

ACCS NEWS

ISSUE 4 • 2022/2023

Creativity

in our

Schools

Annual
Education
Conference



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Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
Cúnam na Scoilcanna Pobail agus Cúimstitheacha

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ACCS receive NIMS Innovation Award at State Claims Agency event



John Irwin and Pat Kirwan, Deputy Director, State Claims Agency

ACCS was delighted to be awarded the NIMS Innovation Award at this year's State Claims Agency Enterprise Risk Network Recognition Awards. The awards, held on 11th May in the Royal College of Physicians were attended by John Irwin, General Secretary ACCS, Anne Marie Dillon, Director of Human Resources ACCS, Catherine O'Sullivan, Director of ACCS/JMB Further Education Support Unit and Hilary Treacy, Data Protection and Education Legal Advisor ACCS.

The Awards acknowledge and reward the leaders in enterprise risk management in the State sector and commend the ongoing process of continuous improvement and progress in the management of risk within State Authorities which are part of the General Indemnity Scheme.

The NIMS Innovation Award recognises a State Authority that has used NIMS, the National Incident Management System, in an innovative manner within a risk management project or initiative.



L-R: Elaine Byrne, Senior Enterprise Risk Manager, State Claims Agency, Anne Marie Dillon, Director of Human Resources, ACCS and Katie Nugent, Enterprise Risk Manager, State Claims Agency

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WINNER

ENTERPRISE RISK NETWORK RECOGNITION AWARDS 2023

Presented by the State Claims Agency

Welcome

Glenamaddy School community was honoured to host the annual ACCS Education Conference earlier this month. This was a wonderful gathering and, in the spirit of ACCS, was an ideal opportunity for students and staff to forge new friendships and connections with students and staff from other schools in the ACCS community. Indeed, our guest speaker, Professor Tom Collins, when launching the event, commented on the authentic and real sense of community and connection evident in Glenamaddy.

As you will see from the photographs in the following pages the students' enthusiasm and passion for creativity and entrepreneurship shone through on the day. I've no doubt some of the business leaders from Dragons Den could easily pick up a couple of ideas from our talented students.

The Greeks believed that time had a secret structure made up of moments. There was a moment of epiphany when time revealed something special in luminous clarity. There were moments of Krisis when time became confused and contradictory. And there were moments of Kairos, fleeting moments when time opened up in kindness and promise. All these instants of energies cohered to offer fecund possibilities of creativity, initiative and imagination. Part of the art of living was to recognise and seize such opportunities in one's life.

This newsletter chronicles and celebrates such moments and memories as they coalesce in the life in our schools.

What You Missed That Day You Were Absent from Fourth Grade

By Brad Aaron Modlin

Mrs. Nelson explained how to stand still and listen to the wind, how to find meaning in pumping gas,

how peeling potatoes can be a form of prayer. She took questions on how not to feel lost in the dark.

After lunch she distributed worksheets that covered ways to remember your grandfather's

voice. Then the class discussed falling asleep without feeling you had forgotten to do something else—

something important—and how to believe the house you wake in is your home. This prompted

Mrs. Nelson to draw a chalkboard diagram detailing how to chant the Psalms during cigarette breaks,

and how not to squirm for sound when your own thoughts are all you hear; also, that you have enough.

The English lesson was that I am is a complete sentence.

And just before the afternoon bell, she made the math equation look easy. The one that proves that hundreds of questions,

and feeling cold, and all those nights spent looking for whatever it was you lost, and one person

add up to something.

Throughout this edition of ACCS News we see plenty of evidence of the rich talent amongst our students. We see examples of sporting victories, of beaming teammates holding sought after cups and proud teachers who graciously give their time and energy to coach and mentor our young people.

From music accolades to winning awards at the Young Social Innovators of the Year to success at the Euronext Blue Economy European Final, the flamboyant fashion designs in the Junk Kouture competition and the mighty Hen House builders at the All-Ireland Enterprise Awards, we are honoured to have so many talented entrepreneurs, artists, and designers in our schools. We thank them for sharing their talent with us and we acknowledge and applaud the many dedicated teachers and other staff who have guided, supported, and nurtured our young people on the way.

It is that time of year again, the month of May, named after Maia – the Goddess of Springtime and Growth. Historically, its gentle warmth and rainbows prompted flowers to blossom, seeds to sprout and people to dance. In Galway we associate it with Macnas, a cuckoo time of merriment and frolicking, when calves are let out to grass with their ears cocked and tails up in the air.

As we approach the end of the academic year and thoughts turn to taking a break, we think of our Leaving Certificate students, who leave the post primary chapter of their academic life behind and we wish them luck and success as they choose which fork in the road they will take on the next stage of their life journey.

*“And now you travel on your own opinion
Leave your fears and doubts to fade
Dust your dreams and take them on your journey
Spread your wings and fly away”*

James Duignan, President, ACCS



ACCS Annual Education Conference –

Creativity in our Schools

This year's annual Education Conference hosted by Glenamaddy Community School, Co. Galway on Wednesday 26th April was indeed a festival of learning and wonderful creativity. ACCS President and Principal of Glenamaddy Community School, James Duignan and his team warmly welcomed the visitors who arrived from all the regions early on Wednesday morning.

The conference focused on the theme of creativity in our schools and was an ideal opportunity for schools to gather, learn, and share with one another and to showcase the amazing creativity which is abundant in our schools. This event was a fantastic opportunity for schools and students to share their ideas and practices in a school setting.

The conference was launched by Professor Tom Collins, Chairperson of the Governing Bodies of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown (ITB) since 2013 and founding Chairperson of the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA) since 2015. Deeply committed to education for all and especially community education, Professor Collins has held numerous posts in education including former President of Maynooth University (2010-2011), Professor and Head of the Education Department (2006-2011), Dean of Teaching and Learning (2008-2011) at Maynooth University and Chair of



Professor Tom Collins

NCCA, (2006-2012). He has published and lectured widely in the area of Education and is a regular media columnist.

Professor Collins spoke to the gathering about the importance of community and how a school can influence and be influenced by its local community. Glenamaddy is a small, compact town in the West of Ireland steeped in its own history and wild landscape where the school is a beacon of hope and creativity, nurturing the young people and the wider community.

He also addressed the importance of voice and participation in education as he addressed the young people in the audience. Nowadays, we recognise and place an

equal value on many different forms of expression, music, art, sport, oracy, crafts, dance and movement, photography, gardening and many more. The final comments from Professor Collins included a simple reminder to all present, and most especially to the young people, about the importance of minding our planet and taking care of this precious resource.

Following the launch by Professor Collins, Glenamaddy students directed delegates and visitors to the showcase area where they spent time throughout the morning visiting each school's display. Students from six schools who participated in the Junk Kouture competition proudly modelled their creations during the morning.

In the afternoon all guests and delegates made their way to the local theatre where they were welcomed by James Duignan and Áine O’Sullivan, ACCS Assistant General Secretary. They were then treated to a superb program of performances.

Thank you to the students and staff of Ballyhaunis Community School, Castlerea Community School, Celbridge Community School, Glenamaddy Community School, Heywood Community School, Portumna Community School, St. Attracta’s Community School and St. Patrick’s Comprehensive School for a wonderful show.

ACCS wishes to acknowledge the planning and work of the Glenamaddy Community School team and to thank James and the school wide community for their hospitality, kindness, wonderful food and abundant treats throughout the day. This is the second year that we have availed of a school for this conference, and we are delighted at the success of the event. The Education Conference 2024 will be hosted in the Leinster region by John Hayes and the team in Kildare Town Community School.

Finally, ACCS would like to thank all schools who participated in the conference this year, for attending, and especially to thank the staff and students who showcased ideas and shared many wonderful initiatives with us on the day. Videos and photographs from the event are available on the ACCS website www.accs.ie.



Mary Costello, Principal, St Patrick’s Comprehensive School Shannon and James Duignan



Pictured with James Duignan are L-R: Niamh Byrne, Lochlainn Mechan, Aobhinn Cowan and Nicholas Plews, Portumna Community School

SHOWCASE AREA



Belong To Launch of LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Initiative



Belong To
LGBTQ+
Quality Mark

Belong To is launching the LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Initiative 2023/24 with information recently sent to schools. They currently have 57 schools working away on their journey due to achieve the mark in early 2024 and now have places for 80 new schools/centres to take up the initiative.

The LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Initiative has been piloted in over 55 post-primary schools nationwide, with impact assessments carried out by researchers at University of Galway and Dublin City University. This year, they have partnered with over 100 post-primary schools and alternative education centres nationwide to support them in achieving the Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark. As part of the Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Initiative, they provide whole staff training, one-to-one support, guides, toolkits and other resources.

The Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark Initiative invites participating schools and alternative education centres to:

- Recognise and promote existing supports for your LGBTQ+ community.
- Build on these existing supports and grow as an LGBTQ+ safe and supportive community.
- Achieve the Belong To LGBTQ+ Quality Mark, by demonstrating your commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion across key action areas.

For more information or to apply to take part, please contact our Education and Training Officer, Stephen Cassidy on T: 01 5826152 or email stephen@belongto.org.

Together, we can create a sustainable, positive impact for the LGBTQ+ students in your school now and into the future.

Sharon Heron (she/her)
Director of Education,
Training and
Community Practice



SEAI Schools Energy Workshops Now Open for Bookings

Energy and sustainability-focused workshops for primary and post-primary level students and CPD courses for teachers

The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) is encouraging schools and teachers in both primary and post-primary schools to book SEAI Energy Workshops. These workshops are free for students and teachers and explore the topic of energy and sustainability in a fun and engaging way. The workshops take approximately 45-90 minutes and complement the existing curriculum.

Due to the high demand for workshops, we are still working through our waiting list from our last round of bookings and those schools will be contacted shortly to confirm workshops. However you can learn more out about all the available options and book workshops for the 2023-2024 academic term by filling out the booking form on the SEAI website www.seai.ie. There are various workshops available for primary, post-primary and CPD courses for teachers. There is limited availability for the summer term 2023 so we recommend you book your workshops as soon as possible so you don't miss out!



Kinsale Community School

hosts Department of Education EU Conference on Sustainability Education



Kinsale Community School recently hosted a two-day EU Council of Ministers conference in collaboration with the Department of Education aimed at exploring Sustainable Education Strategies. The event brought together educationalists and representatives from 13 different countries, as part of the European Education Area Strategic Framework, to discuss the need for collaboration across educational systems within Europe to address issues relating to sustainability, climate change, and biodiversity.

The keynote speakers at the event included Professor Paul Walsh and Lord David Puttnam. Professor Walsh is a renowned Professor of International Development Studies and the Director of the Centre for Sustainable Development Studies at University College Dublin. Lord Puttnam is an accomplished film producer, renowned educator, and prominent environmentalist.

Professor Paul Walsh shared his expertise on the significance of sustainability education in achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. He emphasised the role of education in creating a more just, equitable, and sustainable world and stressed the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration in achieving this vision.

Lord Puttnam's address focused on the critical role of education in shaping a sustainable future. He emphasised the importance of schools in preparing students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers, armed with the necessary skills to tackle the complex challenges facing our planet. Lord Puttnam acknowledged the challenges posed by Brexit, COVID, and the war in Ukraine and how these crises have shifted the attention away from sustainability. He commended the student voice for keeping this critical issue at the top of the agenda and encouraged them to continue their campaign for change in our consumerist society.

The conference also included panel discussions with Laura Power, Education Officer for World Wise Global Schools, Liam Wegimont, Executive Director of Global Education Network Europe, and teachers from the school.

“This was a wonderful opportunity for our students to be given active agency in respect of a global concern which is very real and very urgent. He commended the students for keeping these issues at the top of the agenda.”

Fergal McCarthy, School Principal of Kinsale Community School and Vice President of the European Federation of Education Employers.

During the conference, visitors had the opportunity to witness firsthand Kinsale Community School's commitment to sustainability through their various sustainable practices.

The Department of Education's conference held at Kinsale Community School marked a significant milestone in addressing the challenges posed by climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainability, highlighting the vital role of education in creating a sustainable future. The school's unwavering commitment to sustainable practices and fostering a positive learning environment for students was evident throughout the event and served as a source of inspiration for educators and communities across Europe.

Old Bawn Community School

welcomes Minister for Education Norma Foley



Old Bawn Community School recently welcomed Minister for Education Norma Foley. The visit was the first visit of a Minister for Education in the school's forty-four year history. On arrival, Minister Foley was greeted by student representatives from 1st, 2nd, 5th and 6th year. Head students Sarah Whelan and Oisín Cullivan formally welcomed the Minister and guided her around the school. Students spoke about subjects they liked and their experience in Old Bawn. A selection of students performed a beautiful acapella version of Let it Be led by 6th year student Pearl McCarthy.

Following a chat with the caretaker and secretaries, Ms Foley met with a Student Voice group made up of Robert Ennis (3rd year), Aoife Hegarty (3rd year), Victoria Ikolaba (3rd year), Amy Farrell (5th year) and Kofo Bamidele (6th year). All five students have had very different experiences in Old Bawn, some working with 1:1 devices, others opting to get a device and each student has had their own adversity to overcome with regard to learning. The students were fantastic ambassadors for the school and a real reminder of why we, as a community continue to strive for a holistic education.

Minister Foley then officially opened the Old Bawn DreamSpace. This space has revolutionised Learning and Teaching in the school. A blank canvas, where the students bring the colour with their

ideas and learning, the room is designed so as to allow students to embrace problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration in an ever-evolving space. Students from 2nd year and our DreamSpace Ambassadors from 4th year demonstrated a variety of STEM focused learning experiences through virtual golf, Minecraft, MicroBit, Sphero, Lego wall and Indi cars.

The final stop on the Minister's visit was to have a round table discussion with teachers, Cathal Molloy (Physics, Chemistry and Science Teacher and Year Head), Shannon Power (English Teacher and OneGood School Lead), Charlie O'Callaghan (Science & Maths Teacher) and Regina Grenham (English Teacher and Integr8 Co-ordinator). The group discussed CPD and focused on the power of in school and contextual upskilling programmes where teachers learn from the perspective of the student, the importance of time to learn and consolidate new skills and the impact technology has had on the learning in Old Bawn Community School.

Throughout the visit, Minister Foley engaged with the entire school community, chatting freely and openly. It was a real honour for the Senior Leadership Team to take a step back and to watch the flourishing school community being recognised by the Minister during her visit.

Ursula McCabe, Principal

Student Voice

A personal viewpoint and seal of approval from
Athboy Community School student, Conor Muldoon



Hello, my name is Conor Muldoon. I'm a Transition Year student in Athboy Community School and I am the Chair of the Student Council. This is my second time writing an article for the ACCS around Student Voice so I must have done something right the first time round.



As I stated before in my previous article, Student Voice is a key component to the healthy working and running of a school. It leads to a strong relationship between students, staff and school management as students feel they are listened to on issues concerning them, for example learning practices and the running of the school.

From my experience of working on Student Voice with the ACCS and within Athboy Community School I'd have to say it has been quite a successful initiative as we've made quite a substantial change in several areas and continue to do so presently. For example, students in the school have had a say on getting a new PE uniform which has now been fully rolled out across the student population. We got their opinion on what uniform they wanted by rolling out surveys on the uniform and discussions in PE classes about the uniform. We then attended board of management meetings and parent association meetings to gain support for the new uniform which we did and now today we have a new PE uniform that students wear and are happy with. Another element key to the Student Voice's success in Athboy Community School is frequent meetings with the school's board of management. This has really enhanced our Council's incentives as we've seen in the past that the board has held to account the in-school management if one of our projects has been put on the long finger and pushed for our views to be heard and respected. Lastly, another key component to the Student Voice's success has been a frequent meeting with the principal within our school. This gives us the opportunity for our views to be heard and make sure the issues we have brought up are being acted upon. This also shows clear communication with the student body and the day-to-day running of the school.

So, in closing I believe the Student Voice initiative is a successful project. We are currently working on the next step of this project which is the democratic lottery which we hope to have up and running by the start of the new academic year which I believe will be a successful initiative and will further enhance Student Voice within our school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the ACCS team for the support and guidance on our projects over the last few years. I hope that the Student Voice initiative continues to expand in the future as it has been quite a successful project and long may it continue that way.

Conor Muldoon

Athboy Community School



Student Participation Coordinators in St. Aidan's Community School meet with Professor Laura Lundy

The St. Aidan's Community School SPOTLITE Programme stands for: Student Perspectives On Teaching & Learning In The Educational Space. Students and staff have been working on this project collaboratively for the last couple of years and it has been officially rolled out in the school over the past 6 months. In essence it captures and documents examples of highly effective practice in learning and teaching from the student perspective. Students have been visiting classrooms and observing lessons throughout the school. They have been engaging in follow up conversations and Q&A sessions with staff and learners. Participation is completely voluntary and there is no element of inspection or evaluation. It takes its lead from the LAOS 2022 quality standards and seeks to get to the top of Harts Ladder in terms of student participation. Following an initial 3-month pilot process, students presented their findings to a whole staff group in March 2023. One quotation from a staff member following the meeting was: *"Thank you, I will change how I teach tomorrow because of what you said today"*.

Following some publicity surrounding the programme, we were contacted by Professor Laura Lundy from Queens University Belfast, a world leader in Student Voice and on youth participation. She met us to find out more about the programme and said it was an exciting and cutting-edge process that exemplifies among the



highest levels of student participation in schools that she has seen. She also invited the school to present at an upcoming symposium on youth participation in Queen's University in the autumn. We have also been asked to present to a group of school leaders from Singapore on the subject in May 2023.

For more information have a look at the youtube video at the following link: <https://youtu.be/XO9NI4U1YDQ>

Ella Chaney, Nadine Gibbons and Majella Tuffy Murray



All toilets in St. Aidan's Community School are now gender neutral, single person bathrooms



After a major change in design and full retrofit, there are no more communal toilets in St. Aidan's Community School. This was requested by students and has been a huge success. In the almost 3 months since the toilets opened, all traces of the problems that characterised the previous design have disappeared completely. There are no more unsupervised areas or communal hand washing spaces. No more urinals and no cubicles. Instead, every toilet block in the school has been converted into a suite of individual one person at a time bathrooms with all doors leading out on to a supervised corridor area.



Many schools often find it hard to monitor and control what goes on in toilet areas, from vandalism and anti-social behaviour, to use of phones, cameras and vaping. St. Aidan's was no different. This design has totally solved that problem and should be considered by all schools. It is not specifically about providing gender neutral toilets, which it does also, it more importantly makes it easier for schools to ensure safe, hygienic and supervised toilets for all and an end to the many problems to be dealt with due to the former outdated design.

Kevin Shortall, Principal

Uplifting voices at

Castlerea Community School

In Castlerea Community School we believe that nurturing an interest in the creative arts is one of the greatest gifts we can give our students; be it poetry, drama, dance, music or the visual arts. These interests help students improve their problem-solving and critical thinking skills, improve communication skills and give students opportunities to express their feelings and emotions. Above all these interests are great fun and wonderful for our mental wellbeing. We hope that through our participation in a wide range of disciplines, students develop a passion and love for the arts. Massive congratulations to the students in Castlerea who swept the boards this year in competitions in poetry recital and writing, script writing, public speaking and debating. **Eileen Ryan**, Principal

Success In the Soroptimist International Public Speaking Competition

Two Transition Year students competed in the Soroptimist International Public Speaking Competition this year. Leanne Vaughan and Sarah Joyce participated in the local heats in Athlone in November and along with nine other girls from Roscommon, Athlone, Longford and Offaly they spoke on a diverse range of topics under the heading Prosperity and Health, People and Human Rights and Partnership and Empowerment of Women. The girls were judged on content, delivery, humour and engagement with the audience. Leanne Vaughan won first place and progressed on to the regional finals. Leanne was highly commended by all the judges for her exceptional ability to engage with an audience and to deliver an immensely powerful and inspiring speech on Partnership and Empowerment of Women. Leanne was honoured and privileged to have had the opportunity to deliver her speech in The Lord Mayor's Residence in The Mansion House, Dublin in November and at the ACCS Education Conference in Glenamaddy in April. The aim of this competition is to encourage girls and women to be the best version of themselves at every stage in their lives and to use their voice to raise awareness of issues that affect all of us. The Castlerea girls certainly embraced and enjoyed participating in this competition and meeting very talented and inspiring young women from all over Ireland.



Leanne Vaughan after winning first place in the local heat of the Soroptimist International Public Speaking competition for her speech on Partnership and Empowerment of Women.

All Ireland Poetry Aloud Final

Castlerea Community School were also successful this year in the All Ireland Poetry Aloud Final with Sarah Joyce taking first place in the Intermediate Category. First year student Rian Fahy won first place in the Connacht Poetry Writing Competition with his poem "One Moment" and Transition Year student Rolandas Plotnikovas taking second place with his poem "My Unbroken Trust".

Knights of St Columbanus Public Speaking Competition

Having secured first place in the Connacht finals of the Knights of St Columbanus Public Speaking Competition students Leanne Vaughan, Sarah Joyce, Julia Dzwonkowska and Micheal Shriane went forward to the National Finals held in Dublin where they narrowly missed out on claiming overall victory to take the second slot. Congratulations to the incredibly talented members of this team from CCS and their mentors Ms. Margaret Larkin (English teacher) and Mr. Stephen O'Hara (Chaplain).



Members of the Senior Public Speaking team with the Connacht Final Trophy

RTÉ National Playwright Competition

The RTÉ National Playwright Competition was next on the list for Castlerea with their first ever entry into the RTÉ National Playwright Competition with Leanne Vaughan's play shortlisted in the top 20 in Ireland.



Shane Larkin, Leanne Vaughan, and Sarah Joyce all TY students from CCS who entered the RTÉ National Playwright Competition, photographed with their teacher and mentor Ms. Margaret Larkin.

Castlerea Community School Partnership (& Empowerment of Women)

Women’s fearless sacrifices are often overlooked. Thankfully in today’s world women participate in every industry, their effort and ideologies have shaped the world as we know it. But what led to this change? What made the male dominant society take notice of the valuable work done by women?

Good evening, my name is Leanne Vaughan, and I am a Transition Year student in Castlerea Community School. In my speech I will explore Partnership and Empowerment of Women inspired by the quotation “The success of every woman should be the inspiration to another”. I will examine the fundamental role that women like Rosa Parks, Hannah Sheehy Skeffington and Vicky Phelan played in this revolution and how these effervescent women inspired other women to fight for what they believe in.

The mother of the Civil Rights Movement in America in the 1950s, Rosa Parks dedicated her life to “repairing what is broken in our world” and inspired countless others to put an end to the segregation and discrimination of black people in America. In 1955 she defied the evil Jim Crow law and refused to give up her seat to a white man on a bus. She had enough and she said NO MORE.... In that moment on that bus Rosa Parks inspired a generation of black Americans to sit wherever they wanted on a bus, in a church or restaurant and to enter shops through the front door. Rosa Parks empowered future generations to call out injustices and inequalities and for this we must applaud her.

“Until the women of Ireland are free the men will not achieve emancipation”.

The powerful words of Hannah Sheehy Skeffington spoken in 1909 in an Ireland that treated women as second-class citizens, which encouraged women to leave all power in the hands of Irish men. Skeffington was an influential figure during the Suffragette Movement, tirelessly campaigning for the equal status of men and women in Ireland, during a period when it was not safe for women to be revolutionary and politically minded.

She did everything in her power to inspire new ways of viewing gender roles, symbolically smashing male rule in Ireland by throwing rocks at the windows in Dublin Castle as women were relentlessly refused entry into political meetings. This action cost Hannah her job her freedom. Her crime – she had enough. She said NO MORE. Like Rosa Parks she was no longer willing to sit back and be excluded, silenced and ignored. Thanks to the trojan work done by men and women in The Irish Suffragette Movement Irish women were finally permitted by law to vote and stand in parliamentary elections in 1918, which opened the door for women to finally have a voice in parliament for the first time in Ireland.

One of my personal heroes is Cervical Cancer Campaigner Vicky Phelan who sadly passed away last November. She was not informed that cervical cancer smear tests results showing her to be

“The success of every woman should be the inspiration to another”.

Serena Williams

in the clear in 2014 were inaccurate and the revised results were intentionally kept from her for three years... an unforgiveable and despicable action that ultimately cost Vicky her life.

When Vicky uncovered the truth about the cover up by Clinical Pathology Laboratories in the US she refused to be silenced. She took the very difficult decision to expose the screening programme to much needed examination. By doing this she was speaking out for me, for you, and for all women. She said NO MORE. She had enough.

When then Health Minister Simon Harris ordered an audit at Cervical Check in 2018 a staggering 162 other women were not informed of missed abnormalities and tragically at that point twenty of these women had already died.

Vicky’s final plea to us was chilling “I hope that I have fought enough for your future. It is now your time to take the baton and stand up for yourselves. This fight was for you”. Despite facing imminent death Vicky Phelan did everything in her power to shed light on the failings of our healthcare system so that future generations of women would not suffer as she had.

In my speech I have shone a light on the powerful work of many women that have made change possible and inspired future generations of men and women to seek equality and justice. The fearless Rosa Parks, the visionary Hannah Sheehy Skeffington and the extraordinary Vicky Phelan fought tirelessly and relentlessly so that future generations of women would not suffer as they had.

What makes these women so remarkable?

Each saw an imperfect world and set about improving it, often overcoming great obstacles along the way. Perhaps we should all be inspired and motivated by the defiant words of Rosa Parks,

“You must never be fearful of what you are doing when it is right”.

Thank you.

Leanne Vaughan

Transition Year student, Castlerea Community School addressing attendees at the ACCS Education Conference 2023

Young Social Innovators of the Year Awards 2023

Rosses Community School – Silver Award winners in the Make our World Healthier (Physical Health) Challenge with their entry *Go with the Flow of your Menstrual Waves*

Their team aimed to address the lack of education about the menstrual cycle in Irish schools. They plan to create a module for SPHE/RSE that covers all stages and hormone fluctuations, as well as tracking booklets for girls and information leaflets for parents. The team has worked with various organisations and schools and has conducted surveys and created pilot groups to demonstrate the benefits of tracking menstrual cycles. They hope to get the module rolled out as a mandatory module and to make tracking and information booklets widely available.

Kinsale Community School – Finalists in the Make our World Safer Challenge category with their entry *Strike out Spiking*

Transition Year students embarked on a bold and impactful project this year, called 'Strike Out Spiking', aimed at raising awareness and tackling the issue of drink spiking within the school community and beyond. The project kicked off with an insightful survey of senior cycle students, aimed at gauging their awareness of the problem. Armed with this data, the students engaged in extensive research, which revealed a shocking reality – drink spiking was being significantly underreported.

Through their research and help from Mary Crilly and Dola Twomey from the Sexual Violence Centre Cork they gained a deeper understanding of the risks and consequences of drink spiking and developed innovative strategies for raising awareness and promoting safety. One standout initiative was the production of a thought-provoking podcast featuring Mary, Dola, Holly Cairns, and Senator Tim Lombard, who shared their perspectives and insights on the legislative measures that could be introduced to prevent spiking.

The students then organised an information night at the school, inviting local hoteliers, bar staff, publicans and senior students to share their experiences and perspectives on the issue. This allowed for a fruitful exchange of ideas and helped to build a stronger, more united front against the incidence of drink spiking. The passion and commitment of the students is evident through their Instagram account, which serves as a testimony to their cause.

YOUNG SOCIAL INNOVATORS

Congratulations to Rosses Community School, Bishopstown Community School, Heywood Community School and Kinsale Community School all of whom made it to the final of the Young Social Innovators of the Year Awards 2023 which took place on 2nd May in Croke Park.

Heywood Community School – Finalists in the Youth Connect – Strong & Caring Communities Award category with their entry *Youth Connect*



By recognising the positive impact that volunteering and social interaction can have on young people's well-being, these passionate students came together to create an innovative project aimed at helping young people develop life and social skills by engaging them in meaningful volunteering opportunities and social activities.

The team partnered with Tidy Towns, Pieta, Jack and Jill, PATH, Abbeyleix Golf Club, and Laois Kayaking to create a volunteer booklet and noticeboard and plan a volunteering awareness day and bake sale for a local charity. Their social media launch will highlight volunteering opportunities and social activities in the community. They also plan to reactivate the Volunteer of the Year Award for Transition Years and complete the Darkness into Light event.

All-Ireland Title comes to St. Louis Community School



Congratulations to Owen Monaghan, Odhran Freeman and Kiefer Walsh from St. Louis Community School, Kiltimagh, who were crowned All-Ireland champions in the Junior category of the Intellectual Property award at the All-Ireland Enterprise Awards recently in Croke Park. The boy's business venture is making hen houses. Congratulations are also extended to their teacher Mr. Gallagher and their families. **The first Mayo team to take an All-Ireland title out of Croke Park since 1951.**

Bishopstown Community School – Finalists in the Make Our Community More Inclusive and Poverty Free Challenge Award category with their entry *The Best Years*



The group of 8 Transition Year students focused on the social issue of loneliness in the community and aimed to create opportunities for intergenerational connections.

They engaged in surveying the community about their interactions across the generations and finding out what activities people enjoyed. From this, they constructed a series of small-scale events to help create an awareness of the issue and help people to connect. They displayed posters about the issue, undertook a food collection in aid of the Cork Sick Poor Society and a guest speaker visit with Age Action Ireland.

Their actions included working with the CSPE and SPHE classes to have first year students send one of their creative schools uniquely designed postcards to a grandparent or older neighbour, they made friendship bracelets for the elderly and have contacted local representatives about having chess tables installed in our local park.

Their Vintage Dress Up Day, a fundraiser for Age Action Ireland, which included a photo competition where students were asked to copycat an old family photograph proved very popular. Their big idea will entail a community tea dance with music from across the decades. This will be combined with displays from local groups or organisations which offer activities for older people or assistance.

The YSI experience has been a fantastic opportunity for the students to display their leadership skills, exercise their voice and advocate for others. The speak out and finals day have shown them the strength of their actions and the changes young people can make in the world. The future is bright!

Gort Community School



Gort Community School had two groups taking part in the National Final of the Student Enterprise Programme.

First year student Orlaith Connors received a 2nd place award in the Junior Category with her entry Orlaiths Derrybrien Honey on the day. Huge congratulations to her on a fantastic achievement. Orlaith was also interviewed on RTÉ's News2day programme.

Transition Year students Adam Diskin, Sean Hill, Jack Losty and Diarmuid O'Fathaigh of Thoor Fire Pits represented Galway in the Senior Category. Well done to the boys on the outstanding achievement of representing their county and school at the National Final. We look forward to seeing where they can expand their business in the future.

Thank you to all management, teachers, parents and students of Gort Community School who supported these students over the last number of months in making these enterprises a reality.

Moyne Community School

Enterprise Success



Clip Clop Designs by Caitlin Morris, a second-year student in Moyne Community School was the winner of the intermediate category at the national final of the Student Enterprise Awards.

Caitlin upcycles old horseshoes into bespoke decorative gifts. Her products have sold throughout Ireland and even as far away as Luxembourg, Germany and the USA.

Moyne Community School was also represented at the national final of the Student Enterprise Awards in the junior category by “Big Move 2 Big School”. This is a booklet by first years for first years on the transition from primary to secondary school. The booklet was featured in the Examiner newspaper and on the News2day programme on RTÉ 2. Pat the Baker came on board as the main sponsor and the booklet is selling in class sets to schools all over Ireland.

Tullow Community School



Students website ‘Monarch Gymwear’ crowned Best Website Winners at the National Student Enterprise Awards Final

Students, Oisín Nolan, Jamie Noctor, Paul Barrett and Andi Dascalescu represented County Carlow at the National Student Enterprise Awards Final.

They set up a company called ‘Monarch Gymwear’ where they sell their own brand of gym clothing direct from their website to the final customer. They won the award for the Best Business Website.

At the start of the year Paul, Andi, Jamie and Oisín were thinking about what business to start and they chose gymwear because they were all interested in the gym and they knew they would be passionate about this business. The lads worked really hard all year and put a lot of effort into their website and branding.

During an interview on KCLR they said, “The purpose of our business is to establish a gym clothing brand that will provide high-quality, stylish clothes for gym-goers at an affordable price. We will focus on creating a unique and memorable brand that will be easily recognisable in the gym.”

Ramsgrange Community School

Alison and Amy Duffin representing Wexford and Ramsgrange Community School in Croke Park at National Finals of Student Enterprise Awards in the Intermediate section with their mini business “Positive Pots”.



Heywood Community School



Team 'Budtobloom': Roisin Bradley, Hannah Clancy, Erin Costigan and Dan Bergin

Two teams from Heywood Community School reached the National Final. 'Budtobloom', based their entry on sustainability, and every part of their product is either recycled or biodegradable. 'Hulr', created a hurler holder for a bicycle to improve the ease and safety of cycling with a hurl.



Team 'Hulr': Daniel Alyward, Donil Mathew, Evan Farrell who were placed third in the Senior Category

ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards: People's Choice Award 2023

Congratulations to ACCS member schools who made it to the finals of the ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist People's Choice Awards (YEA) 2023.

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards (YEA) is an all-Ireland environmental awards programme that recognises and rewards young people who raise environmental awareness and improve the environment.

Below is a list of ACCS member schools and their entries which you can view on www.ecounesco.ie



| SCHOOL | TITLE |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Ballinteer Community School | BCS Biodiversity |
| Ballinteer Community School | Less Fertiliser More Growth |
| Cabinteely Community School | From Local to Global |
| Cabinteely Community School | Sustainable Shopping |
| Kinsale Community School | Boosting Biodiversity |
| Kinsale Community School | Consuming Fish: The Carbon Footprint of Trawling |
| Kinsale Community School | Investigation of Correct Recycling Habits with the Recycling Guidelines Among the General Public |
| Kinsale Community School | Lightsavers |
| Kinsale Community School | Not so Frank and Honest |
| Kinsale Community School | TY Waste Watchers |
| Millstreet Community School | How Chemicals in Hair Dye Affect the Environment |
| Millstreet Community School | How Dung Beetles can Benefit Soil Health and Enhance Biodiversity |
| Mountmellick Community School | Mother Nature's Minions |
| Newpark Comprehensive School | Plastic Outta the Park |
| Pobalscoil Neasáin | Nature Nurture |
| St. Wolstan's Community School | Woolly's Waste Not Want Not |

Junk Kouture 2023



Congratulations to Carndonagh Community School and Moate Community School who were among the ten winners selected at the recent Junk Kouture Dublin City Final Powered by RTÉ in the 3Arena, Dublin to represent Ireland at the World Final later this year in Wembley, London.

Moate Community School - #TagMe

Moate Community School's entry #TagMe was made by Eva Donlon (Model), Méabh O'Shea and Evie Nugent. The amazing design was inspired by the famed designer Missoni and made from plastic colour testers from Delta Q, a plastics manufacturer in Athlone. The group was praised for their stunning design which saw over 2,500 tags, handsewn together into a colourful dress and headpiece. The plastic samples usually end up in landfill because the different colours make them difficult to recycle.



Carndonagh Community School - Invidia

Carndonagh Community School's stunning creation Invidia was designed by students Ailish Doherty, Julia Grant and Ciara Gilmore. The design was made from 100% recycled shoe boxes and a shower curtain and was modelled by Ailish on the night.

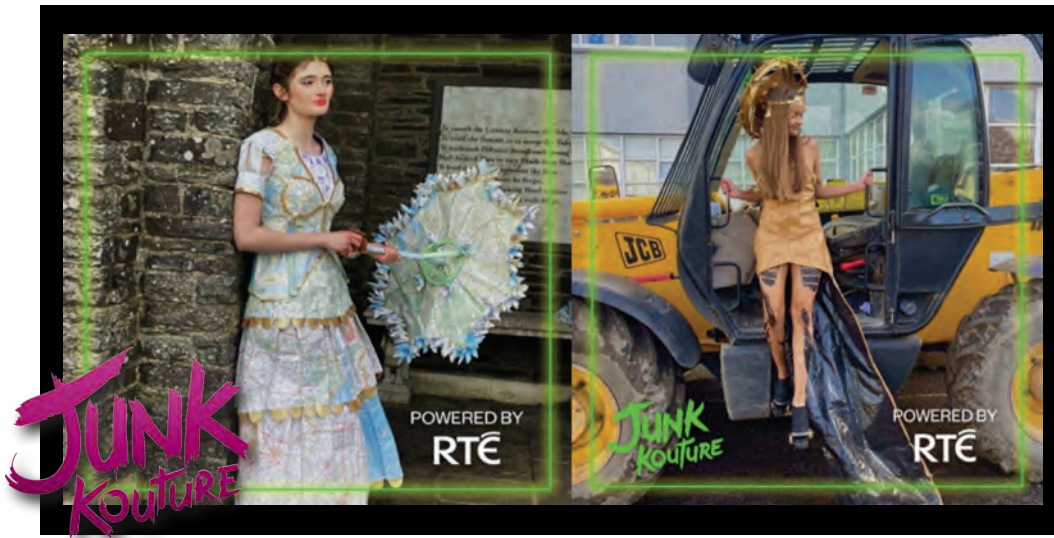


Both design teams will face stiff competition from 60 other teams from Abu Dhabi, London, Paris, Milan and New York in London at the world finals in October this year.

We wish both teams the very best of luck.

Heywood Community School

Junk Kouture 2023



Junk Kouture has become one of the most popular modules on the Heywood Transition Year Programme and two entries made it to the Final. The 'Journey to the Past' creation, modelled by Alex Smith was made from maps and Luas tickets aimed to inspire people to embrace public transport to combat climate change. The 'Fast and Fabulous' dress modelled by Leah Bergin was created from leather from car seats and car parts, highlighted the waste involved in scrapped cars.

Sporting success for

Tullow Community School

in the Duff Cup Final and Senior League Division 2

DUFF CUP FINAL 2023

On the 27th of March, Tullow Community School Junior Rugby Team travelled to Naas RFC to take on Templeogue College in the Duff Cup final, and the Tullow Ultras did not fail to bring support, helping the team to victory.

Following a hard-fought battle, Tullow emerged victorious and celebrated an ecstatic 20-12 win over Templeogue College to win the Duff Cup 2023.



SENIOR LEAGUE - DIVISION 2A WINNERS

Tullow also finished top of the Senior League – Division 2 with a commanding performance against Drogheda. The final score of the match was 45-26, Tullow stayed strong the whole way through the match and never gave up even though, they had a few injuries, as a team they stayed strong and stuck it out until the final minute. Leading them to win the Senior League – Division 2A.

Bishopstown Community School

make it to the big screen with their short film **Live and Let Live**



Students of Bishopstown Community School were part of an exciting student led project ran by the Arts Council, Creative Schools, which saw them participate in the Film Fresh Festival televised in April and of the 1,700 entries were nominated in Best School category. Students were part of the live recording which took place in Limerick's Odeon Theatre and the event was hosted by BBC radio 1 host Gemma Bradley and Stephen Byrne.

Young people need the space and respect to grow into the unique adult they are meant to be. Their film explores how, in including and accepting others, you allow for emancipation of yourself and others.

Their short film was accompanied by a song which was written and produced by the students with the help of local music artist and producer GMC. The song not only put a message of empowerment and inclusion to a melody but included beats and

subtitles which could be listened to and understood by students in the school's deaf unit also.

The mission of the Creative School's Committee, which was established as a result of the Arts Council funding, was to stimulate students' imaginations, work collaboratively and implement the arts in their education.

The Committee has also supported students' positive behaviour in the school by designing a range of postcards to identify students' strengths in the classrooms and the corridors. Students and teachers alike found that creativity in the school stimulated additional ways of working that reinforced the impact of creativity on young people's learning, development and well-being.

You can watch Live and Let Live on <https://www.youtube.com/@freshfilmfestival>

The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School

We were given the task of designing a mural for the foyer. It was needed to show who the Designated Liaison Person and Deputy Designated Liaison Person are in our school, and we had to show that our school accepts everyone. We created a few designs and got feedback from the Principal Dr Welch and our Art teacher Ms Ferguson. We sketched out our design on the wall and started painting. We spent two weeks painting the mural and after the finishing touches, it was completed. We are proud of the finished product and we think it turned out really well.

Rianna and Alyssa Kelly, TY students



Celbridge Community School

visit the US Ambassadors Residence in the Phoenix Park

In March students from our school visited the US Ambassador's Residence in the Phoenix Park. This was a wonderful experience for our school and the students involved. During the tour of the gardens we were shown the 9/11 memorial which was made of a piece of metal from the wreckage at the twin towers. We were also told about some of the flowers and different areas around the garden and what the significance of them was.

We were then invited into the house and met the ambassador herself, Ms Claire Cronin. We took a couple of photos as a group then headed inside. When inside we were shown all the different rooms, and photos of people who had been at the house. We were also shown a plaque on the wall which named all the Presidents and Vice Presidents who had visited or stayed at the house in the past. Some of the different rooms we were shown were the dining room, sitting room, ball room and another family sitting room. These rooms were all huge and we were even told some stories about these different rooms and what her family would use them for. Once we were shown most of the house we headed into the main hall where we were offered snacks and drinks and brought to the ball room where we did a Q&A, we all got to ask questions and get pictures taken with the ambassador. We asked her many questions like, "Have you met Joe Biden?" "How long will you be Ambassador for?" And "who would you love to meet?".



After the Q&A was over, we got individual pictures taken with the ambassador and then we said goodbye and headed back on the bus to school.

It was an enjoyable experience. The ambassador was so nice and made sure to answer everyone's questions with plenty of thought. If I had the chance to go again I would, it is an experience I would recommend to everyone!

Thank you to our school for organising the trip.

Abigail Scully
Second Year Student



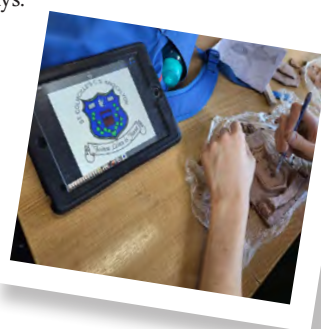
St Colmcille's Community School

Sustainable Development Goals

This piece has been created to reflect our school's goals in working toward a more sustainable future inspired by the EU's Sustainable Development Goals set out for 2030.

Our Transition Year Art class have created this piece working along side local artist, Donna McGee through the use of ceramics. Each tile reflects a different goal set out by the EU and our school community through a use of visual communication to allow any viewer to interpret the meaning of the goal it displays.

This piece reflects not only our community, with local artists and students being the creators but our schools commitment and passion for a greener and more sustainable future.



Ballyhaunis Community School

Intercultural Day



St. Mark's Community School

Celebrate 5th Annual Culture Day



Celebrating our diversity and the many rich cultures and talents which are at the heart of our school community.



ACCS Continuous Professional Development Programme August 2023

Induction of New Principals & Deputy Principals in Community & Comprehensive Schools

Date: 17/08/23
Time: 11.00am – 5.00pm
Location: Mullingar Park Hotel, Co Westmeath, N91 A4EP

Date: 18/08/23
Time: 9.30am – 12.30pm
Who should attend? All recently appointed Principals & Deputy Principals for an introduction to the sector.

ACCS Briefing for Boards of Management and School Leaders – Commencing a New Academic Year – WEBINAR

Date: 22/08/23
Time: 10.00am – 11.30am
Who should attend? Principal, Deputy Principal(s), Secretary, Board of Management, Chairperson, Board of Management and Board of Management Members.

Leadership & Management Posts of Responsibility in Schools – WEBINAR

Date: 31/08/23
Time: 4.00pm – 5.00pm
Who should attend? Principal, Trustee Nominees on Selection Boards for Leadership and Management Posts and Independent Panel Members.

The Continuous Professional Development Programme 2023/2024 will be included in the August edition of ACCS News

Recent ACCS Info Bulletins

| BULLETIN NO. | DATE | SUMMARY |
|--------------------------|------------|--|
| ACCS Info Bulletin 10/23 | 28/04/2023 | Human Resource Matters Template Letter of Termination of Fixed Term Contract. Template Letter of renewal of Fixed Term Contract. |
| ACCS Info Bulletin 09/23 | 18/04/2023 | Social Inclusion Webinars 1. Effective Literacy Strategies in Post-Primary DEIS Schools. 2. Adapting and Managing Successful Transitions. |

Recent Relevant DE Circular Letters

| CIRCULAR NO. | SUMMARY |
|--------------|---|
| CL 25/23 | Voluntary Search and Rescue Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools |
| CL 23/23 | Voluntary Search and Rescue Leave for Registered Teachers employed in Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools |
| CL 18/23 | Special Needs Assistant Allocation 2023/24 |