

Aghamore GAA Club, Mayo

Operation Trans-Agha-Mation (OPTAM)

Operation Trans-Agha-Mation is an 8 week community physical activity/fitness initiative aimed at increasing health awareness and helping the community to become a healthier place. It is open to everyone in the community regardless of age, fitness level, weight etc. Aghamore GAA are into their second year of Operation Trans-Agha-Mation (OPTAM) with 50-80 people attending the exercise classes (Yoga, Circuits, MetaFit, Bootcamp) on a weekly basis (November- December 2016).

The programme was not aimed at weight loss but in promoting a healthier lifestyle and way of life within the community and encouraging people to get involved in exercising while using the GAA facilities and getting them more socially interactive with people involved in the club. The programme culminated with a 5K at the start of December for the OPTAM participants, as well as people from the community, with a gathering afterwards where people could meet up and socialise. Each participant who registered for the run received an anklet which recorded their time and many set out to beat their 2015 target.

Last October Aghamore's Healthy Club Project Team reached out to principals of the 3 neighbouring national schools and together they initiated "The Run a K a Day" initiative which aims to enhance the children's physical, mental and emotional health & wellbeing during the school day. This involves each school taking the students out daily where they run a kilometre, regardless of the weather. This has been a huge success and between the 3 schools over 300 children have got involved. To tie this initiative in with OPTAM the club organised a culminating 2K event for the national school children just before the general 5K. This was a huge success with 110 children taking part and many parents coming along and joining in.

People were delighted with the outcome and it helped to shine a positive light on the club which is strongly seen as a community organisation rather than just a sporting organisation. Everyone that participated in OPTAM was encouraged to sign up as a Social Member of the club which led to increased membership.

Quote from Margaret Duffy, principal of Tooreen National School:

"I'm delighted to see that it seems to have interested children who don't normally do a lot of exercise or who don't take part in team sports. I notice that a number of children are independently and voluntarily choosing to do extra running during their breaktimes which I think is what this project is trying to achieve- that children take ownership of their own exercise and fitness. All classes from Junior Infants to 6th Class are taking part as well as our special needs children who are doing it to the best of their ability".