dinner. I do the dishes after that and then I'd do my homework and then I'd do Mam's hair for a while and then I'd help Mam get into bed because sometimes her hand just shuts down altogether."

Brid added: "When the Young Carers started up, it was great because it was just for them - a day out, a day away from the normal routine of having to help me along and only for Bernie and Maureen they'd have no other outlet. They can switch off and just enjoy life and only for the Young Carers they wouldn't have this opportunity."



Roscommon Young Carers Group with members of Athlone Sub Aqua Club, James Mannion Deputy General Manager, Hodson Bay Hotel, Maureen Connelly and Bernine Dowling, Project Coordinators, at Hodson Bay last Saturday.

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