

The Promise for a Sunny Day

Thoughts from ACCS President James Duignan

Hope in your Heart

We live in hope, the hope of better days to come. Even though this past year has brought us more uncertainty than ever, perseverance, purpose and patience have prevailed. Inspired by the message of faith, hope and love, we continue to work and play faoi scáth a chéile.

With an audacity of hope, we will inevitably keep it going, pepped by reminders like Brendan Kennelly's resilient lines:

Though we live in a world that dreams of ending,
that always seems about to give in,
something that will not
acknowledge conclusion
insists that we forever begin.

Translating Hope into Action

We are blessed to have so many purveyors of hope in our school communities. When we take time to reflect, we can appreciate all the little things and all the big things, curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular, that make up life in our schools. Life is made up of a great number of small incidents and a small number of great ones. Sometimes we don't realise we are living and making memories, we are just working hard and having fun. Together we will resile and thrive.

Promise of a Sunny Day with Definite Certainties of Rain

This time last year we were bolstered by Heaney's promise that if we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere. Perhaps you might consider some of poet, Paul McCarrick's Promise of a Sunny Day in Galway, all be it with definite certainties for rain.

Promise of a Sunny Day by Paul McCarrick

Galway is the promise of a sunny day with definite certainties of rain
wrapped in another promise of a longer November evening
all trapped in a magician's pocket on Shop Street who promises
you the world but gives you wrong directions to the Claddagh...

...It's what brought you here, organised madness with enough road markings to fool you to think that, somewhere, there is control...

...You can look at anyone the way Sally O'Brien might have looked at you on a Tuesday, but we will remember that today is still indeed a Tuesday with all the promise of a sunny day and definite certainties of rain.

Tabhair Aire

From Carndonagh to Skibbereen, from Clifden to Bray we ask our school communities to look after themselves and one another, a sentiment captured succinctly by the prayer:

Pray to have eyes that see the best in people.
A heart that forgives the worst.
A mind that forgets the bad and a soul that never loses faith.

Wishing you all a nice easy summer.

James Duignan

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, states that the child 'who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child'... 'the child shall, in particular, be provided the opportunity to be heard.'...

The Education Conference was hosted online on the afternoon of 12th May on the Zoom platform over two and a half hours. Following a warm welcome by ACCS President, James Duignan, the Chairperson of the ACCS Education Sub-Committee, Pat Mc Kenna briefly spoke about the collaboration on this project between the two organisations, the NCCA and ACCS.

The keynote speaker, Professor Laura Lundy, was introduced by Katelyn McDaid, a sixth-year student in Carndonagh Community School. In her own address, Katelyn described why this work is so important.

'In Carndonagh Community School we try to make sure that the Student Voice addresses the needs and concerns of all students in the school. In this way Student Voice provides students with a platform to express their thoughts and opinions, and it emphasises the school's mission statement which 'is to create the best school in which to teach, learn, work and play'.

Katelyn McDaid, Carndonagh Community School.

Professor Laura Lundy is the Co-Director of the Centre for Children's Rights and Professor in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. Professor Lundy's work and 'The Lundy Model' has been an important influence and lens for strengthening and developing our ideas and work in this project. Professor Lundy shared her story with

'A starting point would be a renewed focus on the significance of feedback. I suggest that there should be a requirement that the feedback provided to children is sufficiently full, appropriately child friendly, fast and followed-up in order to create the optimal conditions for adults to engage seriously and sufficiently with the views that they have sought or been given'.

Professor Laura Lundy

delegates and described her own involvement in Student Voice work which culminated in the development of the Lundy Model.

A Journal featuring the work of the project and other schools was launched at the event by Professor Lundy. The journal reflects discussions and ongoing collaborations with the schools and is greatly enhanced by the opinions and authentic voices of the students themselves. It also includes contributions from multiple agencies across the system, particularly those organisations that work with our schools on a regular basis and provide exciting initiatives which allow Student Voice to be amplified across school communities.

The event featured breakout rooms where a sample of 15 schools engaged in the project had the opportunity to share their learning and to celebrate their successes. The work at school level seeks to foster a culture which enables enduring and authentic student voices to be heard in and outside the classroom.

The project has had a few critical friends who have supported and developed the work undertaken by the schools. These include Dr Domnall Fleming, (School of Education, UCC) Ger Halbert (formerly Education Officer, NCCA) and Norman Emerson, (formerly NCCA Director, Key Expert on Assessment with the European Union) all of whom have extensive experience in working on Student Voice initiatives. On the day these were joined in a panel discussion by Professor Laura Lundy and Alicia O'Sullivan (Education Officer, ISSU).

'Education is a huge part of life and our experience of it can determine a lot of other prospects. I think that now is the time to rejuvenate and I believe that Student Voice is central'.

Alicia O'Sullivan, ISSU

The discussion explored many of the themes highlighted during the presentations in the breakout rooms from the perspective of the panellists and considered how the work by the schools could be developed even further.

The conference was brought to a close by Arlene Forster, CEO, NCCA and John Irwin, General Secretary, ACCS.

Ultimately, the proof of the success of the projects will be whether such Student Voice practice is still maintained in Irish schools 5 years from now – that will be the real evidence of whether the 'calm of the ocean floor' has truly been ruffled!

Norman Emerson

ACCS and the Education Conference Sub-Committee wishes to thank all participants and guests who took the time to attend and participate in the Education Conference this year and extends its appreciation to all in Head Office for their organisation and coordination of the event.

ACCS and NCCA look forward to continuing their collaboration on the project "Student Voice at the centre of learning and school life". The Student Voice Journal will be available online and in hard copy later next month.

#FET Is For Everyone

Further education and training (FET) is for EVERYONE! FET and the many courses, training options and apprenticeships and traineeships provide learning opportunities for everyone and in every community in Ireland.

There are a huge variety of courses and training options available to school leavers, employees who want to upskill, those returning to education or the workforce, and businesses who want to upskill staff.

So, we're starting the FET Is for Everyone campaign!

Every year over 200,000 learners, from every county in Ireland and from a huge range of ages and backgrounds, engage in further education and training.

FET has an option for everyone – whether it's a school leaver starting out on their career path; a young parent taking a part

time course; a business taking on their first apprentice; or someone returning to education after many years.

FET offers, regardless of previous level of education, a pathway to go as far as you want to go.

As well as providing school leavers with a direct route into many careers after Leaving Cert, FET can take you further throughout your career. The idea that a burst of education in our late teens and early 20s is enough to last people their entire career is no longer feasible. Employers know this too.

Through FET, you can up-skill and re-skill, as well as benefit from 'earn-while-you-learn' programmes which in turn benefit both employers and learners. These opportunities are particularly important in light of the rapid changes in how we work, brought about by Covid-19.

FET offers great opportunities to move into exciting and interesting careers, or a platform to develop the skills to flourish in further study in higher education. For those who wish to progress to higher education, FET learners account for approximately one-fifth of the annual intake of the technological higher education sector.

FET is at the heart of every community throughout Ireland, and it enhances engagement and integration across the country.

Search for the right FET option for you at www.fetchcourses.ie. For information on Apprenticeships visit www.apprenticeship.ie

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Data Protection Update

On Tuesday 20th April we had almost 200 Principals, Deputy Principals and Board of Management members attend our Data Protection seminar on Zoom. The seminar was part of our in-service CPD programme and provided a refresher and an update on data protection to the attendees.

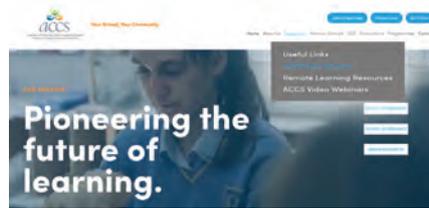
The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) contains a requirement for statutory Data Protection Officers (DPOs) to “inform and advise” the data controller of their data protection obligations.

While ACCS does not have a requirement for a statutory DPO, we are still keen to “inform and advise” our schools (the data controllers) of their obligations, and to help maintain a good awareness amongst school management of data protection issues.

The seminar covered the data protection principles and the important new principle under the GDPR of Accountability. Schools are required to be able to demonstrate their compliance with the GDPR. This is achieved through day to day good practice when it comes to processing personal data, but also through having the appropriate documentation and policies in place in the school.

ACCS has template documentation available on its website: <https://www.accs.ie/gdpr-for-schools>

This link can be found under Resources on our website:



Aside from the templates, there are some other bespoke documents which schools should have in place such as:

- Website Privacy Statement
- Website Cookie Policy and Permissions
- Contracts with Data Processors

Please contact the Data Protection Advisor should you require any of these documents and she will help you to prepare them appropriately for your school.

Data Breaches

The seminar also dealt with data breaches and the increased number of calls in relation to data incidents and/or breaches that are coming to the Data Protection Advisor in 2021.

The most common issues are that of an email or a letter being sent to the wrong person. This is nearly always caused by human error. In fact, the Data Protection Commissioner (DPC) has always acknowledged that well over half of the incidences of unauthorised disclosure of personal data are caused by human error. We

can never be too careful when dealing with people’s personal data.

Not all incidents are necessarily reportable to the DPC, and an assessment should be carried out in the school as soon as you become aware of the incident so that you can decide what to do next. A policy and an incident report form are available on our website. As ever, if unsure, please do not hesitate to contact the Data Protection Advisor who will be happy to assist.

Lastly, the seminar covered a case study published by the DPC wherein they met with a secondary school who had considered trialling the use of facial recognition software for attendance monitoring in the school.

The DPC had serious concerns about this, not least the risk of “desensitising students at a young age to such technology leading to them ceding their data protection rights in other contexts also.”

This is an important message to get to students, who are growing up in a world where their personal data is a commodity, and they should be made aware that they are ultimately the ones in control of it and how it is used.

Hilary Treacy

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Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

CIRCULAR NO.	SUMMARY
CL 30/21	Parent’s Leave Scheme For Registered Teachers employed In Recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools
CL 29/21	Special Needs Assistant Allocations for the 2021/22 School Year for Mainstream Classes in Primary and Post Primary Schools
CL 28/21	Cost Limits for Post-primary School Buildings
CL 26/21	Recruitment of Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) - Supplementary Assignment Arrangements for the 2021/2022 school year
CL 24/21	Revised Payment Mechanism for Hourly-Paid Bus Escorts with effect from the commencement of the 2021/2022 Academic Year Cessation of “Rolled-up Holiday Pay
CL 21/21	Coronavirus (COVID-19): Arrangements for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary schools
CL 16/21	Prescribed Material for the Junior Cycle Examination in 2023 and Leaving Certificate Examination in 2023

Beware of Unsolicited Emails or Calls – it could be a Scam

Thank you to Tom Lonergan, the National Coordinator - Technology Integration, Dublin City University for the following advice on unsolicited emails and calls.

Your school receives a call or an email, with a ‘seemingly helpful’ message that an external party is contacting you to fix an IT problem in your school or on your computer. They may say that they’re contacting you from a company that already provides services to your school, so the company name/email they provide may be familiar to you. Unless you can be sure that the email or phone call is genuine you may be a potential victim of an attempted scam. The motivation for scams is to gain access to your login information or bank details (pins, passwords etc.,) for illegal/fraud related financial gain.

The caller/email may say that in order to fix an IT problem, they need you to access a particular website. The website may look genuine and helpful, with familiar logos, so as to gain your confidence. They may

ask you to click on the website. Scam or ‘phishing’ emails usually contain a link to a malicious fake web page, which is used to capture your login details. **Don’t click on any links or open attachments. Scammers may ask you to download a software update to your computer to ‘fix’ a problem. Once their software is activated on your computer, the main damage could have already been done.**

If you suspect that you’ve been the victim of such a scam, take the following steps.

1. Turn off your computer immediately.
2. Disconnect the computer from the school network by plugging out its network cable.
3. Contact your Bank and Credit Card provider for your school accounts. Explain what has happened and follow their advice. Ask if you need to cancel

or freeze your accounts/ cards.

4. Contact your school IT support company and inform them that you may have been the victim of a scam. Explain what took place and follow their advice.
5. If you have the phone or email details of the potential scammer, report these to the Gardai.

Other Important Points

1. Never reply to suspected spam/ emails.
2. Always use ‘strong’ passwords and never use the same password for multiple websites.
3. Never disclose login details, passwords, PINs, bank or credit card details to other parties.
4. Keep your computer’s operating system, email application and web browser up to date.

HR News

Parents Get Greater Leave Entitlements

In Budget 2021 the government announced an increase in Parent’s Leave from 1 April 2021 from two to five weeks. The Family Leave and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2021 gives legal effect to this change and provides for **five weeks’ leave** and social welfare benefit (Parent’s Benefit) for each relevant parent in the **first two years of the child’s birth/adoption**.

Subject to eligibility and notification criteria being met, Parents Leave applies to births/placements that take place on or after 1 November 2019. During Parents Leave, an employee who has the necessary PRSI contributions is entitled to Parent’s Benefit from the Department of Social Protection. An application for Parent’s Leave should be made at least 6 weeks prior to the planned commencement date.

The leave may be taken in a five-week period or in separate periods of no less than one week. The Act also amends the Adoptive Leave Acts. Previously Adoptive Leave of 24 weeks and additional adoptive leave of 16 weeks was available only to an adoptive mother or a single adoptive father. The new legislation provides for Adoptive Leave for male same sex couples. It also removes the presumption that the adoptive mother will be the primary caregiver and permits families to choose the best option for their family. It allows adoptive



couples (same sex and opposite sex) to choose which parent may avail of the Adoptive Leave. The parent who chooses not to avail of it will be entitled to Paternity Leave.

Anne Marie Dillon
Director of HR, ACCS

Around the Schools

Bishopstown Community School

Bishopstown Community School featured in RTEs Social Affairs Correspondent Ailbhe Conneelys final report exploring the topic of racism in Ireland, in which she looked at integration in the education system.



Conor McNamara loves being Irish. “I love everything about it, from the Guinness to the spuds,” he says. He is fluent in the language and wears his fáinne with pride. He points out he was “integrated into Irish culture” from a very young age.

That’s because Conor and his twin brother Fergal were adopted by their parents in Tipperary town from Romania, when they were 10-months-old.

Both are Roma by birth. They went to a Gaelscoil, played traditional music and GAA and idolised Seán Óg Ó hAilpín as children.

“He was a massive inspiration to me,” Conor says, “one, because he was a gaeilgeoir and two, he and his brothers looked like my brother and I. So, he really inspired me and made me think, I can be a GAA star, I can be successful, I can be anything I want to do and even though I look different, I can still be as Irish as anyone else”.

Conor and Fergal both became teachers. Conor works in Bishopstown Community School in Co Cork.

Here, when students look around the class, they see different colours and cultures among their peers. They are lucky too that

when they look at Mr McNamara, they have a teacher that also looks different.

Conor’s experience was different when he was a pupil. “We were in the minority in terms of physical appearance. Not how we felt in our souls or in our hearts, because we felt Irish, but definitely we knew we looked different”. He says today, children can look around the classroom and see they have “a point of reference”. Conor says it will take more time for those generations to “go through the system”.

Right now, he says there’s a discrepancy in relation to what is in front of teachers and what is in front of students. For students who are from minority backgrounds, it’s important for them to see people who are also from different backgrounds at the top of the classroom.

Mariam Malu Tiku, who is the President of the Student Council at Bishopstown Community School, says Mr McNamara is the “physical embodiment of working hard, beating whatever stigmas one may face being different”. She says it’s very important to see him in the position he’s in as a teacher. “It gives you a lot of inspiration for opportunity in your own life”.

Yakub Packo has decided he wants to become a teacher following his Leaving Cert. He describes the school as being like a family, which he says comes from having a range of different backgrounds and cultures

Here, when students look around the class, they see different colours and cultures among their peers.

in the building. Through the school’s career guidance, there’s recognition of the value students like Yakub could bring to classrooms in the future - like what Mr McNamara is bringing to their classrooms today.

The teachers have shared their educational journey with the students to help encourage them.

The Principal of Bishopstown Community School, Edwina Gottstein, says there are different students from very different backgrounds in the school who are taught the concept of tolerance, understanding and mutual respect. “If you give respect, you receive respect and that’s how we value each person here.”

The school has been fortunate to have had some staff members from different countries in the past, including a substitute teacher from Nigeria, a teacher from South Korea and an SNA from Poland. They currently have a teacher who is deaf and Conor who joined the school this year.

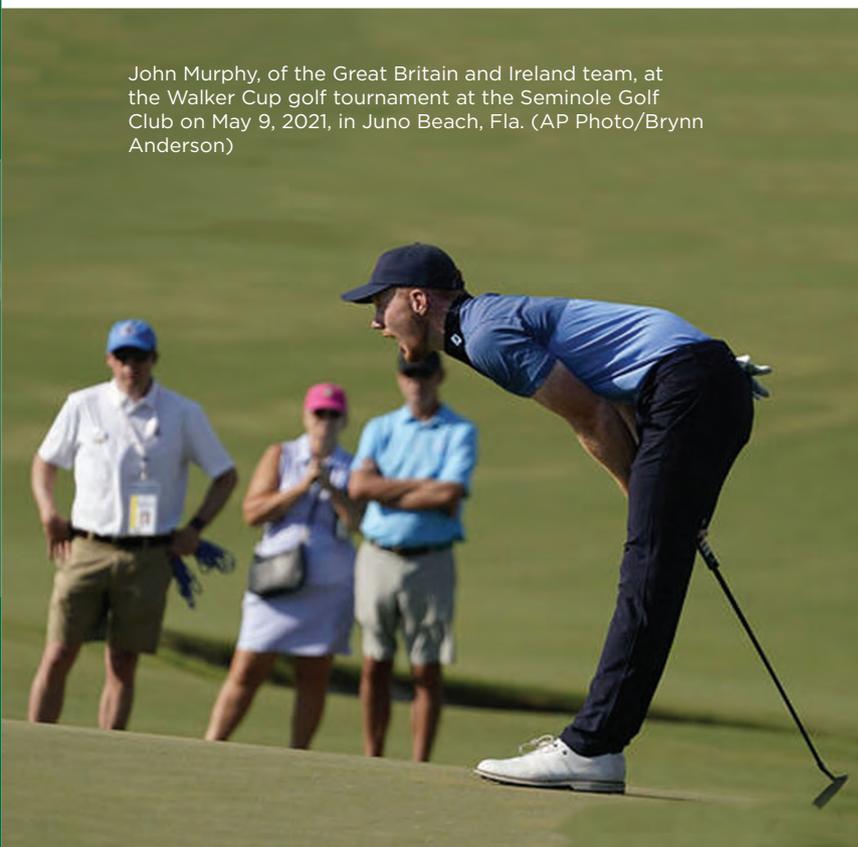
Ms Gottstein points out that Mariam, as Chairperson of the Student Council, is constantly conversing with her about representation of people of colour in all of the roles within the school. “So, I suppose more needs to happen in that area and for its students to be able to identify with those particular role models,” she says.

By witnessing role models from all backgrounds in the education system, the Children’s Ombudsman believes this will lead to a more equal society.

The full article by Ailbhe Conneely, RTE can be viewed at the following link; <https://www.rte.ie/news/ireland/2021/0506/1214056-racism-in-ireland/>

Kinsale Community School

John Murphy, of the Great Britain and Ireland team, at the Walker Cup golf tournament at the Seminole Golf Club on May 9, 2021, in Juno Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/Brynn Anderson)



Past pupil of Kinsale Community School made it two wins from three in his Walker cup debut with a foursomes win with Mark Power. The good times continued for John Murphy and Mark Power as they won their Walker Cup foursomes match on the 18th green. The match was tied when Murphy hit a super five iron into 15 feet on the final green and Power finished off to win the hole and claim an important point for the visitors.

The Irish pair have a history of playing together for Ireland, and now they have a 100% Walker Cup record. "We've known each other for so long, it's just great to be out there with your friend at such a big moment," said the Kinsale man.

"We just had such a good time all day even when we were losing holes or dropping shots, we just said enjoy every moment of it. Thankfully it paid off in the end."

GB&I are still in the hunt for a rare away Walker Cup win, they're just two points behind USA with ten singles matches to come. Murphy is now two wins from three games while Power has a 100% record after three wins.

The full article by Niall O'Shea can be viewed at the following link; <https://www.echolive.ie/corksport/arid-40284707.html>

UCC Psychslam Competition 2021

Kinsale Community School were delighted to receive first prize in the UCC Psychslam Competition 2021. This year, seven dedicated and determined TY students participated in the virtual competition. The students in question are Ben Loughnane, Caoimhe McGuinness, Tara Gleasure, Cremma Liddy, Wiktorja Nowak, Kian O'Callaghan and Aaron Ganly. The competition challenges students to research a self-selected brief from a range of options provided by the UCC Psychology Department and demonstrate the psychological science pertaining to the topic. The students picked "Why do we procrastinate?" because of its pertinence in the everyday lives of so many people.



For the competition, a video recording was required showing three students presenting 20 PowerPoint slides, each 20 seconds long in pecha kucha format. The entire team worked diligently to research academic material in relation to

procrastination. The students provided national and international research to anchor their points. They also conducted a survey of Junior Cycle students in Kinsale Community School which developed their qualitative research skills.

We are very proud of the achievements of our students in Kinsale Community School. This project was a collective effort and the students demonstrated strong teamwork, leadership and research skills. This project has afforded our students the opportunity to engage with researchers and psychologists. The team are very much looking forward to attending the 2021 UCC Applied Psychology Science Communication Summer School in mid July.



Mount Temple Comprehensive School Space X Mission

Every year, @astro_pi Mission Space Lab, lets young people write code to conduct scientific experiments aboard the ISS using the Raspberry Pi.

In 2021, 214 teams from across Europe and Canada will have their experiments run in space and two fifth year Computer Science students from Mount Temple Comprehensive School in Dublin, Niamh Staines and Kitty Joyce, have had their experiment accepted. Thomas Pasquet is the ESA astronaut who will run the experiments during the mission which took off from Nasa's Kennedy Space Centre, Florida on Friday 23rd April 2021. Thomas is one of four crew members on board the SpaceX Crew-2 mission 'Alpha', which docked with the International Space Station.

"...teams from across Europe and Canada will have their experiments run in space..."

"Niamh and Kitty have shown self-directed independent learning, which is a key concept in a subject such as computer science, and this achievement is entirely down to their hard work and diligence. Computer Science is a new subject in Ireland at Leaving Cert level and this achievement has shown that Irish students can compete on a world stage when they have the right learning environment and encouragement.

Furthermore, we have to take into account that remote learning has been difficult for everyone during the last year and a half, but these two girls have pulled together and demonstrated a high level of dedication and application, that shows we can overcome anything in the face of uncertainty when you have passion and commitment for what you're studying."

David Frew, Computer Science teacher in Mount Temple Comprehensive School, who has guided Niamh and Kitty through the project.

Pictured L-R: Students Niamh Staines, Kitty Joyce and Computer Science Teacher David Frew



The above article by journalist Diarmaid MacDermott appeared in the Irish Times on 23rd April and can be viewed on <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/spacex-mission-lifts-off-with-irish-schoolgirls-experiment-on-board-1.4545724>

"...these two girls have pulled together and demonstrated a high level of dedication and application..."

Moate Community School

Start thinking of your project idea early in the summer months and don't get stressed as it's all "just a bit of fun".

That is the advice from transition-year student Abby Mullins, who along with friends Megan Carroll and Chloe Murphy, were named the overall group winners in the 2021 BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition (YSTE).

The students of Moate Community School in Co Westmeath won the accolade for 'Wool – Saviour of our Sea' after developing a wool blanket which enabled the removal of oil slicks following a spill in a seaside location.

Helping to launch the 2022 event, which will be held virtually for the second year in a row, the award-winning trio are encouraging students to start planning their projects early.

"My advice I'd give to students is definitely start thinking of a problem or issue you can solve in the summer months. Get your project ready and, most importantly, don't get too stressed. It's just a bit of fun so enjoy it," Abby said.

Their teacher Mairead Cusack, who received the Educator of Excellence Award, said the event gave students the opportunity to research a topic that interests them and "find a solution to a real-world problem."

"We were delighted when one of our teams won best overall group at January's exhibition. I'm always so proud when I see the ideas students have and how excited they are to carry out their investigations," she said.

...the event gave students the opportunity to research a topic that interests them and "find a solution to a real-world problem."

For the second year in a row, Europe's largest STEM event will be a virtual affair, with the exhibition which gives Irish students the opportunity to showcase their innovative creations in a high-profile setting.

Now in its 58th year, event organiser BT Ireland has waived its project entry fees for participating students. The top prize this year will be the coveted trophy for the BT Young Scientist of the year plus €7,500 prize money.

The closing date for entries is September 27, 2021 and more information is available on btyoungscientist.com.

The above article by journalist Melanie Finn appeared in the Independent on 4th May 2021 and can be viewed in full at <https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/try-to-solve-a-real-world-problemand-have-fun-young-scientist-winners-launch-virtual-2022-event-40384630.html>

Photo: Chris Bellew/Fennells



Abby Mullins, Megan Carroll and Chloe Murphy pictured with their BT Young Scientist Award



Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill

Tallaght Community School

The Joint Committee on Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht is currently examining an Online Safety and Media Regulation Bill and is keen to engage with students around the issue of Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety. Three, fifth year Politics and Society students from Tallaght Community School, Rory Hynes, Jake Bushe and Yoanna Ivanova, were invited to a virtual meeting of the Committee to present their views on Thursday the 6th of May 2021. They were joined by representatives from Kinsale Community School.

In preparation, the team ran a focus group and surveyed the students at Tallaght Community School. They used their findings to compile a list of recommendations which were presented live on Oireachtas TV. The results revealed that an alarming 16% of students had experienced online bullying first hand, while 26% of students knew of bullying occurring. 39% of people who knew of it, reported it to site administrators and 16% of cases were not resolved. They also discovered that most parents used different social media platforms than their kids.

The students wanted to address the issue of cyber harassment without negatively affecting people's experience of the internet or infringing on any rights. They didn't want people to feel as if the content they post online is being heavily regulated.

Using their findings, the students recommended that the Irish Government pass a law which clearly defines and condemns cyber bullying, making it illegal to use the internet to threaten, offend or slander anyone under the age of 18. The law would entitle victims of cyber bullying to report malicious content and have it removed by the site administrators within a 48 hour period. If the content is not removed, victims can appeal to an independent privacy guarantor, which will intervene on the user's behalf. Further to this, they recommended launching a Cyber Safety campaign targeted to parents. The campaign should educate parents on internet safety, cyber bullying and should focus on helping parents understand what their children are going through online, as not all parents experienced social media growing up.

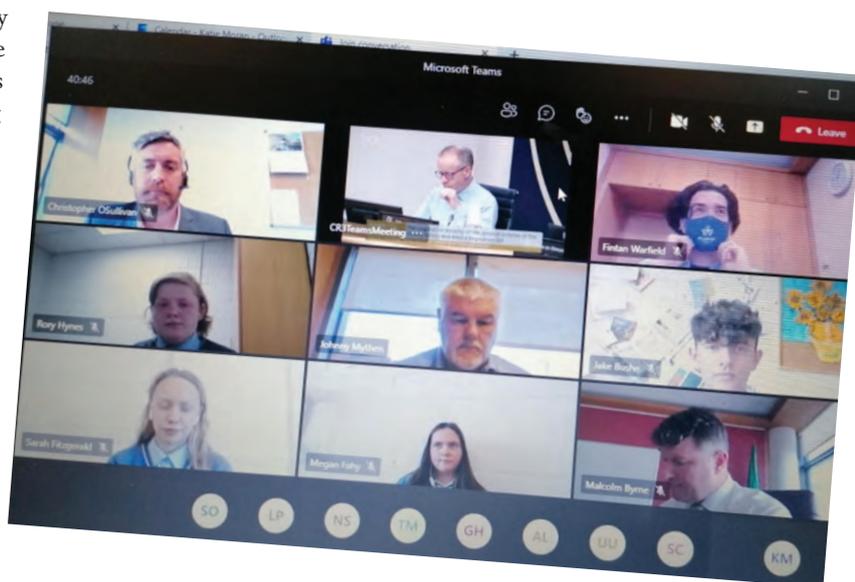
'The students wanted to address the issue of cyber harassment without negatively affecting people's experience of the internet...'

"If today's presentations is anything to go by we should have great hope for the future generation."

Katie Moran, Politics and Society Teacher, Tallaght Community School.

Having presented their findings, Rory and Jake were faced with a series of complex and in-depth questions on the topic, which they addressed with ease. All of the young people involved demonstrated an ability to synthesize their viewpoints with data in order to form a complex discussion around the topic of Cyber Bullying and Internet Safety. Many thanks to students, Rory Hynes, Jake Bushe and Yoanna Ivanova and to the Principal, Aidan Lynch, Deputies, Ian Boran and Ryan McCarthy and Politics and Society teacher, Katie Moran for their contributions.

This event was covered by RTE journalist, Tommy Meskill on 6th May and his article can be viewed on the RTE website at the following link <https://www.rte.ie/news/politics/2021/0506/1214165-cyberbullying/>



All-Ireland Winning Playwright and Druid Theatre Company play New Amphitheatre in Glenamaddy Community School

With perfect dramatic timing, Glenamaddy Community School's newly constructed amphitheatre opened with a Druid Theatre Company production of Tom Murphy's first play 'On the Outside', followed by a premiere performance of 'Same Tune, Different Arrangement', the award-winning play by Transition Year student, Aoibhín Collins.

As part of its Galway 2020 Commission, The Druid Theatre Company toured the West last Autumn with outdoor performances, giving theatre goers live experiences under covid restrictions.

Transition Year students in Glenamaddy enjoyed The Druid's staging of the satirical Murphy's comedy, which presents two townies, Joe and Frank, who despite being short of the admission price try to gain entry to a country dancehall. Modern day students could still identify the themes of exclusion and overcoming social barriers in the 1950s small village depicted and recognise the shenanigans and tribulations of the play's characters.

Murphy's play won the All-Ireland Amateur Drama Festival in Athlone in 1959 marking the beginning of a significant literary and theatrical career, so it was fitting then that among the audience in Glenamaddy was Transition Year student, Aoibhín Collins, who subsequently scooped the top prize in this year's prestigious All-Ireland

School's Playwright Competition, with her insightful play, 'Same Tune, Different Arrangement'.

Run under the auspices of the RTE All-Ireland Drama Festival, the competition, sponsored by Athlone Credit Union is in its eighth year and invites Transition Year students to write a one-act play on a given theme.

Writing towards a theme of 'Transition', Aoibhín introduces us to her play's central character, Maureen, a recently bereaved widow who inadvertently gets caught up in a grudge held by her friend, Joan, against the local priest, Fr. Paddy. However, common sense eventually prevails, and all ends well.

Although both plays were written over sixty years apart, the themes and setting remain familiar and relevant to current audiences. Normally, the winning play is performed during the All-Ireland Drama Festival in Athlone by professional actors, but such an event was not possible this year. However, the RTÉ News2day team visited the school to record a socially distanced performance of the play starring Aoibhín herself and fellow students Gabrielle Kilcommons and Rowan Dunne, which was later aired on the evening news.

RTÉ All Ireland Drama Festival Director, Regina Bushell and School's Playwright Coordinator, Margaret Egan congratulated

Aoibhín on her win, noting that her work signalled promising potential for a future writing and acting career.

The plays were an ideal opportunity to trial the school's new al fresco recreational space, the amphitheatre, which was built into a slope on the school grounds by local stonemason, Owen McStay using cut limestone and recycled materials. The outdoor tiered room is designed to seat two hundred people on a good day and is acoustically sound. It is hoped that on fine days and nights the amphitheatre will play host to airy events and festivities such as open-air masses, concerts, dramas, lectures, and cinema screenings.

Sometimes out of a crisis comes an opportunity and if necessity is the mother of invention, fun is its father.

Aoibhín Collins, All-Ireland School's Playwright winner on The Amphitheatre stage



The Amphitheatre at Glenmaddy Community School



Ballyhaunis Community School



Our TY students cycled to Knock and back in May for the annual Cycle Against Suicide ride. The ride aims to highlight mental awareness with our students by promoting the message that; 'It's OK not to feel OK; and It's absolutely OK to ask for help'.

Mayo Pink Ribbon

3rd year students from Ballyhaunis Community School decided to take up the challenge to complete a Walk to raise vital funds for Breast Cancer Research and Mayo Pink Ribbon. This year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic

the charity was not able to host their annual fundraising initiative. Our students wanted to do something to help after an inspiring zoom meeting with volunteer Yvonne Horan.

They chose to complete a PINK sponsored walk around the town of Ballyhaunis and creating awareness by wearing vibrant pink clothing and pink ribbons. The weather did not dampen their spirits and they were encouraged to keep going with the occasional beep. The Ballyhaunis Community School students are thankful to all their families and

friends for sponsoring this very worthy cause and enabling Mayo Pink Ribbon to continue with their exceptional work. Well done to Ms. Murphy and all the teachers involved.

Talented Artist Sarah Morris

Enjoy this sensational portrait by 5th year Ballyhaunis Community School Art student, Sarah Morris. The painting is a colouring pencil portrait of Sarah's brother. Sarah has captured photographic like detail in her beautiful portrait. She was commended by Texaco Art Competition judges for her outstanding work.

Beating the Isolation Invasion with Bishopstown Community School

Bishopstown Community School delved into the YSI experience this year and set out to #BeatTheIsolationInvasion. The challenge the students wished to address was the isolation that had arisen from the impact of covid on the school community and the wider local community. Covid-19 has caused significant challenges for everyone and the students set out to raise the spirits of the school and community through spreading positivity and hope as well as creating connections.

We were thrilled that our project was recognised and was shortlisted for the YSI finals in May in the category of Make Our Community Better Challenge Award.

The YSI team had implemented a series of events to achieve their goal, these included, Christmas Door Décor, the Jerusalem Dance Tik Tok (before the Gardaí version) with over 4000 views, positivity checklists on the upside of lockdowns which were featured in local newspapers and an animated video on positivity.

Linking with our RE and CSPE classes the student worked together on a Food Appeal. We were inundated with donations due to the generosity of our students, staff, parents and the wider community. We made the food donations to the Cork Sick Poor Society, a local voluntary organization who were overwhelmed by the generosity and delighted to have made a new link with young people in the community. This action had a huge impact on our students as they learned about the charity, the work they do and the people who are helped through their work. We also wrote Christmas cards and letters to people the charity helps.

Through a photo competition we produced a calendar of the category winners and the Rebel Munch, recipe book formed from a collection of much loved family recipes from across the generations and diverse cultures of our community. The work completed by this team has been phenomenal especially when you consider that the students themselves were working remotely, they managed

to keep the project going and despite this challenge will complete all the elements of their project before the end of term.

The YSI experience has been a fantastic addition for our students, they have matured greatly through their work and gained self belief in their abilities. Their presentation skills and confidence has been greatly enhanced through the process of reaching the finals. They developed a greater understanding of the world and now recognise that they can effect change in their community. The power of small actions has been demonstrated through the project showing they can have a big impact. We are very proud of our students achievement and look forward to seeing what they do next.



Supporting Pieta Darkness into Light at Ballincollig Community School

Ballincollig Community School has always been huge supporters of Pieta's annual Darkness into Light community event. Our senior cycle students supported our local community with a school choir for passers-by on the walk. Due to Covid restrictions moving the event online, our transition year students undertook the role to lead positive promotion of the event this year.

A group of six Transition Year students at Ballincollig Community School formed a committee and worked in partnership with our local Darkness into Light Ballincollig Committee. The students began their support by organising a tree planting ceremony in honour of Pieta. On the morning of April, the 16th, the Tree of Hope ceremony took place in the Wellbeing Garden of our school. Members of the local Darkness into Light committee and Darren Coyle Garde, Funding & Advocacy Co-Ordinator at Pieta House, gathered to watch a beautiful cherry blossom tree planting organised by the Transition Year students. The Tree of Hope is a symbol of solidarity with those who are struggling with their mental health. The tree also signifies new beginnings, growth and change.

The students continued their support of Pieta, creating a promotional video for social media, on the positive work of Pieta and mental health. They also helped raise awareness via the school social media as well as the local community social media. Students created posters and a notice board in school and visited local shops to help further promote the Sunrise Virtual Walk May 8th event.

On Friday May 7th 2021 a 'Yellow Day' fundraiser to raise much needed funds for Pieta took place. This fundraiser, along with Pieta's Virtual Sunrise Appeal, helps hugely to promote a brighter and more hopeful outlook for people.



The Meitheal Team

The Meitheal Team is an integral part of life here in Ballincollig Community School. This group of 5th Year students participate in the Meitheal Youth Leadership Programme, which is run by Scala in Blackrock, Cork. Through this programme they learn many life skills and grow and mature as individuals. Their main focus is to support first year students on their new journey in secondary school.

The Meitheal team is involved in first year induction, greeting the new students on their first day and showing them where to go. They also organise monthly events during the school year to help first years to get to know each other and settle in. They act as mentors to individual students and as peer role models within the school community. All their work is underpinned by the motto JCH which represent the values Justice, Compassion and Humility.

Many older students have fond memories of their encounter with the Meitheal Team in first year and are eager to get involved in the Meitheal Programme themselves in senior cycle.

Cabinteely Community School Introduces Nurture Groups

Cabinteely's Nurture room is a comfortable and welcoming environment. It combines the comfort of home with the best part of school. Each Nurture group is typically made up of between two and six students. The Nurture Group aims to strengthen the teacher pupil relationships, increase student confidence and self-esteem and address individual academic and emotional needs of students. So far Nurture has been an extremely positive experience for both students and staff.

The concept of Nurture was first introduced to Cabinteely Community

School in 2018/19 by the School Completion Programme and Susan Gibney of Blackrock Education Centre. The Nurture Group is an evidence based programme. It was developed by Marjorie Boxall, an educational psychologist in 1969, when she noticed a large number of students entering primary school with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Nurture Groups allow teachers the time to address the social emotional needs of the students. It assists in removing the barriers to learning. Research shows, students who attend Nurture Groups, try

harder in lessons and have more positive feelings about school. We needed a way to better support the students with extreme needs in our school and this seemed like a worthwhile investment of time and money.

In our first year of Nurture, we visited a local Primary school that had a well-established Nurture Group. This gave us the opportunity to see the concept in practice and how it could be integrated into the school timetable. We then followed up with training, which was run by the Blackrock Education Centre. Starting out, we had two staff members – one teacher and one SNA trained in Nurture. During this time, we got to see the positive effects and enjoyment the students experienced in Nurture Group.

From September 2021, Cabinteely Community School will run a full time Nurture room. Our aim is to improve attendance, attainment, behaviour, reduce exclusions and adopt a whole school nurturing ethos. We look forward to more staff coming on board and Nurture being adapted as best practice throughout our entire school community.

Avril Browne (Teacher) and
Louise Walsh (SNA)



Thinking outside the Box in Ramsgrange Community School – ‘Zoom Cookalongs’

We have always known the value of parental involvement in a child's education here in Ramsgrange Community School and never was that more important than during lockdown. We had to look at new ways to keep our parents motivated so this was the basis for our very first 'RCS online cookalong'.

Every week for four weeks, the ingredients for a full family meal was delivered to almost 15 families by our Home School Liaison Teacher, Sharon McDermott. Then the cookalong was delivered via Zoom by our Home Economics teacher Mairin Dunne once a week. It really was such a fun and positive experience for everyone involved, parents and their students alike. They made Cottage Pie, Lasagne, Thai red curry and a Pasta Bake. It was so enjoyable it's definitely something that we will continue to do even after Covid!



Carrigaline Community School

Per Cent for Art Scheme



L-R: Paul Burke Principal, Darragh Wilkins Artist and John Lyons Art Teacher

The *Per Cent for Art Scheme* is a state run initiative which provides funding for public artwork, resulting from publicly funded capital construction projects, with up to 1% of the budget being ring fenced for this purpose. Carrigaline Community School began our Per Cent for Art scheme adventure in 2017 with funding secured as a result of the then recently completed school extension.

The Per Cent for Art Scheme could be described as a journey, perhaps even an adventure, with those at the outset having no idea of the final destination nor any inkling of the interesting characters that might turn up along the way. For the school community it is a wonderful opportunity to engage with an Artist, to be a part of the artistic process and work together to produce something that impresses positively upon our students, staff and local community.

CCS began by forming what is called a Public Art Working Group. This group included representatives from the staff, the board of management, the students, the parents, the school extension architect and the County Cork Arts Officer. Together we decided that we would run an open two stage competition for this commission. Over the course of a number of meetings we developed a detailed brief outlining the aims for the commission and the selection criteria. The brief itself was open with only one major stipulation; that the artist would involve students in the artistic

“The Per Cent for Art scheme journey has been truly fascinating and very rewarding.”

process. The competition was then advertised on Publicart.ie and the Visual Artists Ireland news bulletin.

For the first stage of the competition artists were asked to submit a proposal outlining their vision for the commission and how they might involve the school community during the project. We were blown away by the enthusiasm for the commission, mostly from artists working in Ireland, but to our surprise quite a few from overseas, in one case, as far a Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We formed a selection panel whose job it would be to whittle down the entries and finally choose the winning proposal. The creativity, variety and ingenuity on display in the artists’ proposals was mind boggling, ranging from clear resin sculptures to be made from 3D scans of our students, to a towering 3 storey high glass mosaic, or a wavering cloud of 500 ceramic starlings forming a murmururation to wrap around our new school extension. Shortlisting was no easy task. We adopted a pragmatic system, each member of the selection panel scoring the proposals on how well they satisfied the selection criteria set out in our brief. At the end of a long day we had a shortlist of four artists to be invited to the second stage of the competition.

At this point Artists were invited to visit the school to explore and research potential sites for their proposed artworks. I had the job of meeting each of the shortlisted artists in order to show them around our school campus. The board was intrigued to hear about each of their ideas but more-so their journey as an artist to this point in their career and our competition.

For the second stage of the competition, we invited the four shortlisted artists to develop their ideas further. The selection panel then

met for the final time to view the updated proposals which at this point now included small maquettes and material samples made from bronze, stained glass, ceramic and steel.

After many hours of deliberation we each applied our markingscheme. Darragh Wilkins, a local Cork Artist came out on top. Aside from the beautiful design what really impressed the panel was how Darragh intended to engage and include our students in the project.

Darragh proposed to create a beautiful new entrance gate for the school, made from stainless steel, adorned with decorative bronze foliage inspired by native flora incorporating an arch of small bronze castings created by our students. He was very generous with his time and met with many of our art students on a number of occasions to teach them the art of mould making and bronze casting. Each of our 5th Year Art students designed and created their own relief panel in response to the theme of native flora local to Carrigaline. Students collected plants, flowers and many other natural objects found locally from which to create their designs. Initially they worked in clay and then plaster. Then at a later date Darragh invited all of the students taking part to visit him in his studio where he demonstrated the bronze casting process and they got to see their creations cast in bronze. This was a wonderful learning experience for everybody involved and no doubt will be a treasured memory which is now permanently fixed to our wonderful new school gate.

The Per Cent for Art scheme journey has been truly fascinating and very rewarding. Working with Darragh has been an amazing experience that our students will take with them long after their graduation, and the wonderful artwork that Darragh created with them will be here at the school welcoming us to CCS every day.

Academic Scholarships for Castlerea Community School Students

Huge congratulations to Castlerea Community School students, Sinéad Gorham and Ciara Mulheir who were both recipients of the inaugural Pauline & Bunny Jones NUIG scholarships worth €10,000.

Both scholarships coming to students of Castlerea Community School is a great achievement for Ciara, Sinéad, their teachers and the school. The scholarships were awarded to Ciara and Sinéad in a virtual event that took place on May 6th. At the event, Ciara and Sinéad both spoke of the wonderful opportunities

presented by the scholarships and encouraged young people of Roscommon to apply for the scholarships. They both thanked the Jones family for demonstrating such faith in the young people of Roscommon and for making such a valuable contribution.

Along with NUIG Excellence scholarships awarded to Brendan Pacey, Ciara Mulheir and Sinéad Gorham and Sligo IT Sports Scholarship for GAA awarded to Amy Malone, this comes to a total of over €15,000 in scholarships awarded to students of the LC class of 2020 at Castlerea Community School.

TY Overcoming the Challenges

In the words of Abi Flanagan, TY student and Poetry Aloud National winner,

“TY is a year in school like no other. Suddenly the world opens up and you are exposed to so many new things. This has also been a year like no other and while no it wasn't exactly the way I imagined doing TY I don't feel too hard done by, in fact Covid had many positive outcomes”.

Abi Flanagan

This year we have our largest TY group and we began in September with the commitment to look for solutions, not problems. We created mutually beneficial partnerships in our local community and availed of so many online opportunities. Students were able to avail of programmes

such as MiniMed and Look into Law as the virtual nature of the programmes this year facilitated many students to participate.

With a strong tradition of Enterprise in Castlerea Community School our students continue to excel under the guidance of Ms Y Ryan, Programme Coordinator, and Rustbusters will represent Co Roscommon in the National Final of the Student Enterprise Competition on May 14th. We were very lucky that we availed of the opportunity of work placement during term one, as each TY student was lucky enough to find work placement largely due to the work of the TY team.

This term we have welcomed many of our past pupils to speak to students about their career paths to date. These included Garda Inspector David Cryan, Gabija Gataveckaite, political journalist, Irish Independent and Su Carty, Womens Rugby Union. The feedback has been hugely positive and we are very

proud of the achievements of our past pupils. A hands on approach was adopted for our Global Passport activities and much work was carried out around the school campus such as painting and gardening, as we focused on the theme of biodiversity. Students worked diligently to complete modules such as Future Leaders and Gaisce as well as working towards certification in areas such as ECDL and CPR.

Castlerea Community School have continued our proud tradition of partnership with Castlerea Town Team in promoting Darkness into Light. Our students have left a lasting mark on the beautiful surrounds of the Demense. To say we have been busy is an understatement but it is wonderful to see the fruits of our labour and see the many skills and relationships which have been developed amongst our TY students. We look forward to seeing them progressing through senior cycle and wish them every success.



County Final winners RustBusters, Katelyn Drury and Holly Connolly pictured with Ms Anne Browne, Roscommon Enterprise Office, Mr J Burke, Acting Principal, Ms Y Ryan, Programme Coordinator and Mr J Reidy, Acting Deputy Principal.

Our TY Boys have been busy building, painting and planting.

TY Students, Marianne Conroy, Kaleb Connell, Simon Caulfield and Aine Brennan prepared a promotional video in advance of Darkness into Light. All four students are siblings of TY students of 2016 who worked with the Towns Team to bring the fundraising event to Castlerea.

Douglas Community School

Showcase their new Solar System Mural

This year, in Douglas Community School, we've tried to get our Transition Year students outdoors as much as possible. Twenty of our TY pupils worked with artist Kevin O'Brien on this mural which is over 200 feet long. The mural is an alternative way of presenting The Solar System. The planets and their relative distances are represented to scale. We will use this for many years to come in our Science and Maths lessons.

School murals can transform the interior and exterior of a school at a relatively low cost. As well as brightening up the building, the cooperative nature of involving students in the design, planning and execution of a mural creates a great buzz. They can also gather a lot of attention locally and can be used to reinforce school values, ethos, history or vision. It might be something worth considering in your school next year.

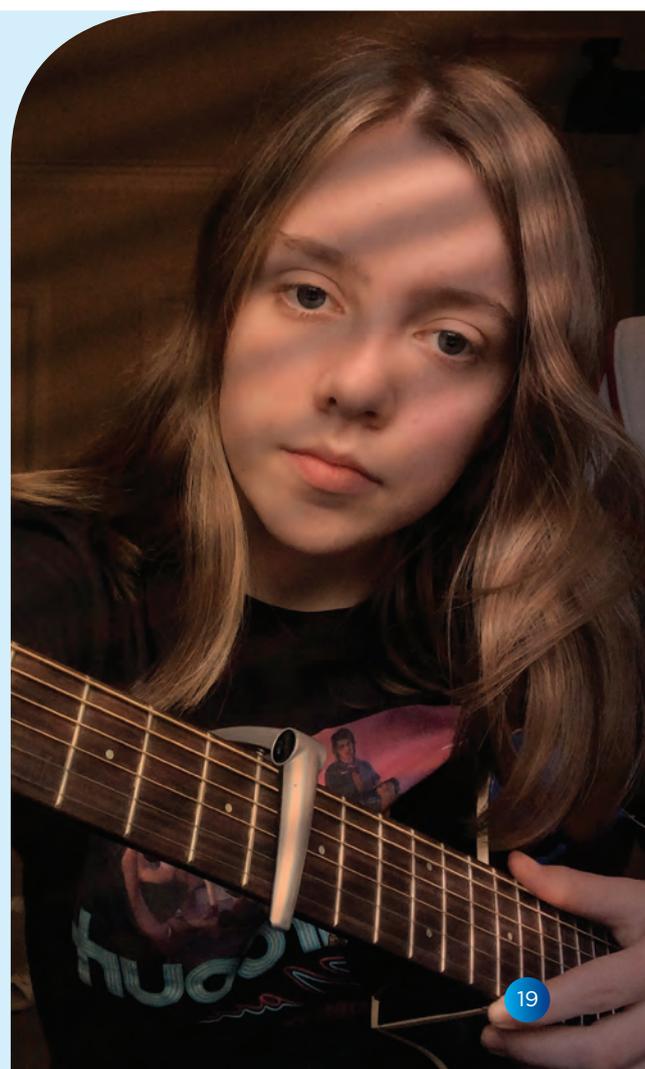


Bright Musical Career ahead for Gort Community School student Jenna Coughlan

Great excitement here in Gort Community School last month as one of our 6th year talented music students won a prestigious award. If Covid restrictions were not in place Jenna would have been travelling to LA last month to record her track. Singer songwriter Jenna Coughlan has been featured on 'Think Earth's Volume 1 EP', an album that has been released by an internationally recognized organization. 'Future Youth Records' is renowned for combating environmental issues. Her original composition 'Smoke Storms' explores themes of Climate Change and is available on Spotify and Apple Music. Jenna is a true talent with a bright musical career ahead.

<https://music.apple.com/us/album/smoke-storms/1563418215?i=1563418222>

Future Youth Records is a non-profit record label dedicated to helping youth create and distribute music promoting social justice. FYR's song writing contests are open to youth aged 16-24 globally. Artists submit original songs promoting social justice. All genres and languages welcome. There are five winners of each contest. In addition to a cash prize and free promotion, contest winners receive production support from our world-class team at no cost.



St. Wolstan's Community School

3rd Year Cycles 1,000km for Crumlin Children's Hospital

At the beginning of April, Abbie O'Leary, 3rd Year student began a marathon 1,000km cycle to raise funds for Crumlin's Children's Hospital. With the help of some friends, Abbie had raised over €1800 in the first week of the challenge. Well done all. #youngpeoplehelping young people.

Shine Festival

TYs had the pleasure of participating in a workshop called the "Shine Festival", aimed at empowering young women and inspiring them to do amazing things. It gave the students access to people such as Irish Hockey Captain, Katie Mullan, actress, Evanna Lynch and many more famous personalities who shared their life experiences and the struggles they faced in getting to the top of their profession.

Green Committee

The Green Committee, under the guidance of Mr. Kiely, was extremely busy all term with various initiatives from planting trees, encouraging cycling to school to recycling some fabulous painted pots for planting in our glasshouse. Our planet will be safe in the hands of these green fingered students!

*Our planet will be safe
in the hands of these
green fingered students!*



What One Good School can do...

Old Bawn Community School's journey towards being awarded One Good School Status in May 2021 by Jigsaw National Centre for Youth Mental Health



In 2018, the Jigsaw National Centre for Youth Mental Health launched the One Good School initiative. This followed closely after their One Good Adult initiative. Based on the largest ever study of youth mental health in Ireland, Jigsaw illustrated the positive impact on a young person's mental health, self-esteem, school success, avoidance of risky behaviour and tendency to seek help when they have One Good Adult in their lives. The One Good School initiative builds on this in terms of how good schools can have the same beneficial effects on young people's lives, helping them to flourish and serve as a massive protective force against distress, antisocial behaviour, mental illness and harmful or suicidal behaviour. At the time the initiative was launched Jigsaw sought expressions of interest from a number of schools to be part of a pilot phase. Our School applied and were accepted to participate beginning in September 2019.

The programme is designed to be implemented throughout the whole school year. It is a comprehensive evidence informed suite of training, engagement and development for everyone in the school community. Oversight and evaluation happen along the way and each school is designated an expert Jigsaw contact person. Training and goal setting for a team leader and one other staff member is the first of 6 activities. Schools must prepare a plan based on internal research and a needs analysis. They then propose 5 further actions aimed directly at teachers, parents, and students. Personnel changes in our school, in Jigsaw, and the arrival of Covid 19 drew the process out to two years for us but also presented unique and novel opportunities to reimagine and adapt our actions and activities and align with the times remotely and in person. Jigsaw learnt from us as much as we learnt from them and the design of one good school has evolved accordingly. A team of 8 school staff and parents took responsibility for different parts of the plan and this has sustained and hastened implementation.

Subsequent to the leadership training, the One Good School programme was extremely beneficial for teachers and SNAs. Courses and webinars were created directly for them following assessment of needs. An Online Mental Health Teachers Awareness Course was one of area that our staff engaged in. It is aimed at class teachers and SNAs to help them support their students through everyday open conversations and give them clear steps and advice on how to support a student that is in need of guidance. Teachers involved in this course described it as 'simple, logical but crucial for the everyday class teacher'.

Maintaining supportive mental health services for students in our school is our priority, but to give students our full attention, it is key for staff to maintain good mental health themselves. This was brought to light through the Self Care for Teachers course. 'A healthy reminder that you cannot pour from an empty cup' as one teacher explained. This online lesson gave teachers and SNAs practical advice on how they could better support their own mental health and opened up avenues for conversation.

This year was one of great worry for everyone across the country, and the uncertainty surrounding exams was naturally overwhelming for some. This is where Jigsaw came in to help and support with the Managing Exam Stress resources. Students complimented the programme for its multi-modal aspects, and its engaging content "I loved the fact that it wasn't just reading, there were videos and audios in it too!"

Two workshops: 'My Mental Health What Helps' and the 'It's Time to Start Talking' were of huge significance and were delivered widely. Year heads shared the 'My Mental Health What Helps' resources with students during assemblies and during remote learning. This gave them actionable tips and advice on how to manage and improve their overall mental health. Jigsaw engaged directly with students through the 'It's Time to Start

'Talking' workshops through Zoom, both during remote learning and when we returned to the classroom. Students described these workshops as helpful and eye-opening, with one student commenting, 'it's helpful to see that other young people feel this way as I do, and everyone is going through the same thing.'

As we are a Community School, it is extremely important for us that we engage with all members of that community to offer help and support. The 'Support for Parents and Guardians' webinar series was one of the highlights for us on our One Good School journey. This activity hosted jointly by Jigsaw and Old Bawn attracted large numbers of parents. The webinar included general advice on self-care for families, helping teens deal with the pandemic, and resources and services available for young people needing help or in crisis. This webinar also allowed Jigsaw and school leaders to communicate with Parents and Guardians and explain to them what exactly Jigsaw's One Good School programme was, provide them information on the services they offer and the outline the material covered daily in schools.

We are only at the beginning, but One Good School has provided us with a tangible and navigable framework to help us be mindful of the mental health needs of all in our school community. Having the badge over our door brings a degree of responsibility that we maintain a high standard of care, awareness and training. We would encourage other schools to contact Jigsaw to find out more about this important national strategy.

Kevin Shortall, Deputy Principal and **Shannon Power**, Teacher

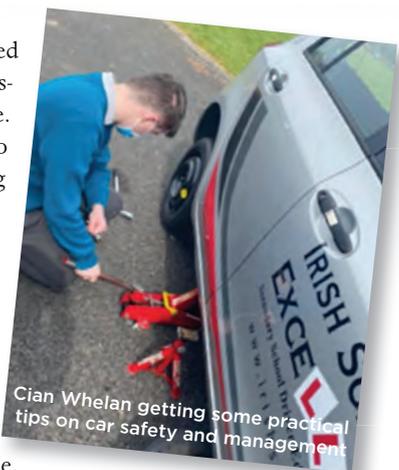




Portumna Community School

Driver Education Programme

This week Transition Years participated in part one of a very enjoyable hands-on driving education programme. Each student got the opportunity to drive a vehicle with a qualified driving instructor, change wheels safely and experience 'Beer Goggles' showing the dangers of driving under the influence. In workshop two of the programme, students will learn how to use satellite navigation systems, practice for their theory test, how to buy and tax a vehicle and complete a green Energy Module.



Cian Whelan getting some practical tips on car safety and management



Planning their future finance: John Luke Reynolds (L) and Cian Treacy

Finance your Future workshop

Transition Year classes also completed an online Finance your Future workshop run by Junior Achievement Ireland. The students learned about the world of work where students identified careers of interest and recognised the importance of staying in school. They also discussed the relationship between education and success with their personal finances. Students also discovered that a balanced budget is important for workers of all income levels, and how to differentiate between gross and net income and found out simple ways to balance a budget.

Global World Wise Schools

As part of our Global Wise School's initiative 2nd, 3rd and TY students participated in ECO-UNESCO Waste Warriors online workshop. This workshop focused on promoting actions to create sustainable cities and communities and increase awareness of our responsibilities in climate action.

(from left) Sheena Claffey and Kaeysyantie Raj-Khanna putting the finishing touches to the outdoor classroom seating.



(from left) Lauren Finn, Esme Duane and Sarah Lily Morrissey participating in the Gobar World Wise Schools workshop.

Scoil Phobail Mhic Dara

Bliain Dhúshlánach ach Nuálach!

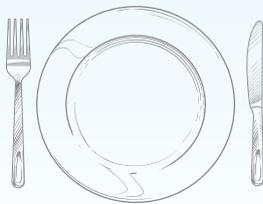
Deirtear gur le linn na dtréimhsí is deacra eacnamaíochta a eascraíonn na gnólachtaí is láidre agus inmharthana. Is mar a chéile sin do na scoileanna ar fad a m'éigin dóibh athrú ó bhun a chur ar an gcaoi a mbíonn an scoil eagraithe. Bhí sé sin amhlaidh

anseo againne freisin le pobal uile na scoile ag teacht aníos le bealaí nua agus go minic fritheadh réiteach a bhí níos fearr. Tá go leor foghlamtha againn agus go leor machnaimh déanta. Ba próiseas féin-mheastóireachta a bhí sa tréimhse ó thús deireadh.

Tá traidisiún na mbliaanta againn anseo sa scoil go mbíonn dinnéar agus cóisir Nollag pleanáilte agus eagraithe ag scoláirí na hIdirbhliana in óstán áitiúil. Cé gur cheap muid go raibh an rás rite ag an togra i mbliaana,



rinneadh sárobair chun é a chur i gcrích. Réitigh na scoláirí na béilí in éineacht leis an gcócaire i mbialann áitiúil, tugadh 174 béile te chuig na seanóirí ag a dtithe, bhí spotduaiseanna iontacha cruinnithe agus rinneadh an tarraingt orthu roimhré le duais do chuile dhuine. Rinneadh ceangal le Raidió na Gaeltachta chun clár réamhthairfeadta ceoil ó na scoláirí a chur amach ar an lá le deis iarratais & beannachtaí a chur amach beo ar an gclár. Bhí bród orainn agus ar phobal iomlán na scoile as sárobair agus iarracht na scoláirí agus múinteoirí a bhí ag obair leo. Bhain na seanóirí an-sásamh as na cuairteanna, an clár raidió agus ar ndóigh an béile álainn.



Obair Ealaíne ó Shiobhán Ní Chadhain, Bl. 5 ag cur síos in iomhá ar a saol le linn na díanghlása.

Bhí scoláirí thar a bheith gníomhach ag cruthú obair ealaíne agus roinnt acu freisin ag forbairt a bpróifíl mar ealaíontóirí tríd na meáin shóisialta. Bhí treoir agus tacaíocht le fáil ón múinteoir ealaíne a bhí ag spreagadh na scoláirí chun a bheith cruthaitheach le linn a dtréimhse ag baile.



De bharr gur ceantar saibhir í an ceantar seo ó thaobh an cheoil agus traidisiúin na hamhránaíochta de, bhrath muid uainn go mór na deiseanna chun ceolchoirmeacha agus taibhiú a dhéanamh ar thallann agus ábaltacht na scoláirí. Cuireann an pobal uilig suim sna himeachtaí móra seo agus iad ag súil go mór leo ag tráthanna éagsúla den bhliain. Rinneadh taifead ar cheolchoirm ina chuideanna beaga agus cuireadh amach chuig an bpobal é go fíorúil Oíche Nollag. Ón t-aiseolas a fuair muid bhí an oíche an-speisialta do phobal an cheantair a bhí ag féachaint ar an gceolchoirm ar YouTube anseo ag baile agus chomh fada ó bhaile leis an Astráil.

St. Aidan's Comprehensive School

In the true spirit of giving our students have worked with staff to fundraise for those in need. They have contributed to various charities including the Christmas Shoe Box Appeal, St. Vincent DePaul, Cancer Care, Pieta House, the Zoo, the Make a Wish Foundation, the Down's Syndrome Association and Crumlin Hospital. The level of our students' awareness of the plight of others, both at home and abroad and their willingness to act and not be bystanders to injustice and poverty is truly commendable.

Marianne Smith, Principal

Walking back to wellness



The Covid-19 crisis has had a huge impact on all staff and students, and it means we were digging deep to work and learn in a school atmosphere that has been transformed. Wearing masks and sitting apart, being in pods and groups, not being able to train teams or choirs – these were just a sample of the restrictions we find ourselves operating under.

As part of our school response to these and other issues, each year group had the opportunity at the start of the academic year to take part in a (socially distanced) 4 km walk from the school through the beautiful Bellamont forest located close to our school. Student and staff welfare and wellness is always at the forefront of St. Aidan's ethos, but in the current climate it has even more importance and relevance.

LEGO® Serious Play



TY Students enjoying Lego Day fun

The TY students participated in a LEGO® Serious Play workshop in St. Aidan's, delivered by Lego Brix Ireland. Lego Serious Play is a method that facilitates communication and problem-solving, during which the students were led through a series of questions, probing deeper and deeper into their chosen subject. Each student built his or her own 3D LEGO® model in response to Kathys questions using specially selected LEGO® elements. These 3D models served as a basis for group discussion, knowledge sharing, problem solving and decision making. It certainly was a very enjoyable and worthwhile day for all. By utilising visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic skills, the method requires participants to learn and listen, and it provides all participants with a voice. By using the LEGO® Serious Play materials and methodology students explore the relationships and connections between people and their world, observe the dynamics both internal and external, explore various hypothetical scenarios, and gain awareness of the possibilities. All this process deepens students understanding, sharpens their insight, and "bonds" together the group as it "plays" together.

Helping Save Dublin Zoo

During lockdown Dublin Zoo posted a tweet stating their financial difficulties as a result of the pandemic, #savedublinzoo. The zoo was closed to the public due to coronavirus restrictions and desperately needed funds to feed and look after the animals.

The cost of caring for the animals can be around half a million euros a month. The first year students decided to help raise funds for Dublin Zoo by taking part in "Adopt an Animal" campaign. The four tutor groups (Rang Méabh, Muireann, Manus & Maitiú) adopted a snow leopard, orangutan and two penguins and donated €200.00 to Dublin Zoo.



3rd Year Annual Bebras Challenge

Coding and Computer Science students in all year groups participated in the Annual Bebras Computational Thinking Challenge. 6 students were then invited to National Finals which are usually held in NUIM. All students who were National Finalists were awarded a National Finalist Certificate.

The Bebras Computing Challenge introduces computational thinking to students, by allowing them to solve interactive tasks online. It is run in over 40 countries. The tasks can be answered without prior knowledge about computational thinking or information and communication technology. The aim of Bebras is to get students all over the world excited about computing.



Tuesday Scripture reflections from the Chaplaincy Team of St Louis Community School



The Chaplaincy Team of St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh received an invitation from Fr Richard Gibbons when the extended lockdown after Christmas had been confirmed. We were asked to select our favourite scripture passages and reflect on them, weekly in a video format. These would then be broadcast on the Knock Shrine YouTube channel every Tuesday night.

As we were in lockdown, we were contacted via our school platform Teams

and asked if we would like to participate. At the beginning none of us really knew what these reflections would look like. We had a general set of guidelines – no more than 10 minutes long; a scripture passage to be read, followed by our thoughts and reflections on that piece of scripture. Each reflection would finish with a prayer.

Although we were unsure how we would put this together several members of the Chaplaincy Team expressed an interest and so the Scripture

Reflections group was born. From the third week in January, we have continued to meet twice a week via Teams to talk through our ideas for each week's reflection.

We have done 10 scripture reflections so far over the past 3 months. Everyone has really enjoyed being a part of the team and has had different benefits from this experience. Here are some of the experiences from different people in the team:

I really enjoyed the experience because I learnt a lot about the scriptures by seeing everyone's reflections each week and by helping to gather resources for everyone else's reflections. I also learnt new skills such as working with a team, I learnt how to edit a video and I learnt how to reflect on a piece of scripture. It has been enjoyable meeting up with others from school although virtually every Tuesday and Thursday evening - **Andrew Maloney**

These weekly scripture reflections have been a great hobby during this lockdown! It was lovely having our online call twice a week and getting to hear everyone and see what everyone else has been up to. I was on the fence for a while about doing my own scripture reflection, but everyone was so lovely and helped me in every way that they could, and it really gave me a huge confidence boost. This opportunity has taught me about the meaning behind all these scripture pieces and for that I will be forever grateful - **Alannah McNicholas**

I really enjoyed this whole experience. I loved the way that we were able to help people during this tough time. It gave me the opportunity to explore my faith and overall be a better person. The meetings were always positive, fun and interactive. Talking and working with everyone was really the highlight of my week. I enjoyed getting to know everyone on the team and just being able to talk to people during this very isolated time. This experience was one of the ways I was able to cope with this quarantine and I can't wait to keep working with the group to produce more scripture reflections - **Cara Higgins**

I would describe my experience as part of this group so far as really positive and enjoyable. I look forward to seeing what each of the next reflections are going to be based on and what people's interpretations are of scripture pieces. I feel that I now have a better understanding of scripture pieces and what their true meaning is and how they apply to everyday life - **Thomas Maloney**

I found it was lovely to be part of a team and bring a little joy to people during this challenging time - **Joseph Grego**

I joined the scripture reflection group later than the others, but it's been a great opportunity to expand my faith. I've really enjoyed it and hope it continues - **Eabha Murray**

I joined this group a bit later than the others but I'm very glad I joined. It is a great way to keep in touch with my faith over lockdown and I enjoy the weekly meetings. I did a reflection for the Easter video and I hope to do more in the future - **Sauna Langan**

Being part of this group is a great experience. Everyone works hard and helps each other out with the reflection videos. I was able to improve my faith as a result of being part of this group - **Jonathan McHugh**

It has been a great privilege to be part of the Scripture Reflection Team. I have really enjoyed meeting with everyone every Tuesday and Thursday for a chat. Being part of this team has brought me and everyone in the team closer to each other - **Cariosa Burke**

The scripture reflections have been a wonderful experience. I've learned so much about different scriptures and I enjoyed hearing people's thoughts, views and feelings. It is lovely to do something during lockdown. I enjoyed writing my own reflection with my cousin Jonathan, we worked hard to put the video together and overall, it has been a very worthwhile experience, one that I will forever remember - **Lauren Conroy**

I always looked forward to our meetings to swap and share ideas or sometimes just have a chat - **Niamh Grego**

Although we faced the challenge of Covid-19, we were able to make the best of the situation we were in and were able to make these reflections while working remotely.

At the start we were very confused on what to do or how to put the videos together but as the weeks went on, we started getting the hang of it. It was a huge learning experience for everyone. From the people helping behind the scenes to the person/people producing reflections that week, we all came together to make sure that each reflection was at the highest standard. If it wasn't for the help and guidance that we received from St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh especially Mrs O'Brien and Ms Regan who attended every meeting, we wouldn't have been able to accomplish so much and for this we are thankful.

Although this project was challenging at times the wonderful response and feedback from the public made it rewarding. Knowing that we were helping people get through this difficult time and that people enjoyed tuning in each week to watch us was a huge honour.

We are all so thankful that we were given the opportunity to make a difference to people's lives and we were able to reach a wider audience than we ever could have imagined.



Aadya doing some immuno-histochemistry on human skin tissue.

St Tiernan's Community School

TY Work Experience in UCD

In April, four of our lucky TY students – Sylvia, Armaan, Evdoxia and Aadya – got the chance to participate in a week-long work experience in the UCD Conway Institute of Biomolecular and Biomedical Research and Systems Biology Ireland.

During this week in UCD, the students were engaged in a variety of activities which gave them a real taste of university life and pursuing a career in scientific research. The photo attached showcases Aadya doing some immunohistochemistry on human skin tissue. As well as this, St Tiernan's students participated in researching and producing a poster about the ethics of a national DNA database, planning out a bacteria experiment in the lab, and even experienced what it was like to work in aseptic conditions. The work culminated in the students listening to a talk given by Hannah Sharpe who dialed in from the University of Oxford, speaking about her very exciting job as part of the team who developed the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine for Covid-19 along with researcher Danny Johnston who gave a seminar on vaccines.

"...students were engaged in a variety of activities which gave them a real taste of university life and pursuing a career in scientific research."

A fantastic week was had by all and we are very grateful to the Conway Institute for having our students!

“Hygiene for the Homeless”

As part of their Social Education Task, our fantastic LCA1 class organised and ran a “Hygiene for the Homeless” campaign over two weeks in April.

Hygiene products, clothes and sleeping bags were donated by our very generous students and staff. These items are of fundamental importance to every human being, and our students felt it was incredibly important to collect as many items as they could, which would have a direct impact on the wellbeing of the homeless community of Dublin city. With the help of our LCA Coordinator Ms. Ní Sioista, the students collected, sorted and organised all of these donations.

One of our hard-working SNA's Alan McHugh has been bringing weekly donations into the homeless community of Dublin city every week all year, and he also brought this donation from our school community in for the LCA1 class.

This was truly an incredible initiative which was very successful, and we are very proud of our students for their hard work throughout the campaign.

Success for St. Ciaran's Community School at the Student Enterprise Awards 2021



Our school was very proud of the TY company Easy Ex who were part of the All-Ireland Enterprise finals this week winning the senior category for the 'Best Company to adapt to Covid-19 in Ireland'.

The four lads, Carl McGovern, Oisín Craig, Sean McDermot and Josh Keating under the guidance of their teacher Mr Peter Carry, developed stickers which you put around your house as a visual prompt to encourage exercise. You can do these exercises, for example, while waiting for the kettle to boil or for the microwave to stop. Each sticker has a code which you can scan and will bring you directly to a you tube clip telling you exactly how to complete each exercise.

This is a fantastic result and achievement, and it is down to the great work of the students who worked tirelessly on their

"...students worked tirelessly on their enterprise even during school closure."

enterprise even during school closure. Well done to all involved.

A big congratulation also to the company *Eolais* who came 2nd in the Best New Business Idea at the Meath Enterprise week challenge. This team consisted of Kayleigh O Reilly, Pearse Flanagan, Fintan Cogan, Geoffrey Carpenter and Callum Blair.

The experience of 2021 in Holy Child Community School



Over the course of this difficult year, Holy Child Community School Sallynoggin has continued to work hard on ensuring students can learn in a safe environment. When we were learning online at the start of

2021, the school set up a hybrid timetable of live classes and self-directed learning classes, which give students a chance to work independently. I found these really helpful in relieving some of the stress that came with not being able to be in school.

Now that we are back in the building, the school has helped me with my studies through the after-school ACE program, and by providing teachers who are eager to help. The ACE programme gives my classmates and I our own space in which we can do homework and study. Our Year Head is always there to talk to about any issues we have, or problems with the workload.

The school also experienced changes in its appearance. Our caretakers have painted the corridors and classrooms, and we have

introduced new colourful chairs to help with posture. They've also updated the signs at the front of the building and added a lot of new wall displays that feature students' work. We love seeing our work showcased in the corridors, and we like to walk into an inviting atmosphere. Overall, the school feels a lot brighter now due to the new changes, and we have a sense of pride in our school.

I hope the school can continue to listen to students' voices and implement our ideas for improving the school. I also hope the school can continue to create an accepting environment for every student by hosting events like International Day and Stand-Up Week.

Rachel Stevens, 5th Year





Beara Community School



Want the Best? Come West! a transition year group from Scoil Phobail Bhéara have recently won the Making the Community Better Award in association with the Department of Community and Rural Affairs at the Young Social Innovator national showcase held virtually on May 13th.

This project aimed to promote rural generation in line with the government policy Our Rural Future 2021-2025 and they showcased the Beara Peninsula as the ideal location for remote working, getting the work life balance right and developing the infrastructure and services to meet the demand of people wanting to make Beara a destination of choice to live and work in the future.

The students conducted a comprehensive survey – which established that 89% of those interviewed work in a home-based office while 61% would like a designated workspace outside the home that would be conveniently located on the Beara peninsula. Although 71% are happy with the provision of broadband locally, 20% would like improved access or provision of a higher speed network.

Of the 500-plus who responded to the questionnaire issued, 27% were completed by people over 65 years with 59% under the age of 35, 99%

'... they showcased the Beara Peninsula as the ideal location for remote working...'

of those who completed the survey live in Beara, or are connected to the locality, with the remaining 1% expressing the wish to live in Beara and 93% made a conscious decision to make Beara their home and of that number 15% chose it for the purposes of coconing.

An analysis of the figures shows that 61% are renting either long or short terms in Airbnb's, or self-catering properties, with 45% working or studying remotely.

A whopping 73% indicated that they would like to own a property on the peninsula, 100% of the respondents said they would like to remain in the area and not return to office-based employment. The downside to the influx is that 72% of those interviewed found it difficult to find suitable accommodation and have had to deal with rising rent costs. However, 90% said they have already identified a potential purchase, or renovation project, in Beara with the biggest attraction being 'a better work life balance.'

The students created promotional material on various social media platforms, held art and model building competitions and certainly have managed to put Beara on the map. The students are continuing to work with Cork County Council on establishing a digital hub in Beara.

Donahies Community School

Junk Kouture is a recycled fashion competition in Ireland which challenges second level students to create wearable fashion designs from junk materials. Students from all over Ireland compete in Regional Finals in the hope of getting through to the Grand Final.

Every year the entries and standard gets higher and higher and this year was no exception. The designs this year were even more unique, elaborate and over the top than ever before. The techniques were more refined and ingenious and the materials that they used were creative and very original and all made from recycled materials.

It was another outstanding year for the Donahies in the Junk Kouture Fashion competition. The Eastern Dublin regional finals had its greatest number of entries since the beginning of the competition 10 years ago. The transition year Junk Kouture students from 2020 worked tirelessly from September to January working on their outfit. Amy Archbold, Lucy Davis and Emma O'Neill were delighted that their entry "Autumn in Motion" made it through

"Wow Sustainability, proof of talent and creative recycling at its best"

Marie Claire Italy

to not only the Regional Finals but also the Junk Kouture Grand Finals, this was a truly superb accomplishment for our students, the Art Department and The Donahies CS. The reality of our achievement really set in the next day especially when we read the reviews about the high standard of craftsmanship and talent that was needed to win a place in the coveted Grand Final! On 27th November 2020 it was lights, camera, action for this year's finalists as they got to show case their beautiful dress on the cat walk. The Grand Final was filmed in Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin by RTE in a carefully socially-distanced environment. The atmosphere in the theatre was electric. The show was broadcast on RTE February 4th for the entire nation to watch.

Donahies Community School are delighted to announce that 2020-2021 Junk Kouture finalist, "Autumn in Motion" has been featured in the May issue of Marie Claire Italy. A very prestigious fashion magazine and a magazine held in high regard in the fashion industry. The girls emblazed the pages of the magazine that once graced the faces of Nicole Kidman, Gisele Bundchen and Selena Gomez. Imagine being considered in the same ranks of these stars, what an honour it was. We are absolutely thrilled for team members Amy Archbold, Emma O'Neill and Lucy Davis. This is a wonderful achievement for both the school and our student's hard work and talent. The team at Marie Claire Italy fell in love with the design, created using recycled twine and wool, with pistachio nut shells and feathers to add sensational texture.

Here's what they had to say about the dress:

"WOW Sustainability, proof of talent and creative recycling at its best. and the school very proud not only through all the hard work and commitment over the last few months pay off but also the comradery and support you all have shown during what was a difficult year and on the day of the competition. Well done everyone."



Translation

WOW Sustainability, Proof of Talent and Creative recycling. The rules of engagement are one and are very clear, what is created must be made from recycled material. The rest is a story waiting to be told, with talent and so much creativity. Junk Kouture, an Irish platform aimed at young fashion talents aged from 12-18 years, lands in Italy in May. And offers an opportunity for aspiring artists and designers to participate {in September} in a competition to create innovative and above all else sustainable outfits {like the one in the photo above made out of recycled wool and cord, feathers, walnut and pistachio shells} But there is more: Junk Kouture on top of being a competition it is also a community where every young person can express themselves #FindYourSpace or rather find your own space to give life to creative ideas, maybe even by teaming up with somebody else. {junkkouture.com}

A TY year like no other in Ashbourne Community School

Our TY theme for the year was “**Be The Solution**”. Every TY student positively on their own or in a team, found solutions, were the difference and impacted positively on their own life at home, in school and in the community. The TY Class of 2021 had a fantastic year, despite the restrictions.

Some of the online courses completed included:

- IACT Package (Computer Skills, Career Skills, Driving Skills)
- Concussion Coach
- HSA Safety at Work
- CreateSchool Podcasting
- Amnesty International Human Rights Defenders
- SVP Champions
- GAA Go Games Referee Course
- Wolves of Wellbeing
- Kins Skin Clinic Skin Care and Self Image
- Bar of Ireland Look Into Law Programme.

Students were encouraged to do other courses that interested them including Exit Entry, Google Digital Workshop, Open University, Coursera and FutureLearn.

Some of the In-school workshops included:

- Mobile Music School Drumming Workshop
- PALS Positive and Assertive Life Skills Programme
- Medicare First Aid Course
- Fundamentals TY Workshop (personal development, leadership, team building and goal setting)
- Rory O’Connor (past pupil) Mental Health Talk
- Movie Magic Workshop
- Microsoft Dreamspace Full STEAM Ahead Workshop
- Zeeko Online Internet Safety Workshop
- He@lthfest
- DkIT Web Development and Animation Computing Online Workshop
- ARUP STEPS Engineering Week Talk
- Careers in Screen by the IFI
- I-Wish STEM Conference
- STEPS
- Microsoft Dreamspace “Who Wants to be an Engineer”

- Wolves of Wellbeing Healthy Habits Talk
- “It’s Time to Start Talking” Jigsaw Mental Health Workshop
- DSPCA Talk
- Mark Donnelly (past pupil) HUH (How’s Your Head) Clothing Talk
- RSA Road Safety Seminar
- Dublin Zoo Conservation Workshop
- Saraden Design Milliner Workshop
- Caoimhe O’Dwyer (past pupil) Pilates Workshop
- Career Talk with the DAA
- Circus Skills Workshop
- Wolves of Wellbeing Mindset Workshop
- DSPCA Careers with Animals Talk.

TY specific programme completed by TYs included:

- Walk in my Shoes St Patrick’s Mental Health Programme
- UCD Physics TY Programme,
- Hugh Lane Art Gallery TY Programme
- Barista and HACCP Training with Dublin Barista School
- STEPS Engineering Your Future
- RCSI Mini-Med Programme
- DNG Estate Agents Programme
- TCD TYPE TY Physics Experience
- Jessica Plunkett Acting Course
- Russian 4 week course
- Introduction to Nursing with St James’s Hospital
- ‘So You Want to be a Doctor?’ with St Vincent’s Healthcare Group and UCD School of Medicine
- Bar of Ireland Look Into Law Programme.

And Many More Initiatives!!
A TY year like no other!

Caroline Mathews
Programme Coordinator



#andshecycles Ambassadors Mollie White, Laura Bolster & Aoife White, Tuesday 11th May 2021 reconnecting with the benefits of cycling for all

A Final Look Back by Joymarita Rajinikanth, 6th Year Student, Ballinteer Community School



Within the blink of an eye, first year introduction day soon became Junior Certificate results' night and before I was even able to register my surroundings, I now find myself in the final term of 6th year, startled by how quickly time had passed.

I vividly remember my first day of secondary school. My uniform swallowed me whole and my bag - in classic first year fashion - was to me like a shell to a turtle. From the lockers to the routine of secondary education, everything was frighteningly large and new. And speaking of things that are frightening and large, I recall the seniors looming over us in the hallways and how we would have to scurry past them, avoiding eye contact, afraid we'd be stepped upon if we didn't move fast enough.

But now, being a senior myself, the kind that I once so deeply feared, I have had an epiphany. The fear I long harboured as a first year has not magically disappeared like I had so naively hoped. On the contrary, it has grown with me. Fear, much like energy as I learnt in physics, seems to be one of those fundamental forces that cannot be created or destroyed, simply converted from one form to another. My fear of seniors soon became a fear of the Junior Certificate and now it has become fear of the future and all that it holds. But just as I understand physics, I also understand that fear doesn't have to hold me back from reaching my full potential in the same way that constants such as light and heat don't hinder me either.

Likewise, I have gathered other similarly useful philosophies throughout my school career. English has taught me that the judicious use of language, being so vast and plentiful, has often proved to be more successful in solving conflict than violence could ever be. Maths has demonstrated how there is always a right or wrong answer but at the end of the day, it's not the answer you get that truly matters but rather how you reached the answer and whether you made the effort. Geography once taught me how the Earth's plates are constantly shifting yet everything remains in balance. In the same way, I have learnt that no matter what pressure and stress I may be experiencing, sometimes just a deep breath and some quiet allows for everything to fall back into place again. Art has introduced me to the idea that often times accidents can be of the 'happy' variety.

I may not have realised the value of these lessons at the time, but now, as I stand on the precipice of adulthood, I look back and find that the summit upon which I stand is my education, and for that I could not be more grateful.

Joymarita

Your Employee Assistance Service In The Moment Support

Your EAS is available 24/7, 365 days a year and offers in the moment support to employees. Our team is always there to chat and provide immediate support for multiple concerns and difficulties - in the workplace or at home. EAS support is there for you to process how you are feeling and get advice in the moment, as you need it.



If you are experiencing a crisis or just want someone to talk to urgently, you can access your EAS at any time to speak freely with a Case Manager and they will provide support and guidance.



Calls are not limited in length or frequency. You are free to access this type of support for an unlimited number of times.

(scheduled sessions of counselling may be recommended if there is a recurring issue)



You can also call for advice on supporting another team member or colleague (all calls are confidential).



**You can reach your EAS Service to
speak to a Case Manager on:**

Freephone: 1800 411 057

SMS & WhatsApp:

Text 'Hi' to 087 369 0010