HEALTH AND SPORT COMMITTEE

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORT

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Recreational Sport Available to Cross Community as Antidote to Drugs & Health Problems

Having worked in dance, swimming & gymnastics over a period of 25 years I have seen first hand the enormous difference sustained physical movement can make to individuals lives & livelihoods.

Previous to this, in the 1980s I was involved & committed to work against sexual violence. It is relevant that this became so harrowing I had to leave the field. I was part of a clerical team supporting a major academic investigation of the use of sexual history evidence in Scottish rape trials. To find how systemically embedded in the culture sexual violence is was quite horrific, especially in conjunction with the front line support to women survivors of sexual violence, & in the educational process we delivered from the heart of the women's movement.

Most specifically I became aware of how deeply a person's posture reflects their vulnerability to attack. I have had this observation confirmed by health professionals who entirely agree that a person's mental health is not going to improve unless their bodies do likewise.

Hence I have become committed to delivering gymnastics to youth in recreational settings as a strong, limber child who has learnt self pride, body awareness & ability is a child less likely to become a victim of abuse.

Without quoting relevant research; I think it goes without saying that a fit & healthy person, who has learned these habits when young is going to be a better citizen who enjoys life more fully & is more pro active in their approach, & far less likely to succomb to drug abuse, ill health or alcoholism.

I propose that to counter act the shocking & preturbing drug death statistics it would be a light for the future, for government to underwrite the costs of recreational sports provision in a fully engaging programme to encompass all in the general community.

A role that provides great inclusion is parent helper/coach becoming actively involved with their own children's sporting activities.

Of course, not everyone wants to be sporting, but the rewards from prowess achieved through personal endeavour are great, & a fit body does bring a fit mind & enhance the other potential of the person. Gymnastics & swimming are two core activities that develop strength, endurance & flexibility. If these were available to all at an underwritten cost, our society should change for the better within a couple of generations. The saving on health bills & crime would also be enormous.