

DEPARTEMENT CULTUUR, JEUGD & MEDIA

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Ultima 2016 Intangible Heritage Geel family nursing care

"Geelse gezinsverpleging" - Geel family nursing care - is a fragile subject approached in an honest way. It's a wonderful example of how intangible cultural heritage has already encouraged a community to take care of psychologically vulnerable people for many centuries. The support for the tradition is particularly great and strong. Thanks to the close connection with the local identity of Geel residents, the tradition is highly resilient, which ensures a good relationship between continuity and dynamics."

We are seeing that the community-oriented approach that Geel has known for many years is becoming more widely adopted in mental health care and is being used in an adapted form in different places around the world. Family nursing care is a shared responsibility of the foster care families, the local population, the town of Geel and the Openbaar Psychiatrisch Zorgcentrum Geel (Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre). This also translates into the way in which the intangible heritage of Geel family nursing care is researched, preserved and passed on. This unique interplay between the different actors ensures an integrated, sustainable programme to safeguard Geel family nursing care.

Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre is responsible for the practical organisation of family nursing care and since 1850, with the archiving service, it has managed the unique heritage of Geel family care in a modern, high-quality, community-minded way through research, opening up collections, artistic experience and social connectedness.

Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre also promotes a meaningful and sustainable relationship with this heritage, always in collaboration with psychologically vulnerable people. Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre shows, with its cultural heritage activities (archive service, visitors centre, debates, artistic projects, etc.) how a centuries-old Geel tradition (the cult of Saint Dimpna) has evolved into a contemporary approach to psychiatric care, more specifically in the protective and caring environment of a family. With respect to intangible heritage, it's a wonderful example of how a centuries-old tradition can encourage a community to care for people who would often fall by the wayside elsewhere.

- The town of Geel is responding to this fantastically by working with this subject in many of its services.
- Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre and the town use a whole series of tools (exhibitions, symposia, museum games, oral research projects, interviews, concerts, etc.) to make this subject accessible to a very broad audience and above all in order to bring different communities together around it and allow people to meet and start debates: patients and family, care providers, the authorities, and the general public.
- It's a fragile tradition with great resilience because it is embraced by the community of Geel, the town and Geel Public Psychiatric Care Centre. This unique interplay between the different actors ensures an integrated, sustainable programme to safeguard Geel family nursing care.