

accs NEWS

ISSUE 3 - MARCH 2021

CONVENTION '21

A VIRTUAL SUCCESS

BT YOUNG SCIENTISTS

COMMUNITY & COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOLS TO THE FORE

JUNK KOUTURE

CUTTING EDGE FASHION FOR
THE FUTURE

PAUL FIORENTINI

A SINGULAR MAN



BT YOUNG SCIENTIST
& TECHNOLOGY



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All paper used in the production of this newsletter comes from FSC managed sustainable forests.

Designed by ACCS

TO ALL OUR SCHOOLS

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this addition of ACCS News - This is your newsletter where we share and showcase achievements and school community events.

Any school that wishes to be included in future editions, please email Áine at aosullivan@accs.ie attaching your news story and good quality photographs.

Your school, the ACCS community!



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A NEW PRESIDENT FOR ACCS

It is a great honour for me to accept the role of president of ACCS and wear the chain of office, unaccustomed as I am to wear such decoration. I want to thank the Board of Management & Trustees of Glenamaddy Community School, our Deputy Principal, Eileen Gildea, my colleagues, and friends in school and in the Connacht Region, together with all the Boards of Management throughout the country who nominated me for the position, who have afforded me this opportunity and put their faith in me.

I joined the ACCS family some twenty years ago and was immediately struck by the genuine welcome I received from everyone, the help, advice, and support. There was always a listening ear. As a young Principal I felt I had found my tribe so to speak. As a Principal, Secretary of a Board of Management and as a member of Executive I have experienced first-hand the professional and caring nature of the good people in the ACCS community. I would like to give back what was once given to me and continue the legacy of Paul Fiorentini, my predecessors and all in ACCS past, present, and on into the future.

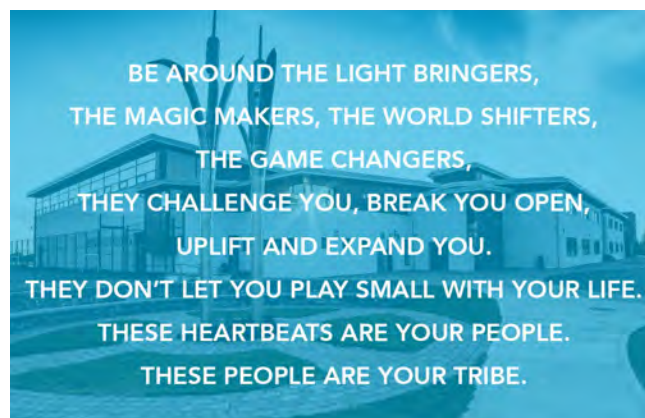
A wise woman I know, Sr Mary Hennelly, once told me that Service is the Duty of the Soul. Serve is what volunteer members of Boards of Management and dedicated Principals and Deputy Principals like

yourself do every day – you serve you students and school communities selflessly. If I can be of any help to anyone, please let me know. You can find me on the four roads to Glenamaddy.

I would like to conclude with a positive message of hope – I'll borrow from the Clare Poet and Philosopher, John O Donoghue who wrote so beautifully in *Eternal Echoes - Exploring Our Hunger to Belong*.

He believed in the incredible power in a community of people who are together because they care and who are motivated by the ideals of compassion and creativity.

Together we in ACCS will rise to the challenges as we always do. Go raibh mile maith agaibh.



CONVENTION '21

39th Annual Convention

INNOVATION, INCLUSION AND IMPACT ACCS SCHOOLS RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

The 39th ACCS Annual Convention was a one-day event this year taking place virtually hosted from Head Office on the ZOOM platform on Thursday 11th March.



More than 200 delegates joined the online event representing Boards of Management across the whole sector. The Convention represents an opportunity for ACCS to conduct its necessary business as an organisation while also affording delegates an opportunity to reflect upon and discuss current issues relevant to our schools and the wider education landscape.

This Convention had a different energy to any other and business was concluded differently in the online space. The usual item agendas were there, and the chat was lively as delegates settled in for a day of virtual polls, webcams, muting mics and chat on the screens.

Reports including those highlighting the substantial work of the ACCS sub-committees, the CPD report for the academic year, the Building Projects Advisor's report and others were adopted.

Reports on the audited ACCS accounts and on activities in HR, GDPR and FE outlining the work completed in these areas throughout the year by ACCS personnel were also adopted by delegates.

There were two motions presented to Convention 2021 and these were carried unanimously by the delegates.

MOTIONS

The first motion considered was proposed by Adrienne Whelan, Principal, Killinarden Community School as follows:

'Given the huge change in role and responsibility of Clerical Officers in the Community and Comprehensive sector, the lack of promotional opportunities and qualification allowance, that ACCS seek immediate restructuring of the Grade level as a priority.'

Adrienne highlighted the lack of opportunities for promotion and the areas of work in which Clerical Officers find themselves engaged on a daily basis including Governance, GDPR, Finance, Administrative Responsibilities, Building Works and even School PR when working with parents and visitors to the schools.

The Clerical Officer is critical to the Principal's role, the 'Go To' person on many occasions across any given week or day. Suzanne Shanley seconded the motion on behalf of Killinarden Community School.

John Irwin, General Secretary, in supporting the motion reminded the delegates that while ACCS welcomes advances in this area over the past year, this remains one of ACCS' policy objectives and noted the work of current President, Paul Fiorentini who has raised this issue with the Department of Education at every possible occasion during his presidency.

The second motion was an ACCS Executive Motion which called on:

'ACCS to engage with the Department of Education and the relevant patrons to progress the inclusion of the Community School joint patronage model as a stated option when a new school or amalgamation is being proposed in any area. The patronage process should be amended to allow the designation of a community school under joint patronage based on the expressed parental preferences and reflecting diversity of provision.'

The motion, which was proposed by President, Paul Fiorentini is one that ACCS has raised at previous Conventions. Paul introduced the background and

context to the motion noting that the Community School Model is the only joint patron model in the Irish system and is one which we believe remains fit for purpose and very relevant in current times. However, the challenge remains that it is not a stated option for parents to consider in the current process. While seconding the motion, Antoinette Nic Gearailt (ACCS Executive) highlighted recent developments including the establishment of AJP and the emergence of the new Catholic Education Partnership, a new unified and authoritative voice, a single entity representing the many voices of the Catholic patrons.

The Assistant General Secretary, Aine O'Sullivan, called for the process to be reviewed and amended to include the Community School Model at the outset. The motion was then endorsed by John Gorman of the Rosses Community School.

Voting was accomplished through the 'Polling' function in Zoom and overseen by Tellers appointed by Convention.



Polis

Motion 1 Poll in Progress 00:00:17

Attendees are now viewing questions 0 of 0 (0%) voted

'Given the huge change in role and responsibility of Clerical Officers in the Community and Comprehensive sector, the lack of promotional opportunities and qualification allowance, that ACCS seek immediate restructuring of the Grade level as a priority.'

Tá	(0) 0%
Níl	(0) 0%
Ag staonadh	(0) 0%

End Poll

ACCS EXECUTIVE 2021-2022

Munster: (3) Denis Ring Fergal McCarthy Noel O'Sullivan	Dublin: (3) Pat Mc Kenna (Hon Treasurer) Brenda Kelly Antoinette Nic Gearailt
Connacht: (2) Adrian Jackson Tom Costello	Comprehensive Schools: (2) Craig Petrie Richard Prendiville
Ulster: (2) Maeve Sweeney Patrick Mc Vicar	Leinster: (3) Mary Jackson (Hon Secretary) Paul Thornton (Vice President) Denis Magner
James Duignan (President) Paul Fiorentini (Ex-Officio)	Co-Opted: David Leahy (GRETB) Co-Opted: Dr. Eilis Humphreys (Le Chéile)

IN MEMORIAM



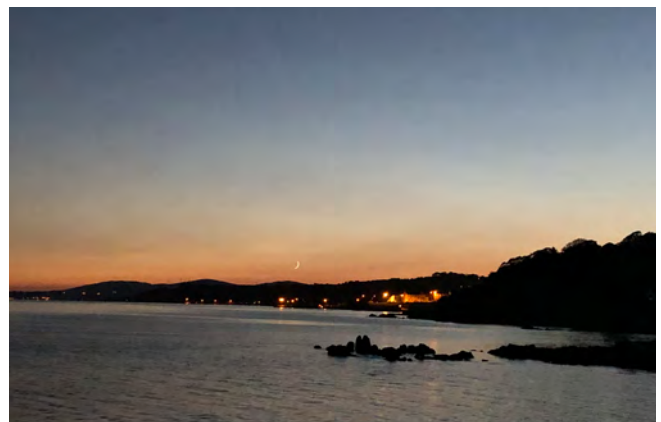
ACCS President, Paul Fiorentini opened Convention remembering all those who have died during the past year including Frank Murray, former General Secretary ACCS, Sr Claude Meagher, former President ACCS and most recently School Principal, Séamus O'Connor of Castlecomer CS. (RIP)



ADDRESS BY PAUL FIORENTINI PRESIDENT ACCS

When I took on the role of President, my motivation was mostly to pay back the support I enjoyed through the years. ACCS directed much of my thinking on how I led as a principal. There was also a desire to show that geographical adversity – or living in the back of beyond - should not be an obstacle to making a contribution and to prove that people in the faraway hills are not necessarily 'greener' than the urban majority. During the pandemic living in rural Ireland became a dividend and the majesty of the landscape was a blessing.

Such is the natural beauty of Donegal I am showcasing a series of images so that when the lockdown is over you can all make your way to Donegal and particularly to the jewel that is the Inishowen Peninsula. We couldn't bring the Convention to Donegal, so we have brought Donegal to the Convention.



We consider and remember our current and former colleagues, principals and deputies who lost partners and loved ones during the year. We remember past

friends and colleagues of ACCS, notably former General Secretary, Frank Murray and former President Sr Claude Meagher, great characters, great minds, much loved and respected, both of whom left their imprint on the ethos and values of the community school, both of whom understood the value of joint patronage as a vehicle for inclusion. Ní fheicfear a leithéid arís!



We have to have faith in our school leaders and the teachers. In 1993 John Coolahan recorded the only professional group that got specific praise in Professor

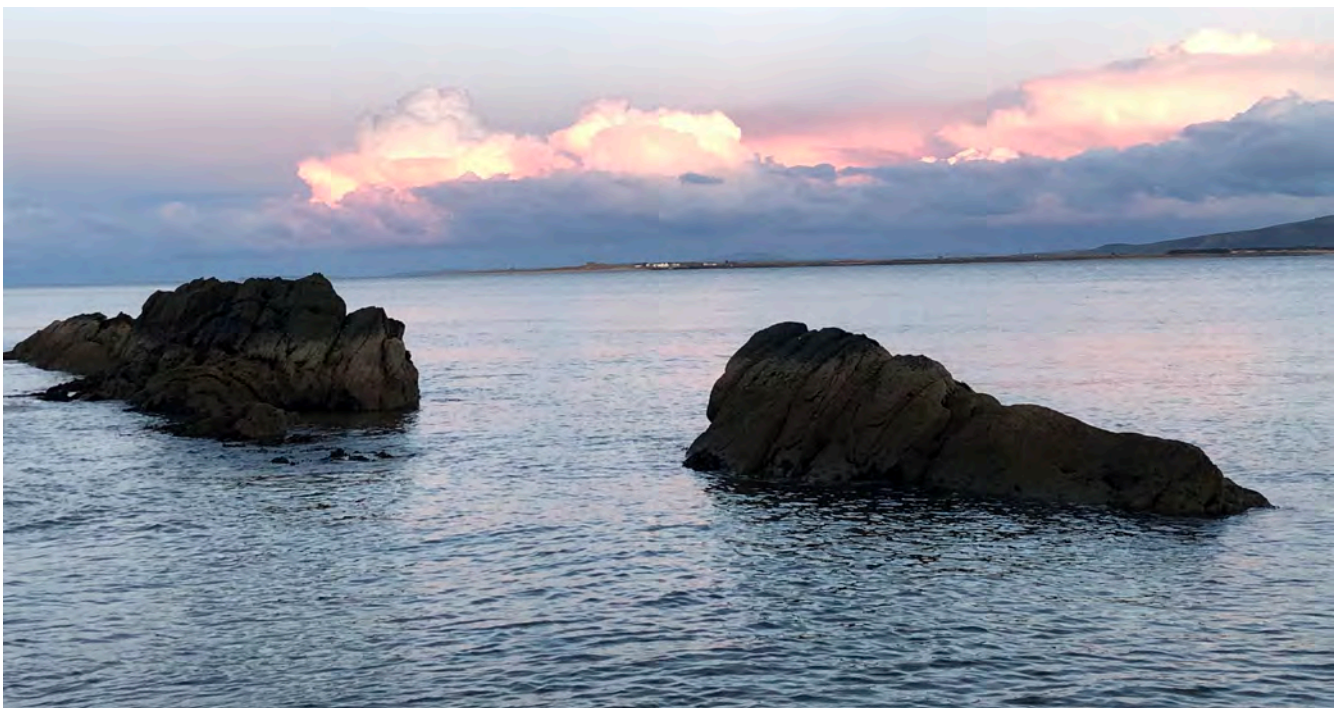
Joe Lee's analysis of modern Ireland, was the teachers. He stated:

'When the history of the Irish people finally comes to be written – the saga, for saga it was – of those teachers who struggled to inspire their pupils with a full sense of their own potential will deserve belated homage.'

As I move to the conclusion of this address and of my role as President of ACCS, I wish to say that I got a wonderful opportunity to get insights that I would otherwise have missed. I got to meet people who were unique and wonderful, and I have to say that across the board, amidst all the partners there is a tremendous commitment to education in this country. I learned so much from the school leaders I met through ACCS. I was lucky to meet people I would not otherwise have met.

There is a tremendous energy and enthusiasm across the organization and collaboration is key to that.

Go raibh maith agaibh! Thank you most sincerely for the opportunity to serve as president of this wonderful organisation. Go dtiocfaidh muid. Slán agus coinnigh slán!





ADDRESS BY NORMA FOLEY T.D. MINISTER FOR EDUCATION

'In the face of adversity,
something that will not acknowledge
conclusion,
insists that we forever begin.'

Brendan Kennelly

ACCS was delighted to welcome Minister Norma Foley to address Convention 2021. Minister Foley acknowledged school leaders' invaluable commitment to education during the past year and especially since school closure in March 2020. The Minister opened her address by offering congratulations to the newly elected President James Duignan and assured him of her continued engagement with him and with the Association in the development of educational innovation and good practice. She highlighted how onerous and challenging this time has been for schools and how leaders have led change, re-evaluating,

reconfiguring and reimagining their school spaces to ensure these are safe places.

She assured Convention that her Department is fully aware of the particular effect of the pandemic on Leaving Certificate students. She expressed her gratitude to teachers for the exceptional Leaving Certificate arrangements for 2020 and 2021.

The future is positive and filled with hope as students return to schools and the roll out of the vaccine programme continues. The Minister commented on continued investment in DEIS and other areas, Ireland's success in the TIMS study and strategies for improving Teacher Supply, including Turas Abhaile, and upskilling programmes for teachers in key subject areas.

Commenting on the theme of this year's Convention: 'Rising to the Challenge' Minister Foley remarked, 'How richly appropriate' and thanked ACCS and its schools' leaders for rising to the unprecedented and unexpected challenges magnificently and generously.

CONVENTION '21

IN CONVERSATION WITH MAIRÉAD MCGUINNESS EU COMMISSIONER

'You are the change makers – in your everyday work you have a huge impact on the young people with whom you work.'

You can influence and shape people's future and that is powerful.'

ACCS welcomed Ireland's EU Commissioner, Mairéad Mc Guinness to address the Convention. Introduced by Mary Jackson, Principal, Ardee Community School and ACCS Executive, as a past pupil and past parent of Ardee Community School.

Ms McGuinness thanked Mary for her warm introduction and reflected on her years as a pupil in Ardee C.S.

and its influence on her future career. She described many later visits to schools and their influence on her development.

Commissioner McGuinness spoke about gender balance and equality in the Commission, the ability to respond to change whether good or bad, in the development of students and the community. She outlined the many opportunities for development which are open to students in the area of financial literacy, methods of correspondence, climate change and many others. She spoke about her view of the diverse range of abilities present in the Irish population and the influence of schools in the development of students to meet world needs.

The Chairperson Mary Jackson thanked Ms McGuinness for her valuable contribution to the Convention and wished her well on behalf of ACCS.



GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT



General Secretary, John Irwin reminded delegates of the breadth and depth of work completed by Head Office, the ACCS Secretariat and ACCS Executive throughout the year. He commented on the many project areas which ACCS has engaged in with its schools including Blended Learning, SEN and Student Voice.

He referenced the challenges of Covid Times, including reopening schools, the Leaving Certificate Examinations and SEC Accredited Grades. John spoke about the sector of Community and Comprehensive schools which embody the theme of this conference: schools which are inclusive, innovative, and which impact their communities positively every day. He noted that while our schools have autonomy, they have accountability, and as shown in the past year, they manage challenges in an agile manner.

John paid tribute to all those with whom he works in ACCS Head Office, the ACCS Executive and, in particular, to outgoing President, Paul Fiorentini whom he described as a singular man who has represented ACCS on many occasions, has given of his time during his presidency freely and generously and is so well regarded by all other key stakeholders in education.

The General Secretary's report is available on page 39 of the Convention Handbook.

A recording of the convention will be available on the ACCS website, www.accs.ie.

The list of Appendices from the ACCS Convention Handbook can also be found on the ACCS website.

ACCS wishes to acknowledge the work of Mr Tommy Flynn for the excellent summary document on Section 29 Appeals and the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 which is the first document on this list of Appendices and is invaluable reading for all school leaders. See Appendix 1.

Advertisers/Sponsors of ACCS Convention 2021

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Solutions Ltd.**

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Ireland, Dublin 8.**

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**Bookapitch, Sports Facility Software,
Dublin 18.**

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Letterttec Ireland Ltd., Co. Cork.

Lift Ireland, Dublin 2.

**NCCA, The National Council for
Curriculum and Assessment, Dublin 2.**

**NCGE, National Centre for Guidance
in Education, Dublin 1.**

O'Doherty.Biz Limited, Co. Dublin.

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**Post Primary Languages Ireland,
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Prodigy Learning, Dublin 18.

**Protectorate Solutions Ltd.,
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**Sustainable Energy Authority of
Ireland (SEAI), Dublin 2.**

**The Teaching Council, Maynooth,
Co Kildare.**

**TUI, Teachers' Union of Ireland,
Dublin 6.**

TCD, Trinity College Dublin, Dublin 2.

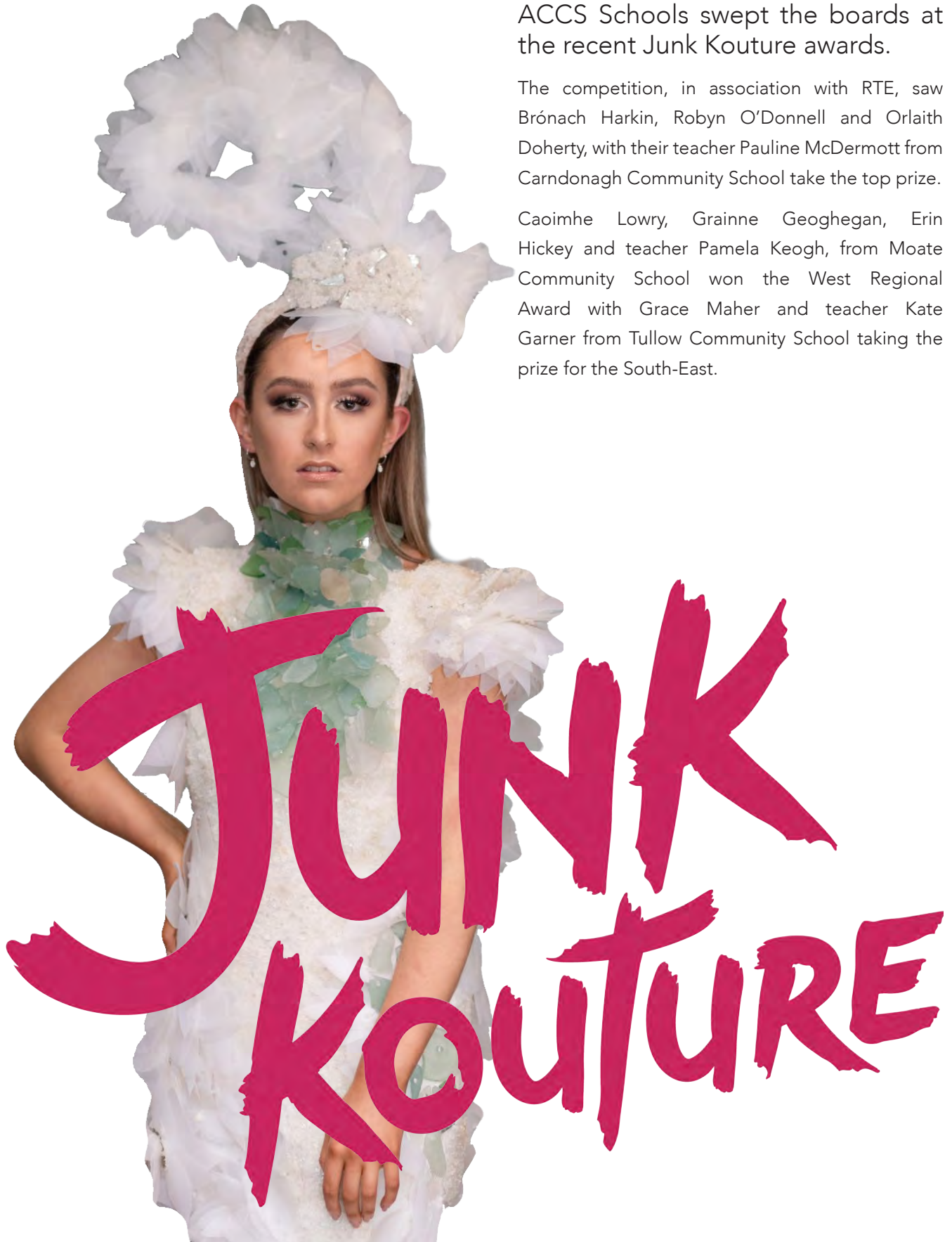
VSware, Dublin 8.

ACCS wishes to acknowledge and express its appreciation to all the companies and organisations that placed adverts with us for their ongoing support.

ACCS Schools swept the boards at the recent Junk Kouture awards.

The competition, in association with RTE, saw Brónach Harkin, Robyn O'Donnell and Orlaith Doherty, with their teacher Pauline McDermott from Carndonagh Community School take the top prize.

Caoimhe Lowry, Grainne Geoghegan, Erin Hickey and teacher Pamela Keogh, from Moate Community School won the West Regional Award with Grace Maher and teacher Kate Garner from Tullow Community School taking the prize for the South-East.



JUNK KOUTURE



CARNDONAGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Three students from Donegal have been crowned 2020 Junk Kouture winners with a fishtail gown made of sea glass, plastic milk cartons and recycled glass such as bottles and jam jars.

The event sees participants show off fashion creations they have made from everyday materials.

The 2020 final, which was to have been held in Dublin's 3 Arena last March, was cancelled due to the pandemic.

But the Junk Kouture team was determined to let the 2020 finalists

have their moment on the runway and in the reimagined final, **Brónach Harkin, Robyn O'Donnell and Orlaith Doherty** took the top spot with 'Synergy'. Under the guidance of teacher Pauline McDermott, Brónach, Robyn and Orlaith from Carndonagh Community School, collected sea glass to sew onto the dress, and made the glass panelling for the gown from scratch.

They also cut out every petal on the dress from discarded plastic milk cartons.

As overall winners, they walked away with €1,000 in prizemoney and a further €2,000 for their school.

Among the panel of judges were Louis Walsh and Michelle Visage, judge of RuPaul's Drag Race.

Visage said of the winning design 'I'm never going to look at a milk carton in the same way. I could be wearing it instead of drinking from it. That is unbelievable babes, you deserve it all.'

CEO of Junk Kouture Troy Armour said the Donegal students 'embody everything that Junk Kouture is about. They have a flair for fashion and sustainability is at the heart of this fabulous creation.'



JUNK KOUTURE



MOATE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A group of Moate Community School students emerged as the West Region winner in the Junk Kouture national final.

The students involved in the award-winning design were **Caoimhe Lowry, Gráinne Geoghegan and Erin Hickey**, under the guidance of Moate CS teacher Pamela Keogh.

'Blinded by Perfection' was the name of the Moate CS design. Made from vertical blinds, fringing, pull strings, and wire hinges, the dress represents how people are blinded by the pressures of social media and the relentless pursuit for perfection.

There was double celebration for Moate CS as Pamela Keogh was awarded the Teacher Hall of Fame award for her contribution to Junk Kouture over the years.

TULLOW COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Grace Maher of Tullow Community School was declared victorious in the South East Region in the competition which sees outfits made from recycled items.

Aided by teacher Kate Garner, her piece named 'Element 13' was successful in taking the regional title while also landing her a scholarship to Limerick College of Art and Design.

Winners were announced in a virtual ceremony.

In January Grace was one of two finalists to speak as part of Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week – ADSW Summit about sustainable fashion, budding creativity and how Junk Kouture can impact the way we treat our planet for the better.

Grace's dress, made from 43846 interlinked ring pulls, was assembled without using glue, wiring or cable ties.





BT YOUNG SCIENTIST & TECHNOLOGY EXHIBITION GOES VIRTUAL FOR 2021

The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition is much more than a competition – it is the experience of a lifetime for the students and teachers who take part. Designed to raise schools’ engagement in the critical subjects of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM), the Exhibition calls upon students aged 12-19 years from all over the island of Ireland to showcase innovative science and technology projects.

The 57th BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition was a unique event as over 1,000 students from over 200 schools took to the first ever virtual platform to set up their projects and begin to prepare for the exciting days ahead. Fans of the Exhibition and members of the global STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) community were able to access this year’s event,

for free, from all over the world via the portal. The virtual exhibition was officially opened by President Michael D. Higgins, who said in his Opening Address, ‘The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition has become an annual highlight in the school calendar over the decades. This year, in light of the restrictions relating to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, a spectacular virtual event has been arranged to help maintain and foster the climate of curiosity, creativity and innovation that the exhibition showcases on an annual basis and which I find so inspiring and uplifting.’

Our Community and Comprehensive Schools were of course well represented both on the exhibition floor and on the podium with a number of awards going to our students.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

MOATE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

The Group Winners award went to **Abby Mullins, Chloe Murphy and Megan Carroll** from Moate Community School in Co. Westmeath for their project 'Wool-Savior



of Our Sea'. These talented young students developed a project which looked at developing a wool blanket which allows the timely and thorough removal of oil slicks following oil spills. Their project was entered in the Intermediate group of the Biological and Ecological category.

The students carried out experiments with various types of wool. The results of their investigations show that all wool breeds effectively absorbed oil, with Fine Bred Grey being most effective in its natural form. The absorption of oil by sheep wool was attributed to the presence of a natural waxy oil in the wool. The students plan to further their project by examining the effect of weaving, crocheting and knitting on the oil absorption. The girls are stunned and delighted with their win.

Daragh Lowry and Conall Mandal took first place in the Intermediate Group of the Technology Category. These TY students designed an app, 'Moate Guide' for their project, an app to co-ordinate your awareness and knowledge of your locality. This app shows information on Moate and its significant places with pictures, sounds and narrations, along with quizzes and orienteering activities to target a younger audience. They developed their 'Moate Guide' in the programming language java using google supports. They carried out surveys to identify how they should design their app. They have introduced a prototype of the Moate Guide to their fellow students at MCS who found it user friendly and

interesting. The students plan to increase awareness of the knowledge, history, sites, amenities, etc in their



locality by making their app available to locals and visitors to the town.

Aine Maxwell, Joyce Conway and Laura Conlon won first place in the Intermediate group of the Biological and Ecological category. In their project, 'Stop Milk Spoilage; Start Seeing Changes', these TY students designed a milk carton, incorporating freshness indicators, that reduced milk spoilage and warns the consumer when milk is at risk of spoilage.



Using their findings, they designed a milk carton, using a blue colour to minimise heat absorption and including smiley face motifs with thermochromic dyes, as a visual reminder to consumers to return milk to the fridge when the carton temperature increases.

Second year students, **Reuben Guinan and Kian Brady** won first prize in the Junior Group of the Biological

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

and Ecological category. In their project '*Superfoods and their Effects on Diabetes*', the students analysed the Vitamin C, sugars and fibre content of various fruits and vegetables. They found when blending fruits like blueberries, the level of fibre is reduced, indicating



smoothies may not be the best for diabetics. Fruit or vegetables containing the highest Vitamin C and fibre levels and the lowest sugar concentration are most suitable for the diet of people with diabetes.

Shana Brady, Lauren Finan and Aine Broderick took second place also in the Biological and Ecological



category. In their project, '*An Investigation on the Impact of Diet on the Prevalence of Laminitis among Connemara Ponies*', their experiments included a habitat study, sugar content, dry matter content and a stem to leaf ratio experiment. They used their findings to recommend a better seeding mix for farmers in order to prevent laminitis. Laminitis is a condition that causes the hoof to be inflamed making it extremely painful for the horse or pony to walk.

Ava and Leah Hallissy along with Annie Duffy won a Highly Commended award in the Biological and Ecological category for their project '*The Future is Bright: Turning Organic Waste into BioFuel*'. The girls produced biofuel pellets from domestic compost like

fruit and vegetable peelings. They measured the heat of combustion of their pellets. They would like to express thanks to Dr. Sean Reidy and Christy Hopkins of the AIT for facilitating them with some of their experiments. Five other projects from MCS TY and Second Year students were presented to the judges: -

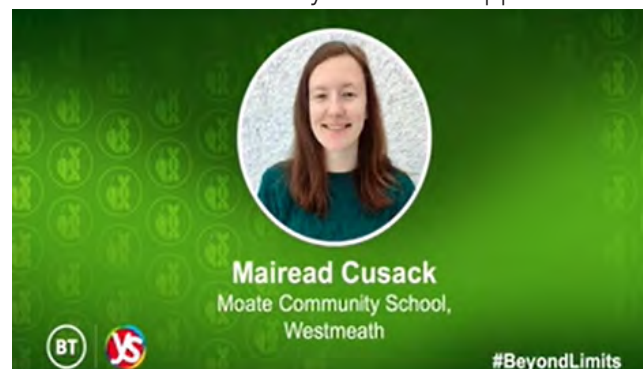
Labhaoise Foley, Kaytlin Flynn and Emer Killian: '*The Bird Feeder Infection Problem*'. **Caitlin Blom and Rachel Bermingham:** '*Investigating the Effect of Music on the Addictiveness of Video Games*'. **Tara Hamilton and Aine Egan:** '*A Statistical Analysis of the Effect from Home on Gender Stereotyping During Lockdown*'.

Niamh Kelly, Sarah McCormack and Skyla Looney: '*Examining the Impact of Lockdown on the Irish Diet*'. **Aine Macken and Mia Shelam:** '*Ironing out the Water Quality Issues on Irish Pig Farms*'.

PERRIGO EDUCATOR AWARD

Ms Mairéad Cusack won the Perrigo Educator of Excellence Award. Mairéad works tirelessly each year with the BTYS students focusing them on project ideas, advising them on their scientific investigations, helping with presentations in preparation for the judges. She is a truly inspirational science educator and a well-deserved recipient of this award.

The MCS students would like to thank Ms Cusack and the other teachers, Ms Irene O'Sullivan, Ms Margaret Mandal and Mr Colin Doyle for their support with the



BTYS projects. In recognition of the high standard of work and presentation, Moate Community School was awarded Best School at the BT Young Scientists & Technology Exhibition.

The students benefitted hugely from their BTYS experiences.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

KINSALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Kinsale Community School qualified 3 projects this year for the BT Young Scientist Exhibition which was carried out virtually due to the Covid-19 restrictions.

Aengus Price, a second year student won 1st place



in the junior category in the 'Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences' for his project 'Are Casein based plastics a viable, sustainable and eco-friendly alternative to oil-based plastics?'.

Aengus also picked up the 'Eli Lilly award' which rewarded his experimental work.

Christina Hurley, a first year student received a 'highly commended award' and **PJ Crowe** also in first year represented the school in the exhibition.

SCOIL PHOBAIL BHÉARA

We at Scoil Phobail Bhéara were delighted to hear that one of our transition year students, **Cathal O'Sullivan**, became the recipient of the



prestigious ABP Farm Safety Award at the recent virtual BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition 2021.

Cathal who hails from a farming background on the Beara Peninsula impressed the judges with his innovative and forward-thinking project that is designed to prevent accidental injuries and death from farm machinery accidents.

His device alerts users when they are too close in proximity to spinning machine parts thus preventing a person from accidentally coming into contact with them.



ABP Food Group which is one of Europe's leading privately owned agribusinesses sponsored the award for the seventh consecutive year. The award recognised projects that focus on improving farm safety and educating young people about the dangers of accidents on farms. Cathal explained that most accidents are caused by people becoming too complacent. Being entangled in PTO (Power Take-Off shafts), crushed under machinery parts or between vehicles, caught in mechanism and struck by objects are the main causes of deaths with farm machinery. The Department of Agriculture and Marine reported 19 fatalities on farms in 2020.

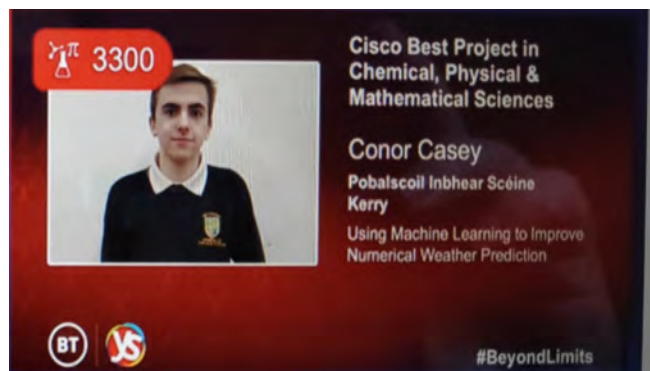
Annie Graham livestock manager of ABP said 'on behalf of everyone at ABP, I would like to congratulate Cathal on his successful award submission. His innovative projects embody the spirit of the award, finding new solutions to making our farms safer'.

The school community of Scoil Phobail Bhéara would like to extend our congratulations to Cathal and to his teacher, Mr Dara Crowley and wish them both continued successes.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

POBALSCOIL INBHEAR SCÉINE

Huge congratulations to Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine student, **Conor Casey**, who is continuing his scientific success with two awards at BTYSTE 2021. Conor won the Cisco Gold Award for Best Project in the Physical Chemical and Mathematical Sciences category as well



as coming 1st in senior individual in Physical Chemical and Mathematical Sciences.

Conor's project is titled 'Using Machine Learning to Improve Numerical Weather Prediction'. For the project, Conor created a computer programme and trained it on past weather data. This allows the programme to see patterns in weather and thus potentially increase the accuracy of weather predictions. His programme also uses substantially less computational power than is currently used to analyse weather (Met Éireann uses a supercomputer while Conor's programme runs on a commercial laptop). Conor is currently taking part in the BT Young Scientist Business Bootcamp and will be presenting his project at the Science for Development online showcase in March.

Conor has had a lot of science success throughout his time in Pobalscoil Inbhear Scéine. He won the Central Statistics Office Best Use of Open Data award at BTYSTE 2019 for his project on light pollution. This led to him winning the 'Rising Star' award from the International Dark Skies Association. He has won awards in the Vex Robotics Competition and is also competing in F1 in Schools this year.

He was also crowned Runner Up in the SciFest National Final in November 2020 and will be representing Ireland in the virtual ISEF (International Science and

Engineering Fair) in May and in the Hong Kong Global Youth Science and Technology Bowl in June.

SCOILMHUIRECLANE

Congratulations to **Lavinia Waldron and Priya Evans** on winning individual awards in their category: Chemical, Physical and Mathematical Sciences at the virtual BTYSE ceremony which was held live online this year.

Lavinia was awarded 2nd place in this category.



Her project was titled 'An investigation into the differences in contaminant levels in water from old and new pipe work systems in comparison to the levels at its original source'.

Project outline: Investigating the differences in water contaminant levels at source and at consumption of an old and new dwelling while identifying possible causes i.e., ageing pipes/environment.

Priya was awarded 3rd place in this category.

Her project was titled 'Sensor Data in a Time of Coronavirus: using environmental factors to generate a warning system for indoor spaces when safe capacity is exceeded'.

Project outline: An investigation that explores the possibility of using CO2 levels to determine when an indoor space is approaching or exceeding safe capacity during coronavirus.

We appreciate the guidance of their teacher, Ms Jenkins.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

CASHEL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Congratulations to **Megan Kirby and Ava Abbott** on being awarded 3rd prize in the Senior Group Social and Behavioural section of the BT Young Scientists competition.



The competition went ahead this year in virtual form due to Covid-19. This presented a number of challenges for the organisers and the teachers and pupils involved. The new format meant that the experience of three days in the RDS and all the buzz and excitement that goes with it was missing. Due to Level 5 restrictions on the dates of the competition it was reduced to a three-minute

introductory video submitted with your project book and this was followed up by three video calls from judges to the group members, who had to be in separate houses.


Despite the loss of the normal experience our two students really enjoyed themselves and had a great time. Their personalities and passion for their subject matter shone through and the judges were impressed.

The project titled, 'The Knock-On Effect', was a statistical analysis of the relationship between head trauma and the onset of mental illness. The girls carried out a massive 1500-person survey through their social media platforms and analysed the data to create correlations, present their findings and make recommendations for future care of head trauma sufferers. The subject matter is now very topical with rugby and soccer players grouping together to show how they are suffering following head traumas in their sports.

Well done to the girls who have continued a nice trend for our school following on from our First Place Award in the same category last year.

CASHEL COMMUNITY SCHOOL


A STATISTICAL CORRELATION BETWEEN HEAD TRAUMA AND THE ONSET OF MENTAL ILLNESS



THE KNOCK ON EFFECT!


A STATISTICAL CORRELATION BETWEEN HEAD TRAUMA AND THE ONSET OF MENTAL ILLNESS

By Ava Abbott and Megan Kirby



AIMS

- Our aim was to prove our hypothesis - That there is a significant link between head traumas and the onset of mental illness-
- We wanted to see if there was a possible intervention prior to the onset of mental illness
- We hope that this will aid in the knowledge amongst society of the long term effects that may occur post head trauma



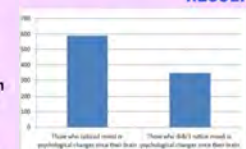
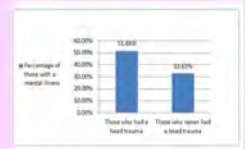
TIME BETWEEN TRAUMA AND MENTAL ILLNESS:

- 2.36% (0-6 MONTHS)
- 2.16% (6-12 MONTHS)
- 13.72% (1-3 YEARS)
- 2.16% (3-5+ YEARS)

Conclusion:

Any individual who suffers from a head trauma regardless of its severity should be evaluated by a psychiatrist or a psychologist 6 weeks post injury, 6 months and then a year later. This evaluation should be then followed up by a full neurological examination by a doctor. After a year, it will depend on the individuals cognitive and psychological state if they will require future evaluation

RESULTS/CONCLUSIONS:

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

HEYWOOD COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Heywood Community School entered three projects to the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition this year. To the delight of the students, their teachers and the school community all projects were acknowledged by the judges for their quality and depth of treatment.

Evan Hogg, a sixth year student who entered a project entitled '*The Regulations at Play Behind Your Physical Activity: A Statistical Analysis into How We Can Use SDT to Better Motivate the Nation to Participate in Physical Activity*', continued his remarkable run of form in the competition by winning his third award in three consecutive campaigns. On this occasion he was awarded second place in the senior individual Social and Behavioural Sciences category. This complements his success last year with a first-place finish in his category



and a third-place finish in 2019. Evan's results 'suggest that youth best respond to integrated regulation when it comes to increasing their physical activity levels. Therefore, integrated regulation should be the driving form of motivation for children in the exercise domain'.

Our newcomers to the competition, both groups receiving Highly Commended recognitions, are delighted with their performances and are eager to go again next year! One group of Transition Year students **Aoife Carey, Sarah Haide and Sinead Uys**, who entered their project entitled '*Is mental illness glamorised in younger generations and why is it a trend to self-diagnose?*', described their experience. 'We got our idea for the project because as teenagers we're exposed to the internet in a way that older generations have

never been before. There's been a huge conversation growing around mental health, especially online, but



this has also led to a huge amount of misinformation'. They say the experience of discussing their work with the judges was very rewarding.

Cillian Moran, another Transition Year student, entered a project called '*The Effect of Binaural Beats On Our Memory*'.

Cillian's research showed statistically significant evidence that binaural beats improve memory. The study supports the case for future research into the



utilisation of binaural beats as an effective memory tool in the field of Neurology with varying applications including use as a study aid, a memory enhancement tool and possibly as treatment for the memory loss associated with the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. Cillian found taking part in the first ever virtual finals of the competition to be a very rewarding experience from which he gained a fascinating insight into the field

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

of Science.

Facing into a time of further remote teaching the school community were of course delighted to hear the great news of the school's success again this year. Ms Joyce Byrne, head of the science department in Heywood C.S., congratulated the students involved and paid tribute to the excellent support shown by the supervising teachers Ms Fiona Barry, Ms Sharon Magner and Mr Aodhagán O Súilleabháin. Ms Byrne said 'The science department works brilliantly together every year. Every teacher in the department contributes their time and expertise to support the students in their work. The delight shared by the department teachers regarding the students' success this year really shows how involved and committed they are to their students' development. It is wonderful to be part of. The department looks forward to receiving expressions of interest in the competition from budding young scientists in the school in the future'.

TARBERT COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

'Rushes - a new energy source for heating homes?' by **Paula Eve Culhane & Jim Culhane.**



Rushes are presently seen by many as a weed and a liability on farms whereby farmers often end up having to spray or cut them which can prove costly. Our project investigates if a liability can be turned into an asset and so we set about investigating the potential for baled rushes to generate heat energy.

In Ireland, government policy is to move away from fossil fuels as a source of energy to more reliable renewable sources of energy together with low carbon options.

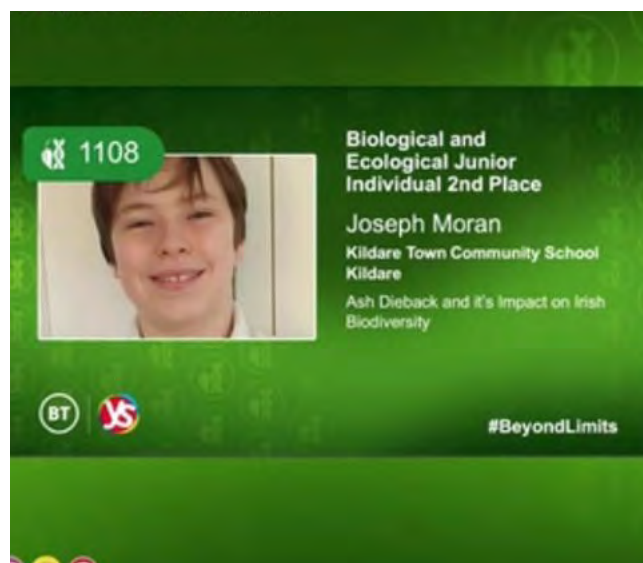
The main renewable sources of energy in Ireland are wind, solar and hydro-electric which cannot guarantee supply at all times of the year due to the fact they are variable in nature. We explored the potential of rushes becoming a more constant micro scale heat generation source. In order to do this we had to do much research on topics such as decomposition and heat prior to carrying out a number of experiments.

Our results, we believe could influence local farmers to provide baled rushes for heating their own homes together with other local homes and small scale businesses within a 20km radius and is a concept that perhaps could assist in providing a much needed solution to climate change.

Even though we are both first year students and the time for carrying out this project was limited, we thoroughly enjoyed the whole process and hope to extend our project in the future.

KILDARE TOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A massive congratulations to first year student **Joseph Moran** at #btyste2021. Joseph's project focused on the



problem of Ash Die Back, a disease which is causing native Ash trees to die in very high numbers. Many thanks to Ms O'Neill for all the support.

BT YOUNG SCIENTIST EXHIBITION

LORETO COMMUNITY SCHOOL, MILFORD

Congratulations to all students from Loreto Community School, for their efforts in the BYSTE 2021 Competition.

Projects included:

1. 'Do Horses Respond to Human Emotions': **Aoife Giles, Megan Hegarty and Victoria Gallagher.**



2. 'A sustainable Home Freshener': **Loren Connolly, Áine Connolly and Hannah Gallagher.**
3. 'A Chemical analysis of Hand Sanitisers': **Keeley Boyle and Aoibheann Boyle.**



4. 'An Investigation into the Practical Uses of Facial Recognition Technology and Biometrics, and the Experimentation of Available Open-Source Technology': **Ryan King and Ahmed Yousif.**

Aspecial congratulations goes to Megan, Tori and Aoife who came 3rd in the Senior Biological and Ecological Sciences Category.

The girls studied the effects of anxiety on animals and details of their project can be found on the school Facebook account. The girls will receive €150 prize money along with certificates and medals. Well done to the girls, their families, and teachers for all the work on their project.

Ryan King, fifth year, was interviewed by iRadio about his Young Scientist project. The link to the broadcast can be found on the school website.



STUDENT VOICE

ACCS STUDENT VOICE WEBINAR

On the 28th of January, members from various Student Councils and schools across Ireland were invited to attend the Student Voice Webinar hosted by the ACCS supported by NCCA. Niamh Madden (first year), Amanda Brien (second year) and I, Zara Keane (fifth year), attended this webinar representing Portumna Community School's very own Student Council.

The meeting was held over Zoom and we were given a briefing on the ACCS, their involvement with schools, and how they were welcoming student input and voice. A selection of schools present were given the opportunity to chat together in breakout rooms where we were asked to discuss the effect of changing from a normal school environment to remote teaching and learning; what improvements were made since the

The features of meaningful participation... (Lundy)



first lockdown in March, and what we could do better. Throughout the webinar there was an open group chat that could be read by everyone, focusing on the impact of the pandemic on us the students, over the past few months. This group chat was open to all students to voice their own opinions while the presentation was being delivered by the ACCS. This group chat was monitored by members of the ACCS where many students made excellent points and gave great ideas for improvement. However, the most interesting part of the whole webinar was when they invited students from different schools in a Q&A style session, to speak on different issues or experiences they and their school had found difficult and had overcome. The students that represented their schools were very well spoken and gave very valid points and ideas they felt would improve their overall online learning experience. It was a great insight for us to see how other schools had

responded to the ongoing difficulties of the pandemic.

Many students voiced their concerns for the Leaving Certificate and the Junior Cycle, the neglect that was felt by both students and teachers alike by the government in regard to the information & communications given on the education sector, and the timeliness of same. Further issues were also highlighted such as the stress placed on fifth years who were worried as to whether or not their future would rely on their fifth-year test/assessment results. Other ongoing issues such as student wellbeing and the lack of social interactions which is a central part of our face-to-face school environment were highlighted and discussed. Transition year students enlightened us on issues they were facing such as missing out on many of their trips and visits by guest speakers, and most importantly, work experience. First and second years spoke well on their experience in the lack of social interaction and how it was affecting them and their own personal wellbeing.

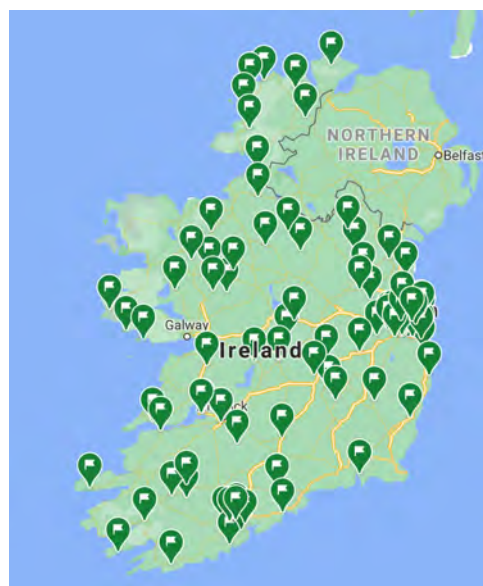
This meeting gave students the one thing that has been missing since school closure in December, a place to voice their concerns where they could be heard and indeed listened to at a national level, and a place where we could interact with other students with similar interests from across Ireland. Former President of the ACCS, Antoinette Nic Gearailt's presentation reaffirmed that our Student Voice was being listened to and will continue after our contribution to the ACCS Student Voice Webinar, where to date, a lot of work is being conducted behind the scenes.

A key takeaway from this webinar, and most importantly, is how it gave students a sense of community and understanding. It was a great reminder that we are not alone in our struggles and that we were being heard & listened to.

A round of applause was given to teachers, deputy principals and principals who attended as an acknowledgement and thanks from students for their efforts throughout this difficult time. Overall, it was beneficial and truly enjoyable experience for all present, and we can only thank ACCS, and in particular, Áine O'Sullivan (Assistant General Secretary ACCS) as our advocate for 'Student Voice', for giving students a small experience of normality again.

Zara Keane, Portumna Community School.

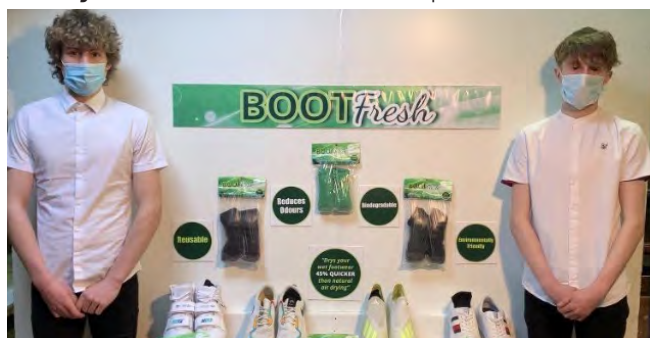
AROUND THE SCHOOLS



BALLINROBE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

MOST ENTERPRISING SCHOOL IN MAYO

We are delighted to announce that **Diarmuid Duffy** and **Ryan Corcoran** have won first place in the senior



category at the Mayo Student Enterprise Awards with their enterprise, Boot Fresh @bootfresh_

Ballinrobe CS also won the award for 'Most Enterprising School in Mayo'.

The boys will now go on to represent Mayo and Ballinrobe CS at the National Student Enterprise Finals in May.

The boys have worked extremely hard from day one with their enterprise and have showed true determination,

especially in these challenging times.

To come out as winners today shows how willing they are to forge ahead in the face of adversity and how adaptable they are to change - all excellent qualities for a budding entrepreneur.

The event took place online on Thursday 11 March and was hosted by Greg Fry, with special guests including James Gaughan and Peter Hopkins - Student Enterprise Programme Mentors, Elaine Moyles - Head of Enterprise at the Local Enterprise Office Mayo and Andy Moran - Former Mayo Footballer, two time All-Star and Footballer of the Year 2017, and owner of The Movement Gym.

Other teams from Ballinrobe CS involved in the competition were Defibrillator Finder, Ballinrobe - **Katie Fraser, Siobhan McGrath and Tamara Schulte** and JDW Sports - **Darragh Lynch, Jack Cahill and Warren Kelly**.

Well done to all who took part and represented the school with distinction, and well done to their parents and teachers for the help and support including Ms Laura Dwyer and Ms Rita Feeney.

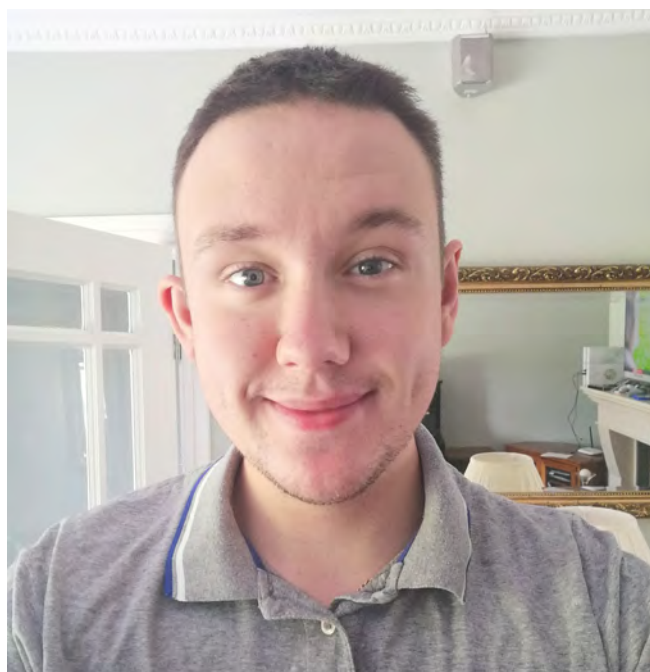
AROUND THE SCHOOLS

CASHEL COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Cashel Community School's pride as Past Pupils emerge as leaders at Third Level.

Brian Treacy and Eoin Hand completed their Leaving Cert in CCS in 2016. Both have been elected to representative student bodies in their respective universities. Brian was elected Education Officer of UCD Students' Union. Eoin was elected President of Trinity College Dublin Students' Union.

In his final year of undergraduate, Brian Treacy ran for Education Officer of UCD Students' Union and was elected. His role, beginning in June of 2019, was to represent the diverse opinions and interests of UCD



Students in relation to academic affairs. This included advocating for better policies and practices in areas such as quality of teaching and learning, library services, and examinations. With this, he was involved in the university's policymaking processes that made policy changes to how student democracy operates at the university level, the university's plagiarism policy, the student code, and the UCD 2020-2024 Strategy. Brian informs us: 'I gained hugely from my time as secretary of our student council in CCS, with the need to synthesize complex discussions and people's viewpoints being crucial to arguing and advancing the students' body's interests'.

Eoin Hand is the current president of Trinity College Dublin Students' Union (TCDSU). As Chief Executive Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, and Chief Financial Officer of the Union, a lot of his work revolves around



the day to day running of the Union, ensuring the work and direction of the Union is of a high standard. His position oversees an organisation with a €1.2 million yearly turnover, over 70 staff members, representing over 18,500 students. As a member of the Union of Student Ireland (USI), Eoin is one of 20 student presidential representatives standing up for the rights of 374,000 students from across the country and lobbying the government for continuous improvements to Third Level Education. He is also the Chief of Campaigns so is responsible for overseeing all of the campaign weeks, and for working with the USI on national campaigns such as housing and higher education funding. Eoin tells us: 'I have often had the pleasure of platforming the ideas of grassroots movements in Trinity to the national stage to inform and shape national campaigns. This is incredibly important in demonstrating how a single individual can have an idea that can change the face of Irish politics as has been seen with the viral 'Ring Your Granny' campaign TCDSU organised during the

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Marriage Equality Referendum in 2015'.

Both former students share how they got to their respective roles:

Brian:

I look back on my time in Cashel Community School with fondness. I was fortunate to make friends for life and to enjoy learning through and beyond the curriculum. Alongside teachers willing us to reach our potential in the classroom, extra-curricular experiences (in particular student council), shaped what I stand for today - Community, being at the centre. After my leaving cert I studied Social Science at University College Dublin, graduating with a 1st class honours. During this time, I was also class representative of the Social Sciences for 2 years and Higher Education Editor of our student newspaper, the University Observer. The common denominator behind the course and extra-curricular activity was trying to understand and address social issues, whether that be at a university, national, or global level. Here, I began to appreciate even more Cashel Community School's motto 'Foghlaim is Fírinne' (Learning and Truth). That philosophy, in my opinion, is a key driving force that allows a community of people to create a better world.

Eoin:

My journey to Trinity is a funny one. I didn't study any languages except the compulsory ones, leaving me with very little options for Arts degrees in Universities. Trinity only required Irish for the CAO. I came here to study music and the history of art and architecture as music was my passion and I wanted to explore some variant of historical studies. Through music I was so privileged to meet incredible people from all over Ireland, and the world. I was able to make lifelong friends through Trinity Music Theatre Society, performing with top class singers and actors from across Ireland and traveling across the country for Musical Theatre Intervarsities. Joining the a cappella group Trinitones was an uncomfortably Trinity experience. I became very aware of my transition from CCS musicals and tracksuits to an all-male singing group wearing black tie... Being nominated as a co-director gave me a wonderful managerial experience, organising gigs, customer

experience, finances, and coordinating 14 very talented singers to look and sound their best. Through Trinitones I was afforded the opportunity to travel all over Ireland, and to see the West Coast of America, and I can honestly say, travel is as much of a privilege as it is an educational experience - it is so important for shaping how we see the world and understanding different worlds.

The reason I ran for the position of president honestly was that I was inspired by my close friend Brian Treacy (fellow CCS student), who was the Education Officer in UCD while I was in my final year of music. I saw what he could do to better the lives of students in his university and the platform he had on a national level to enact real and long-lasting change for students. I put myself forward for the role with a passion to drive for change, to be an active part of my community and to stand up and deliver solutions for students, in their day to day lives, and in the longer term.

Both Brian and Eoin went on to explain the many difficulties posed by Covid-19. The pandemic has definitely been their biggest challenge. It has exposed the flaws in our own structures, systems, and culture and focused the mind on issues that students face on a daily basis. Covid-19 came as a deep challenge that required transparent togetherness between all members of the university community. Everyone here in the community of CCS are very proud of the achievements of Brian and Eoin and we wish them every success in their future careers.



AROUND THE SCHOOLS

POBALSCOIL ÍOSA MALAHIDE

'IS THIS NORMAL?'

Congratulations to our gifted artist, **Eva McParland**, (third year student) who was the overall winner of the Zurich Young Portrait Prize 2020!

Eva's portrait of her sister Ellen (10), depicting her wearing a face mask, won the overall top prize in this highly contested competition, entitled, 'Is This Normal?' Eva said that her drawing helped her to get through the pandemic.

Eva beat off competition from thousands of entries in all age-groups under 18. Her entry is a stunning piece of art and will be displayed in the National Gallery of Ireland until the 21st of March 2021, before going on a tour of Irish Galleries finishing in the Crawford Art Gallery in July 2021.

'We're confident it won't be the last artwork of Eva's to be displayed in the National Gallery. Well done, Eva! We are so proud of you!'



AROUND THE SCHOOLS

TY WINNER OF RELOVE FASHION COMPETITION

Congratulations to our TY student **Sarah Fogarty** who has been awarded the Best Evening Outfit winner in the Relove Fashion Competition, sponsored by Fingal Co. Council. Sarah's design was featured on TV 3 on the 23rd of February. The Relove Fashion competition was open to secondary schools in the Eastern Midlands Region and it encouraged students to take a deeper look at how their clothing is made. Students were challenged to design a unique piece of sustainable fashion to help students explore creative reuse options such as upcycling, repairs, alterations, and mending.



'We are all so proud of Sarah. Well done on winning this great award, during such difficult times. You have done us proud!'

The Judges said of Sarah's design:

'She sourced the items for her outfit from donations from her family and from her own unwanted belongings.

The items are made from silk, leather, P.U. leather, organza, cotton and nylon. Sarah has used an old sample from a bridal shop for the bodice and the overskirt.

It's great to find ways to repurpose and reimagine bridal dresses, as a wedding is the ultimate once off occasion. The reshaping of the overlaid with the flower petals again is quite a single technique but hard to execute with such an elegant effect.

This design required careful attention to detail, and we were very impressed with her research.'

KIND FIRST YEARS BEAT STORM JUSTINE TO RAISE €5,000!

Congratulations to **Orlaith Haverty, Amy Campbell and Lauren Whelan** (first year students) who walked through Storm Justine to complete a full 42km marathon, within their 5km limit, in aid of the amazing local charity 'Aoife's Clown Doctors'. They displayed a unique determination and positivity during such a challenging time!



The students were also mentioned on The Ryan Tubridy Morning Show, having raised almost €5,000 for this great charity.

'It's wonderful to see this altruism in our students! Thank you, Girls! You have brought a smile to so many children and their Families!'

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

CRESCENT COLLEGE COMPREHENSIVE ST COLMCILLE'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

On April 2nd, Good Friday, Crescent College Comprehensive will be hosting a virtual 5/10km charity run in aid of the Daughters of Charity.

The Daughters of Charity support persons with intellectual disabilities in the Limerick and Tipperary region. Crescent College Comprehensive is delighted to be raising funds for such a worthwhile cause. Many students have been privileged to work alongside this charity through the schools Fast Friends Programme and/or during their social placement in fifth year.

In preparation for the run, students and staff have been engaging with our Strava challenge. Each year group is participating as a team and working together to try and complete the most KMs in a given week. Competition between years and staff is heating up!!



Jersey Day at St. Colmcille's



Transition Year 4D Outdoor Pursuits



Registration for the run is €5 for students and €10 for adults and can be done through the miscellaneous easy payments section on [crescentsj.com](https://www.crescentsj.com) (<https://pay.easypaymentsplus.com/login>) There is a free t-shirt for the first 250 so get registered quick!!



Donation to St. Vincent De Paul

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

BISHOPSTOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Sixth year students in Bishopstown Community School returned to in-school learning with a fantastic surprise waiting for them. They were the first to experience the big reveal of our new collaborative learning space and study hub. Bishopstown Community School are very appreciative to Tomar Trust who supported and funded the redevelopment of an area of the school into a modern high spec learning space.



The Learning Hub is a flexible learning space which aims to support our mission in bridging the gap of educational disadvantage and assist students to reach their potential. As a collaborative learning space, teachers can use the Learning Hub for classes when they are using cooperative learning strategies. The space will be conducive to active and collaborative learning methods which is promoted throughout the Junior Cycle. Students in the junior years of the school

may use this exciting, modern space to prepare for their classroom-based assessments (CBAs) many of which require a level of collaboration and public speaking. Senior students will have full access to use the Learning Hub to work independently or with others after school for homework and study. The development of a student-centered study hub provides a more comfortable and attractive option for senior students to engage with after school study.

Teaching and learning is a dynamic and social process. Numerous research studies especially in the field of architecture, provide illustrations of how the physical elements of settings not only influence but also generate learning. The quality of the immediate physical environment that learners experience is so important, for as Leech and Moon contend the physical space is the third teacher (The Power of Pedagogy). An important question about learning places we create is 'What does this environment teach?'



The Learning Hub will inspire students and expose them to a space similar to that of a modern corporate workspace bringing together the classroom and workplace. Lorna Finnegan, Deputy Principal, hopes that 'With students being exposed to and facilitating access to this type of environment in school it will aid their transition from school to 3rd level education and the world of work. As a result, enriching the students' opportunities and experience by building a sense of belonging in such a work and study environment.' Students will develop confidence in being in this modern high spec environment while also fostering skills like collaboration, problem solving and communication.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

The Hub will promote and enable various modes of working and enhance relationship building.



The Learning Hub will allow students to develop skills such as managing their learning, communication and decision making, helping them to become more autonomous learners. Mark Mc Carthy, teacher, points out that 'A flexible learning space enables the student to be mobile and learn at school as they do in everyday life using technologies. We feel these are key skills students will need as they transition to further studies.'

James Crow, teacher, comments that 'Education is the portal to a better life. It has the ability to illuminate the path forward and give oxygen to dreams. Bishopstown Community School has been entrusted with the funding for this room and the finished product is proof of what can be achieved if one seizes the opportunities presented and stays the path in building something for the future. In many ways that is the basis of all education. For Tomar Trust's support, we are forever grateful'.

The development of the physical space will support teaching and learning practices in conjunction with investment in CPD, IT, Collaborative practice and giving



more opportunities and platforms for students and staff to flourish. The school has a number of staff engaged in the Instructional Leadership Programme which provides training in collaborative learning strategies.

The Learning Hub will provide teachers the space to try, test and share these methods with colleagues and students. The room will be used for clusters of teachers to share ideas and best practice.

Louise Keating, teacher believes the Learning Hub is 'An absolutely fantastic space that has so many



possibilities for teaching and learning. As part of the Instructional Leadership Programme this room lends itself to the many teaching and learning strategies that I have taken away from the course and can develop them through the use of this room. Students will be able to work together but with more focus and confidence. It will be a room that will certainly be in demand.'

After their first experience of learning in the space some students commented that the Learning Hub was a modern aesthetically pleasing space while others couldn't help equating the room to Big Brother. Comments from students quickly affirmed that this was a space they will embrace.

Edwina Gottstein, Principal highlights that 'We want this facility to be welcoming, comfortable and have all the resources necessary for our students and staff. A place where they will be motivated, where learning is active and collaborative, where they belong and are inspired. A place that shows that each of our students are valued. A place that they are proud of.'

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

ST CIARÁN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

TY ENTERPRISE

Easy Ex, our TY enterprise company have not let Covid and lockdown stand in their way. The company which builds exercise into your day have gone from strength to strength over the past 3 months. Four of our students **Carl Mc Govern, Oisín Craig, Sean Mc Dermott and Josh Keating** have 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 youtube clip telling you exactly how to complete each exercise.



The lads have been extremely successful already winning the student enterprise challenge in Meath last November during enterprise week and are at the moment preparing for the Meath County Enterprise finals at the end of March.

They have appeared on LMFM, Today FM with Ireland Fittest Family presenter Mairead Ronan and also on RTE News during the 1 o'clock and 6:1 News. This publicity has led to an increase in sales on their website www.easyexstickers.com. The stickers have become very popular with those working from home.

The lads are to be commended for the work ethic they have shown over the past couple of months, as well as their ability to remain motivated, work as a team, even if remotely, show initiative and direct their own learning. School may have been closed but life certainly went on for these TY lads. We are very proud of their efforts

and show that despite lockdown enterprises can still flourish.

TEFL

Transition Year students in St Ciarán's have taken the opportunity of working online and putting it to good use. In planning for TY on-line learning, TY Coordinator Mr Pat O'Sullivan decided to offer this opportunity to TY students as a valuable course which students could do from home while having the added benefit of offering future prospects to students.



Spearheaded by our English Teachers Ms Newman and Mr Cadden, our TY students have actively been engaged in pursuing a TEFL qualification

throughout the most recent Level 5 restrictions. Our TY students have seen the opportunities completing a TEFL course can offer them in their future careers and travels. They have applied themselves diligently with many of them having already completed the course and received their qualification.

TEFL training courses are specifically designed by TEFL teachers to equip learners with the skills, knowledge and, above all, the confidence to become a great TEFL teacher.

Students received the highest standard of TEFL training; from detailed course content to extensive support from tutors and a team of experts.

DROP EVERYTHING AND READ

With all the stresses and pressures on our students, St Ciarán's felt that now more than ever, it was important to continue to encourage students to read for pleasure.

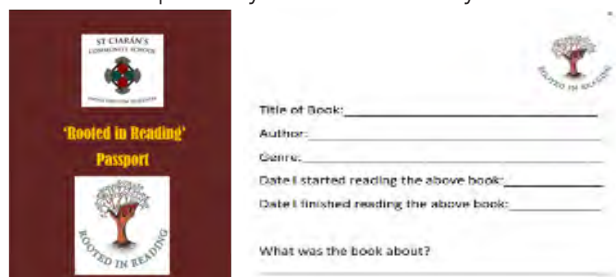
We have weekly scheduled Drop Everything and Read Classes for first and second year students. Each week it happens during a different class, it is a "surprise" for the students – We hope that it will encourage students to have a break from screen time during the week and encourage them to keep up their reading for pleasure and give them a little down time for their wellbeing.

For each session their teachers share a Microsoft form link with the class on Teams which students fill in after

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

they have spent their time reading.

This also ties into our Rooted in Reading initiative, where students keep a diary of the books they have read and



write a book review into their reading passport. Prizes are awarded at the end of the year for those who have read the most books.

Our school has also registered as part of the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards 2021 Junior Juries programme. Junior Juries is a unique programme designed to encourage children and young people to read widely and to engage with reading in an innovative and exciting way.

We can make our own selection of suitable titles from the books shortlisted for the KPMG Children's Books Ireland Awards and use the activity pack to guide students in their reading. At the end of this process each group is asked to collectively vote for their favourite book.

AISTRITHEOIRÍ ÓGA

Tá an comórtas seo ina chuid d'iarracht fhorleathan daoine a chur ar an eolas faoi thábhacht stádas na Gaeilge mar theanga oifigiúil de chuid an Aontais Eorpaigh.

Is iad spriocanna an chomórtais ardchaighdeán Gaeilge a chur chun cinn i measc daltaí scoile, an t-ilteangachas a spreagadh agus suim dream óga a mhúscailt i ngáirmneacha le Gaeilge.

Táimid fíorbhródúil as **Conor Molloy** a bhí páirteach sa chomórtas Béarla agus Gearmáinis á aistriú go Gaeilge. agus **Jack Glynn** é féin lárach arís i gcomórtas Gaeilge an uair seo ag aistriú Béarla agus Fraincise go Gaeilge.

Deis iontach ba ea é bheith páirteach I gcomórtas mar



seo agus tá siúl againn go néireoidh go bráth leo sa chomórtas.

WELLBEING WEEK 2021

At St Ciarán's this year, we appreciated that whole school wellbeing is perhaps more important now than it's ever been with national lockdown and school closure. This considered, the challenges we faced in facilitating a wellbeing week of events was more complex. Taking a virtual approach, and in consultation with Student Council and 'Jigsaw', we delivered a wellbeing programme that ensured our whole school community was able to participate, stay active and connected.

Our wellbeing coordinator Mr Daly understood that it was important to promote this initiative as widely as possible and have as much cross – curricular input as possible to ensure all aspects of the wellbeing indicators were covered. A small sub-committee of teachers created a wellbeing video that included our wellbeing coordinator, members of management, the P.E., religion and Irish departments and our Student council coordinator. Over the course of five days, starting on February 22nd, we aimed to raise one thousand euro for the jigsaw foundation while simultaneously asking our school community to run, walk or cycle 1,200 kilometers. To encourage positive participation and healthy competition, we held in conjunction with this, a 'Teachers vs. Students' element to our wellbeing week with one student from each year and three members of staff winning a spot prize and a no homework pass.

We were both surprised and glad of the immense uptake from our students and by February 26th we had surpassed our goal and had in fact raised 1,315 euro while reaching over 3,000 kilometers. Students and staff stayed connected through the strava app, uploading their activities each day with the added feature of students and staff being able to give 'kudos' to one another. Our fifth years did particularly well, coming in first place with 1,250km alone, other individual students walked as much as 100km in one day while another cycled over 189km during the week.

Even when not together, we remained connected as a school community through this wonderful experience, once again showing that even from home, we can achieve greatness together.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

KILDARE TOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Congratulations to **Aoife Casey**, a past pupil at KTCS and currently a psychology undergrad in UCD, who featured recently in the Irish Independent. Aoife describes life as a helpline volunteer:



'I got involved in NiteLine in my second year of college at UCD. I remember seeing posters for the service around the campus and it really struck a chord with me. People can struggle in college for lots of different reasons and it seemed like a really vital service.

I did my interview in September 2018. They asked me why I wanted to be in the service and I explained that I was studying psychology and I was really interested in mental health. Plus, it seemed like a good way of getting involved in student welfare and well-being.

A month later, I started my training. At NiteLine, we're trained in the Samaritans model of confidentiality, a non-judgemental attitude and non-directiveness, which means we don't give advice to people. We're just there to listen and help them come to their own conclusions.'

Kildare Town Community School commemorated the centennial anniversary of Bloody Sunday at Croke Park.



The centenary was marked with a visit from Kildare's legendary captain, Glenn Ryan, who captained Kildare in one of its most successful periods in recent history, in the 1998 All-Ireland Football Final.



School Principal, John Hayes, a native of Tipperary remembers Tipperary Goalkeeper, Michael Hogan and Glenn Ryan remembers Kildare's Mick Sammon, 1919 All-Ireland medal-winner and the Bloody Sunday referee.

KINSALE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

FEILTE SCOILE 2020

Our 6th annual Feilte Scoile was held on October 7th, 2020, and since 2015, when we hosted our very first Feilte Scoile, close on 60 teachers in this school have shared their expertise with colleagues. This collaborative collective process is a key element of the culture of our school community. It is a culture of cooperation and sharing designed to enhance the educational experience of our students. This culture was never as important as it is now. The pandemic has had a seismic effect on how we teach and how we deliver the curriculum.

It is because of the culture which Feilte Scoile created that we chose the 'digital champions model' of CPD and capacity building amongst our staff. We share our expertise with one another because we recognise that collectively our sum is greater than our individual parts. The structure of teacher groups for this year's Feilte Scoile was organised on the basis of our digital champions groups. The advantage of organising the event on this basis was that the digital leaders were well placed to discuss the content of each workshop with their individual groups as this session was progressing. This enabled further collaboration so that each teacher's understanding of the various features of this year's celebration was enhanced.

We are very fortunate that world acclaimed educationalist, Professor Andy Hargreaves joined us to provide us with a very valuable insight into our important work as we adapt our practices to meet the need to support and guide each other in the context of integrating technology into our praxis. Professor Hargreaves very generously shared the Chenine Charter with us. This charter sets out 10 key principles in respect of the use of technology in an ethical sense while ensuring that inclusivity is core. The charter also recognises that nothing supplants or replaces good quality teaching and the primacy of physical schools.

We are very grateful to the teachers who presented at Feilte Scoile 2020 and who shared their expertise, experience and insight with us. We are especially grateful to the students who participated. Student

voice in respect of our work at Feilte Scoile allows us to reflect on learning as well as teaching and this is very important as we endeavour to pursue excellence as a learning and teaching community in a world which has changed and requires us to change accordingly.

'DARING TO BE...CREATIVITY IN LIFE AND BUSINESS' WITH LORD DAVID PUTTNAM

In October last, TY Enterprise students at Kinsale Community School eagerly awaited to take part in a live master class delivered by Oscar winner Lord David Puttnam. The event was organised by the West Cork Schools Enterprise Programme with the running theme 'Daring to Be ... Creativity in Life and Business'.

The event opened with a welcome from Kevin Curran (Head of Enterprise, West Cork Local Enterprise Office) who highlighted Lord Puttnam's many successes in the film industry producing award winning films including *The Mission Fire*, *Midnight Express*, *The Killing Fields*, *Bugsy Malone* and West Cork's favourite, *the War of the Buttons*. Lord Puttnam's films have won 10 Oscars and 25 BAFTAs and he is also a member of the House of Lords in Westminster.

Lord Puttnam is also chairman of Atticus Education an online education company which was founded in 2012 and delivers audio visual seminars to students globally. Mr Curran also highlighted the importance of creativity and adaptability in business particularly during these testing times.

Lord Puttnam delivered a truly inspiring master class regaling the audience with his passion and work in the film industry and life experiences that led to his success. He spoke about his love of film from an early age where he spent most of his time enjoying the movies with friends. At 16 he worked in an advertising agency which encouraged staff to be 'fearless' and to take chances to do things.

Lord Puttnam's masterclass focused on four topics including resilience, adapting to change, creativity/innovation and digital technology. Some key messages he gave to students included 'Creativity is a muscle

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

and like any muscle you must work at it to improve' and he identified that resilience was a key component in life no matter what you do: 'You have to become extraordinarily resilient. You will have to deal with knockbacks'.

It was a very interactive event for students who had the opportunity to take part in a Q&A session with Lord Puttnam. The event concluded with a closing comment from Lord Puttnam 'There is nothing out there that is impossible if you really believe in yourself'.

ERASMUS PROGRAMME

In March 2020 just as Covid-19 was hitting the headlines Kinsale Community School applied to the EU to participate in an Erasmus+ programme. An Erasmus programme entails travelling abroad to a European country to engage in cultural, social and academic activities. At second level, an Erasmus+ programme involves the exchange of students over the course of a



week to collaborate with partner schools on a common project.

The school have partnered with schools in Germany, Sweden and Poland to work on a project entitled 'Challenges, Choices, Change – Our Mutual Footprint'. This is a climate themed project which aims to get students to:

1. Accept the **CHALLENGE** to fight for environmental protection
2. Make a **CHOICE** about what should and can be done/changed by us
3. Effect **CHANGE**

4. Be strong and efficient in working **TOGETHER** transnationally

During the project, five major environmental topics will be addressed. These are: nature conservation, waste, water consumption, sustainable food, and renewable energies. Besides making the Choice to reduce waste & recycle more within our school community, we



also hope to produce an Eco app that will help raise awareness of sustainable living (the Challenge).

22 enthusiastic TY students are part of the project, guided by teachers Ms Joanne McCarthy, Ms Eimear Murphy, Mr Shaun Holly & Ms Mairéad Dullea. The school are timetabled to host the first mobility (exchange) in March 2021 and timetabled to travel to Sweden in May 2021. Hopefully, these plans won't be severely hampered by the current travel restrictions due to Covid-19. In any case, Kinsale Community School has the technology at its fingertips to engage in a blended approach for the time being and given this is a two-year project the likelihood is that travel abroad will be possible at some stage.

The themes of the exchanges are:

1. Recycle today for a better tomorrow (Kinsale)
2. Always think outside the sink (Sweden)
3. It's always better when it's natural (Germany)
4. Renewable is the future (Poland)

Students are working in their chosen area of interest and will also collaborate with the Green Schools team with the aim of achieving a Green flag for the school. During the course of the project the team will share their progress through the eTwinning Twin Space.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

SCRATCH CODING

Congratulations to third year student **Conor O'Leary**, who we are delighted to announce was winner, of this year's National Scratch Coding Competition, in the 1st – 3rd year category.

Conor was selected as one of 30 finalists in the country to proceed to the National Scratch Competition for Coding. Conor attended the National Awards which took place virtually on Wednesday 4th November. Every year the standard of Scratch projects is high, with the judges having a really difficult job selecting 30 projects out of 500 entrants to proceed to the national finals. Having been awarded as the winner, Conor was commended for his excellent work and highly creative and entertaining Scratch project named 'Don't Fall Off'.



Scratch helps young people learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively – essential skills for life in the 21st century. Scratch teaches computational thinking and problem-solving using a powerful yet simple-to-use building block approach to app creation. Scratch is a fun and interesting way to introduce software development to students. Students experience Scratch as part of their Junior Cycle Coding course at Kinsale Community School.

PRODIGY LEARNING CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE AWARD



In August last, Kinsale Community School was presented with the Prodigy Learning Centre of Excellence Award. This was received in recognition of the delivery of over 250 Microsoft Office Specialist Certifications to transition year students in the 2019/2020 academic year. Well done to all the successful students and their teachers Ms Brosnan, Ms Cooper and Ms Mullaney.

OLD BAWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Old Bawn Community School have been chosen by Microsoft to illustrate the digital transformation they have under gone to other schools using the Microsoft Platform.

They identified really successful and sustainable methods for staff professional development, developing teaching and learning practices and student leadership.

Through trial and reflection they have successfully embedded new Teaching and Learning practices to support their learners in achieving lifelong skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and digital literacy whilst challenging students to achieve higher standards. The cornerstone of the work in Old Bawn was instilling teacher confidence in order to maximise students' potential. Improvements to their environment and infrastructure has meant that teachers are now able to design rich and varied learning experiences for their students that strengthen connection, enhance collaboration and develop creativity.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

EUROGUIDANCE IRELAND CAREERS WITH LANGUAGES COMPETITION

The Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Raphoe, Co. Donegal is very proud of Transition Year student, **Jennifer Holly** and her recent achievement. Jennifer was the overall winner in the NCGE/Euroguidance Ireland 'Careers with Languages' competition.

She is the proud recipient of an iPad while her class will benefit from an Interpreting workshop with Susan Folan (Interpreter with the EU). Jennifer's entry, written in French, included a compilation of a Europass, a CV and letters detailing her love of languages and her passion for the EU. She fully intends to pursue a career in politics and economics, with which languages are an invaluable asset.



Jennifer is a very talented student, making remarkable progress in French in her Junior Cycle years. She has a keen interest in languages, acquiring new skills of her own volition, chiefly in German but venturing into Spanish and Italian also, all while excelling in English and Irish! She has even established an interest in Latin and the languages of the Ancient World.

Congratulations to **Clifden Community School** sixth year student **Lorcan Gay** on his success. The entry was submitted in the target European language. Creating a Europass profile, translating a CV and writing a formal letter develops and enhances valuable career management skills.



Lorcan's entry, in French, builds on his previous experiences with a country where he has spent much time over the years and where he gained valuable work experience during Transition Year. Congratulations also to his Guidance teacher, Ms Anne Garvey.

We wish Lorcan «*Bonne chance*» in the Leaving Certificate and for the future.

Thank you to all the Guidance Counsellors, teachers and of course students, who entered our 2020 'Careers with Languages' EuroGuidance competition. The overall winner was:

Jennifer Holly (TY student), Royal and Prior Comprehensive School, Co. Donegal

*Guidance Counsellor: L. Shaw
French teacher: J. Gallinagh*

Runners up:

Lorcan Gay (sixth year student), Clifden Community School, Co. Galway

*Guidance Counsellor: A. Garvey
French teacher: M. Keating*

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

PORTUMNA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

GAA FUTURE LEADERS SOLO CHALLENGE

Due to the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic, we are living in very different times. The GAA / PDST Future Leaders Solo Challenge is designed to promote positivity, physical activity and wellbeing among young people, while encouraging them to stay at home and follow HSE guidelines at the same time. Transition year student, John Luke Reynolds created a brilliant video showcasing some excellent hurling skills by staff and students alike. This can be viewed on the school Twitter page. Looking forward to more challenges in the coming weeks.



Photos: Maria Scott, Mr Smith and John Luke Reynolds taking part in the GAA Future Leaders Solo Challenge.

PCS TIME CAPSULE

The International Time Capsule Society estimates there are 10,000 to 15,000 time capsules worldwide. Recently Ms Burke's first year history class added their own slice of time to this list. In a simpler era, all that was required for such a project was a container and a shovel, but regulations have changed that. Ms Burke's students had a lot of preparation and planning to do. The various administrative tasks were divided between the class: permissions sought, photographer arranged, the burying planned, mapping organized and a suitable container had to be sourced.

At first, there was some difficulty with finding a site which complied with planning. The initial choice turned out to be unsuitable. Eventually Tom Quinn provided

advice for a site and the excavation could go ahead.

Each student enshrined a handwritten letter to their future eighteen-year-old-selves and a small object



with personal meaning (equal numbers of Galway and Tipperary sliotars were submitted). The class worked with great enthusiasm and attention to detail. The capsule was buried on Friday 18th December at 13.00



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hours. The exact co-ordinates were recorded, and it is hoped that the time capsule will be excavated in



6 years, on Graduation Day. Many thanks to Mr Tom Quinn and Ms Brid Dunne who assisted in this venture.

FARM RELIEF SERVICES SAFE TRACTOR DRIVING COURSE



The Transition Year and Fifth Year students have participated in the FRS Safe Tractor Driving Course. Students were made aware of the legislation governing tractors on and off road. They were informed of the dangers when using tractors such as the common type of injuries and incorrect procedures. They were made aware of the tractor controls and their uses and functions and the various tractor symbols and warning signs.

By the end of the course students were also able to operate the tractor to an acceptable standard and



drive through a pre-set course. Feedback from the students who participated was excellent. Thanks to Ms O'Callaghan and Mr Fallon for organising. Thanks also to Portumna Mart for their facilities and also to Farm Relief Services, the course provider.

A WEBINAR WITH MARK POLLOCK



Optimist, Realist, or Something else?

Our Transition Year group got the great opportunity to attend a webinar presented by Mark Pollock and his team. Mr Smith arranged for Mark Pollock to talk to us about his journey to where he is today and how he constantly strives for a better future for paraplegics across the world.

Mark went suddenly blind in 1998. At the time he was a competitive international rower, winning bronze and silver for Northern Ireland in the Commonwealth

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

Games. He recalls that after becoming blind he felt he had to rebuild his identity and that he did! From New Zealand to the Gobi Desert and even the South Pole, Mark transformed from a spectator back to a competitor. He detailed the training programmes he completed and skills he had to master in order to be the first blind person to race to the South Pole.

In the summer of 2010, Mark was confronted by another obstacle. He fell from a second story window and was facing, it seemed, almost certain death. He spent 16 months in hospital, now transformed by paralysis. He remembers a physiologist saying that hoping for a cure can be more physiologically damaging than losing hope. Mark thought of the words of Admiral Stockdale, 'confront the facts while maintaining the faith.'



Now paralysed from the waist down, Mark began to work with an innovative treatment centre in California called Project Walk. He learned that groups in San Francisco were developing an exoskeleton or robotic legs to help movement and UCLA were working on using electrical stimulations to encourage the nervous system into working. Mark knew that all these different scientists and engineers had to work together in order to get the results they all dreamed of.

Mark began training hard again in order to rebuild his muscles and when using the rebooted legs, he could actually feel his legs underneath him once more. Mark stated that, 'history is full of accounts of the impossible being made possible by human endeavour and this is no different. When you are at 0 you only need to get to 1. By doing this you are taking control into your own hands and becoming a competitor.'

While in hospital Mark remembered asking himself the question, 'optimist, realist, or something else?' An optimist can also be positive about a situation or always maintain a certain amount of faith, but what is backing that? A realist accepts and understands a situation but still hopes and works for a better future. Mark stressed the importance of collaborating and asking for help, these things are what make us humans. He put into perspective how much change one person can make and how you can become a competitor and a realist.



Mark said that having clarity and knowing what you want to do is the first step. Once you have made this decision you must commit to it and maintain focus, and of course collaborate and ask others for help. You can apply this to anything in your life, whether that be getting an essay done, applying for a new job and working alongside the brightest minds to cure paralysis.

Mark closed off his speech with a phrase that really stuck with me, 'He who has a why to live for, always has a how.' We can find these 'why's' in everyday life: our family, friends, school, dreams and ambitions. If anything seems impossible you only need to look at why you are doing it. Mark found his why in helping others and creating a bright future for the 250 – 300,000 new spinal cord injuries every year.

It was an honour to attend his webinar, to listen to his story and have questions answered by Mark. It has been a standout moment from TY and one I will definitely remember.

By Hannah Killeen, TY, Portumna Community School

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

BLAKESTOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL

FLOURISH: ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAMME



In partnership with Fingal Arts Council, BCS took part in the Flourish Arts in Education Project in late 2020. The Flourish Project facilitated our TY students in having a creative encounter with the extraordinarily in-depth work of international artist, Åsa Sonjasdotter; through both an exploration of her exhibited work at The Project Arts Centre, and through the opportunity to creatively respond under the guidance of the artist herself.



It also gave our students a sense of the links between art and 'event' by connecting them with artist Fiona Hallinan, provided a framework to explore what it means to be an artist and grapple with questions concerning care for the earth, in a way that encourages curious, committed enquiry, critical thinking and a sense of agency.

BCS was selected as the only school in Fingal that would take part in the highly prized project. Fiona's workshop with students focused on the act of hospitality and how it can also be a tool for enhancing thinking. Students



shared stories relating to table manners, food utensils and rituals across families and cultures and crafted their inventive design ideas for utensils that respond to a need.



The entire workshop was delivered via Zoom from Fiona's studio in Belgium and proved an amazing experience from start to finish for our students. The school's interaction was captured as part of the Flourish documentary by Fingal Arts Council.

MINI-FOREST & OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

Having successfully completed the first Superproject with Fingal Arts Council, BCS was given a second opportunity to partake in a larger-scale project. Our students teamed up with artist Gareth Kennedy for eight weeks to transform an outdoor space at the back of the school into a mini forest with an outdoor classroom located within. Gareth's work is invested in socially engaged practice that addresses specific environmental, social, aesthetic and economic concerns within located contexts. Our mini-forest will increase biodiversity within the school grounds as we assist nature to take over.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

The mini-forest that encloses the outdoor classroom space will be an area where biodiversity can thrive.

Into the second week of the project, we were joined by Eoin Donnelly. Eoin is a fifth generation woodwright and our students learned first-hand from the master



craftsman. The skills he shared with them will stay with them a lifetime. Eoin shared his knowledge of timber felling, wood turning, and his management of native woodlands. Not only did the students get to learn about all of these things but they also got to experience and try them out for themselves. Gareth and Eoin showed students how to prepare the land and use a hands-on approach to turning soil and marking out their mini-forest. Gareth and Eoin had students actively engaged in their activities throughout and allowed them to take ownership of the development of their project.

430 native trees will be planted in the designated area surrounding the outdoor classroom space this term. The project will be launched officially in late April when the first leaves show.



MILLSTREET COMMUNITY SCHOOL

PERIOD PRODUCT - A GOOD NEWS STORY

Millstreet Community School has long eschewed the silence and 'We don't talk about...' mentality around periods.

In response to a query from two mature and forthright past Student Council members, Sarah Bourke and Jennifer Kelly, we started thinking about the largely unused Period Product dispensing machines in the toilets. Did it make sense, in this day and age, that students avoided using the machines because of the noise they made? Did it make sense that students would have to come to identified female teachers to



ask for sanitary products? Did it make sense that female students were, at times, collected early from school due to embarrassment because of periods?

We embarked on an experiment, whereby we emptied the vending machines and put easily accessible baskets containing period products on stands just inside the toilet doors. We waited to see what would happen...

All of the product disappeared in the first couple of days. 'Disaster', we thought but quickly reversed our thinking as we realised, that actually, it confirmed the need. They hadn't, after all, eaten them!

We spoke to the girls in each of the year groups and explained our thinking: They should not have to leave early on a day when they had forgotten period

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

products; They should not have to ask a teacher for period products - but we were clearly not in a position to provide period product for every young woman in the school, and that the product was available in the toilets for their use when they forgot to bring their own.

We restocked our baskets and have not looked back since. It is now over two years since we started and the cost has proved minimal.

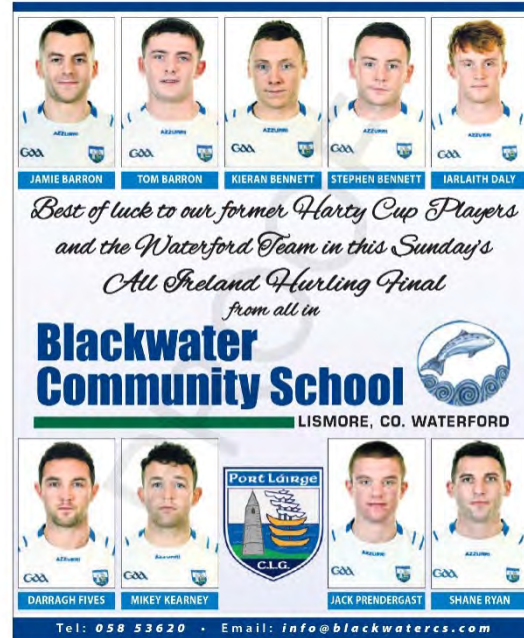
BLACKWATER COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Blackwater Community School acknowledges and celebrates success virtually.



Molly Kenny celebrates achieving 8 H1s in her Leaving Certificate.

Blackwater Community School salutes nine of its past pupils on the Waterford Panel in the 2020 All Ireland Hurling Final. (Kieran Bennett, Stephen Bennett, Jamie Barron, Mikey Kearney, Iarlaith Daly, Shane Ryan, Darragh Fives, Jack Prendergast and Tom Barron.)



Blackwater Community School Past Pupils & Harty Cup Hurlers, Stephen Bennett and Jamie Barron celebrate their 2 All Star Awards.



**BLACKWATER
COMMUNITY SCHOOL**
Committed to quality education

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

ST PATRICK'S COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

LEGALLY BLONDE - COMP SPECTACULAR WINS 11 STAGewise AWARDS!

In December 2019 we held our biannual musical with our production of Legally Blonde. A Comp musical is always a highlight of the school and community calendar and this production proved to be another success. We were immeasurably proud to receive the fantastic news that our school musical was nominated for a whopping 11 Stagewise awards.

74 schools took part in this new awards scheme which recognises excellence in secondary school musical productions. To be nominated in so many categories was a real testament to the calibre of show produced by the school. We are accustomed at this stage to the excitement that builds throughout a production and the inevitable lull once the show is over. These awards, however, proved to be a reason for the buzz to continue.



Our nominations included:

Best Front of House / House Management

Best Visual - Make up / Costumes / Props

Best Comedienne - Sinead Cahill

Best Actress in a Supporting Role - Alanna Willets

Best Actor - Cathal Culloo

Best Actress - Sally Fox

Rising Star - Sally Fox

Best Female Singer - Sally Fox

Best Choral Singing

Best Choreographer - Laura Gough

Best Overall Show!

The only thing to dampen our spirits was the change in format of the awards due to Covid-19. However, once the announcements were made online the excitement returned when we were awarded with Best Actor, Best Actress and Rising Star. We also came in 2nd place for Best Overall Show! Past pupil and choreographer, Laura won for Best Choreographer.

With continued restrictions delaying the arrival of the awards it was only recently that we had the opportunity to celebrate our wonderful nominees, winners, and participants. Our fantastic cast were given their Stagewise awards surrounded by their Legally Blonde family in the school canteen and given the fanfare they deserved. It may have been a smaller celebration than we were accustomed to but in true #CompStyle we made the most of it. We are so very proud of these talented students and the people who have supported, encouraged, and inspired them throughout their musical journey. Well done to all involved! We look forward to the next Comp spectacular!

ST PATRICK'S COMPREHENSIVE COMPANIONSHIP PROJECT

An Intergenerational Initiative combining Connectivity, Community & Creativity.

St. Patrick's Comprehensive School was the first comprehensive school in Ireland when it was opened in 1966. It continues to lead the way in progressive ideas and initiatives. This is very much the case with COMPAnionship – a new initiative to bring a sense of community to those who may feel it is lacking at the moment.

We were first approached by a local community group here called Love Shannon Group to ask if we wanted to get involved in their project to help raise the spirits

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

of the elderly in care homes in the area. It was from this initial suggestion that our idea sprouted and grew. We decided to combine the TY, LCA and Photography Club teams to work collaboratively on this project. The main initiative consists of a website created and maintained by our students and staff. On the website, we share pictures, videos, songs, poetry in an effort to bring some much-needed joy and happiness to the elderly in our area. It is especially aimed at those who may have to isolate/cocoon for much of the 2020 year. Whether this may be residents in care homes or those living in the local area, we hope that the site might be of interest to everyone.



We want to bring a much-needed sense of connection to the people who need it most! Our students, staff, parents, families, and friends have come together to send in special moments and highlights from their lives to share with others. The elderly in our community can see a walk with a pet, a trip around town, listen to a poem or a song in English or as Gaeilge and hopefully feel a connection to others. We hope that these moments may also be meaningful to people who have had to limit their experiences over the past couple of months.

In the lead up to Christmas we also worked with a local care home – Carrigoran House to bring some Christmas Cheer to the residents. Our TYs and LCAs worked to make over 100 goody bags with individual Christmas decorations for the residents. Also included were prayer cards created with photos taken by Olaf in our Photography Club. A large Christmas Tree was made and decorated as a reusable feature for their reception area too. Since then, we have also sent

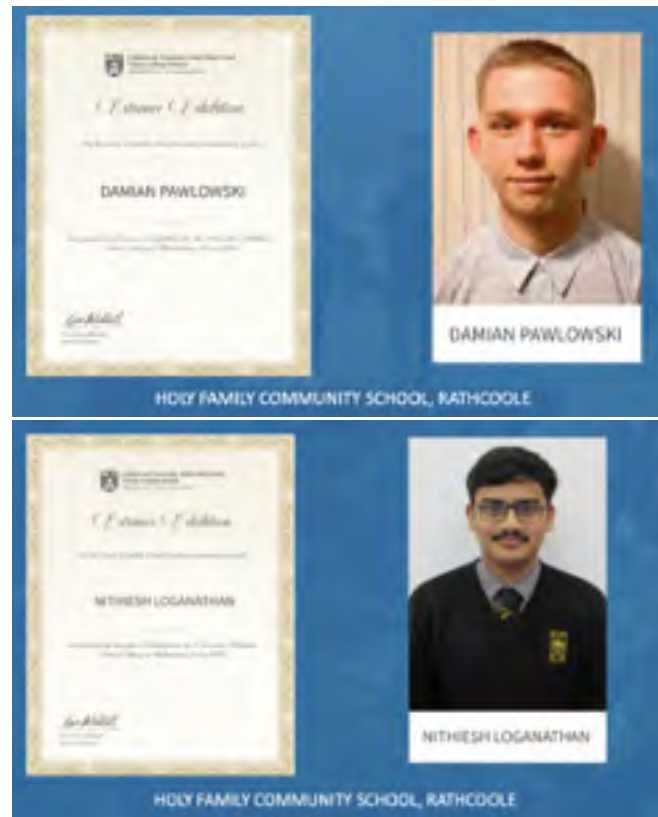
baked goods, framed photos from our Comp-Pix Club and flowers to the care home.

Our project continues with our Spring 2021 theme and our school community are adding to the content. We would love to see similar projects in other areas around the country. As restrictions lift, we aim to make the project more intergenerational by adding the voices and stories of the elderly in our community.

HOLY FAMILY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN ENTRANCE EXHIBITION AWARDS

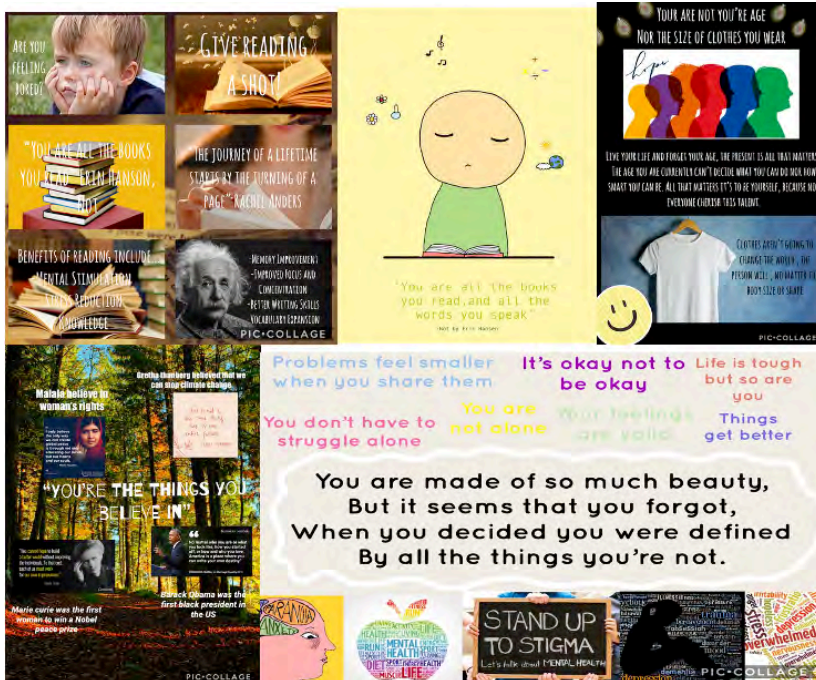
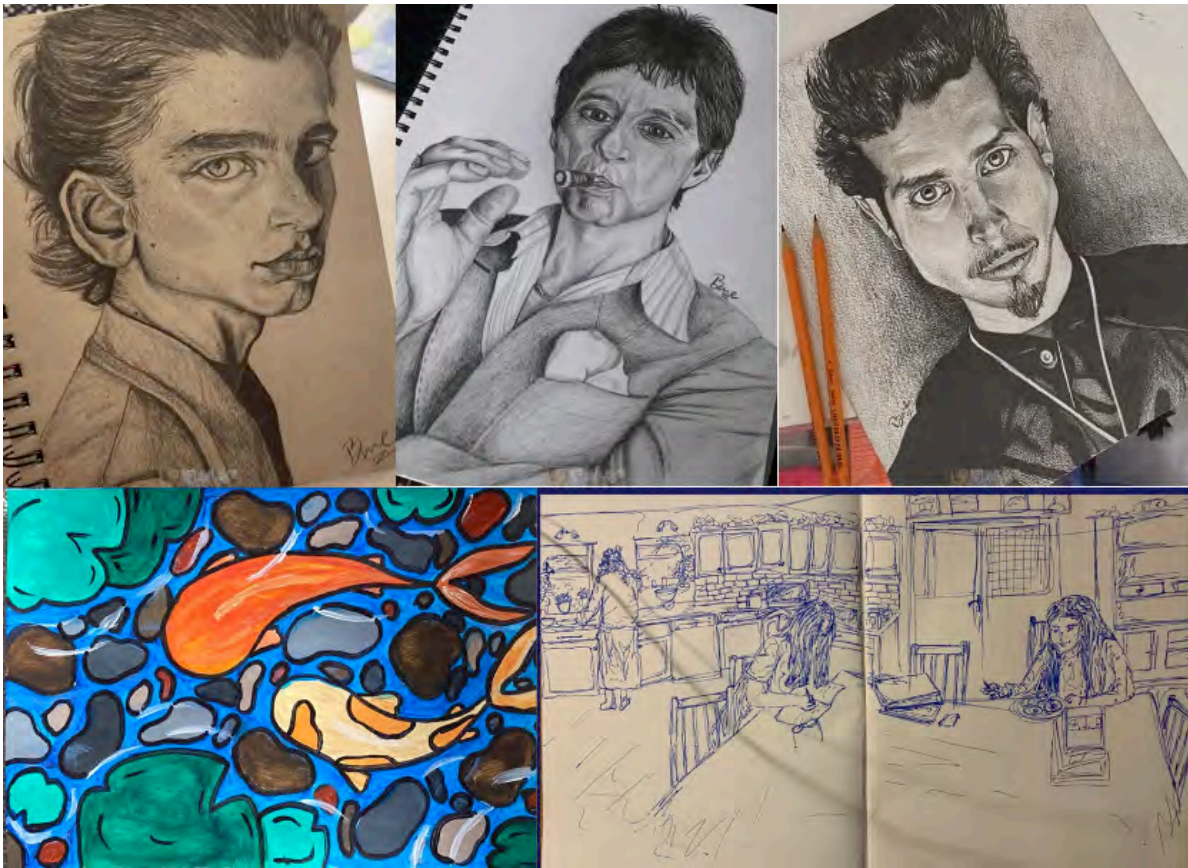
We would like to congratulate **Nithiesh Loganathan and Damian Pawlowski** from the Class of 2020 who have both received the Trinity College Dublin Entrance Exhibition Award. This award is reserved for those who achieve outstanding results in the Leaving Certificate. Nithiesh is studying Medicine and Damian is studying Biological and Biomedical Sciences. We are so proud of both young men and wish them every success.



AROUND THE SCHOOLS

BUDDING ARTISTS

Our students and our Art Department have been very busy over the last few years producing some fantastic pieces of artwork while working from home.



SECOND YEAR ENGLISH

Recently, second year students studied a poem called 'Not' by Erin Hanson. The students created posters using quotations from the poem as inspiration to promote positive messages/improve mental health. Some of the fantastic examples are pictured here.

TRANSITION YEAR: A DIGITAL PROGRAMME

Despite the challenges of Covid-19 and the impact on Transition Year in particular, our resilient cohort of students have continued to excel in online HIIT sessions, cookery tasks, skin care courses, online Barista training, Irish Sign Languages Tutorials, Law Education, Theory Test Practising, TY Come Dine with Me and loads more.

DOUGLAS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

USING VSWARE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR/WORK-RATE MANAGEMENT

In Douglas Community School (DCS) we have been using VSware as our management information system since 2017 and adopted the behaviour-monitoring tool from the start. After some initial adaptation, our system works by setting all students with a starting score of 100 points. Teachers and students together created a customised list of positive and negative behaviour incidents and decided also to include work-rate related comments. Parents have live access to their child's points record and progress is monitored by Class Tutors and Year Heads.

A Whole School Evaluation in 2019 suggested that positive interventions that the school has regarding student care and behaviour should be foregrounded. Our subsequent participation in the Learning School Project formed part of our response to this. The Learning School Project is an action research project organised by the Education Centres in Cork, West Cork, Kerry, Limerick and Clare.

A Learning School is a community of practice in which the culture is one of;

- Continuing reflection and inquiry,
- Commitment to the process of review and self-evaluation
- Participation in on-going development
- Nurturing distributed leadership

In autumn 2019 as part of The Learning School Project, the school conducted focus groups with students and teachers around positive care and behaviour interventions, as well as consulting with parents. Based on the feedback, a programme of promotion of the use of positive VSware points was implemented for a three-month period. This programme included close monitoring of points by Class Tutors and Year Heads, individual student interviews, promotion of the programme amongst students, teachers and parents and for a 'student of the month' for each class. Data from VSware was analysed to compare the usage of

VSware points during the promotion period with the corresponding period of 2018/2019. Second year points usage was also compared with the usage in other year groups. A survey and focus group of second years and teachers was used at the end of the process to reflect on our learning from the promotion of the use of positive VSware points.

Our campaign resulted in an increase in students, parents and teachers checking VSware points. Students reported being very happy with parental involvement. There was a 4-fold year-on-year increase in the use of positive points with second years. When promoted amongst teachers, there was an immediate increase in the use of positive points. There was also, interestingly, a 2-fold decrease in the use of negative points. Feedback from students was almost universally positive on the use of the positive points and on the continuation of the programme. Positive effects reported included improved self-confidence, improved work-rate, increased interest in academic performance and improved relations with teachers.

There were also some interesting findings. Three of the ten students with the largest number of negative points were also in the top ten for positive points. This indicated a tendency to award points to students for 'one-off' positive incidents and was also highlighted as an issue in the student focus group with students reporting feeling 'neglected' if they were getting neither negative nor positive points. There was an interesting significant increase in positive points awarded on Fridays and before holidays, but feedback suggested that this might be the least effective time to award them. Students reported that if positive points were given to a large group at the same time, that they were less effective.

Some feedback might be of interest to VSware as students correctly pointed out that the appearance of the pie chart on the platform can be misleading. They also asked could students themselves have a portal for access to the relevant section through perhaps as a student friendly app. Student feedback at the end led to some further adjustment to our own VSware comments section.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

The promotion of the use of VSware points in DCS has been a success and we will continue to use this as part of our positive behaviour and work-rate management. A continued attempt to promote the usage will be encouraged by senior and middle management.

Concluding with a thought - students suggested that they too would like to get involved in the allocation of positive points. Could we ever introduce such a novel example of student voice?

GOREY COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Congratulations to Gorey Community School Transition Year who won 2nd place in Group Category of The Creative Ireland Programme / RTE 'This is Art!

digital art competition. What has emerged across the quality of entries is the overwhelming talent, creativity, enthusiasm and thoughtfulness to the theme of This is Now.

Tania Banotti, Director of the Creative Ireland Programme, has congratulated the winners, saying 'Not only are our young people extremely talented but their work has demonstrated an awareness and wisdom that must be applauded. As a nation we should be very proud of them.' The citation states 'This is a Transition Year group project. Individual students made A2 self portraits, while wearing masks. The materials used for this work were charcoal and white conte. The overall effect of the work is eerie, given the materials and the subject matter, but perhaps reflects quite well the dark atmosphere this year.'



AROUND THE SCHOOLS

HARTSTOWN COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Adam O'Connor is the Dublin Minor Hurling Goalkeeper and a sixth year student in Hartstown Community School. He and his teammates decided to do something to give back to the community and do something positive during lockdown.

'We decided during lockdown that if we couldn't train, we would try and help some people in need,' says Adam. We all knew that people couldn't physically attend Pieta's annual event, Darkness into Light walk. We knew we had to do something to catch people's attention, so we decided to try and fundraise for them. We decided on Hurl for Hope which aimed to hit 500,000 sliothars in one hour across Dublin.'

'It was amazing to see so many well-known players get on board straight away. We then started asking younger Dublin players right down to the U14 team. They'll be coming through after us and we wanted to show unity in this project and have every team involved. Before we knew it, we had 250 Dublin players taking part,' says Adam.

'The reaction within the GAA was unbelievable. We didn't realise how big the GAA community really is until we launched the campaign. To raise over €20,000 so quickly left us gobsmacked. The help from everyone whether it be GAA clubs, schools, other counties, TV shows and radio shows, they all just wanted to help. It was amazing.'

With every Dublin player involved posting their attempts on social media, #HurlForHope began trending as donations came in from across the globe.

'It was a great sense of pride for all of us knowing that whatever happens and whenever we get to play our Minor Championship, we know that we did some good off the pitch as well as on it.' says Adam.



Adam has shown such great leadership in his endeavours to raise awareness for Pieta House. RTE wanted to showcase the major impact young men like Adam can have on their peers so they created an ad with Electric Ireland and the Dublin minor team to get their message of hope and support across the whole country.

Adam in his spare time makes hurleys and trains with the local GAA club St. Peregrines. He is a fantastic role model in our school who encompasses leadership and community awareness. Adam hopes to study Sport Science in DCU when he leaves school. We are incredibly proud of Adam and we are looking forward to seeing the impact his positivity and leadership will have on future generations.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ANNUAL FRAME OF MIND SHORT FILM COMPETITION

Run by St. Patrick's Mental Health Services

Now in its seventh year, Frame of Mind invites schools and amateur filmmakers to promote a positive mental health message through film, and, at this challenging time, the competition has never been more important.

With almost 100 entries received, this record high number has highlighted the focus people are currently placing on mental health. The competition was open to secondary schools and budding filmmakers alike, who were asked to create a short film of up to three minutes long which shares affirming mental health messages or addresses misconceptions about mental health difficulties. This year's competition also included its first ever TikTok category, just for schools.

St Patrick's
Mental Health Services



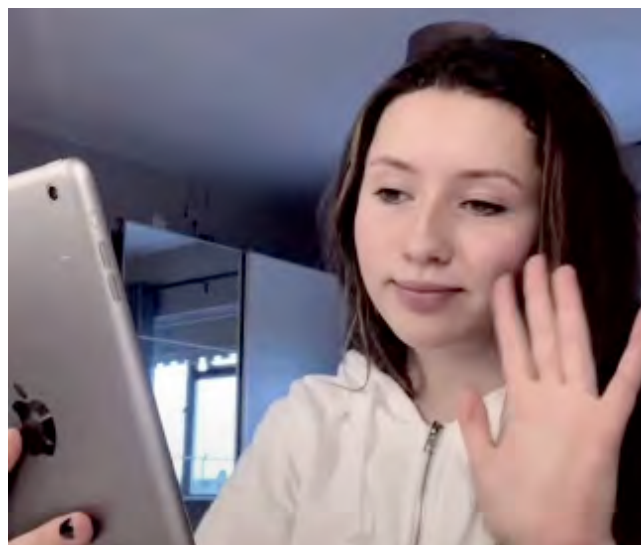
Although filmmakers were asked to follow public health guidance, Covid-19 restrictions did not hinder the creative talents of the entrants. The winners were announced at a celebratory awards ceremony which showcased their thought-provoking, inspirational films. Winners in each category receive a €1,000 prize and runners-up receive €500, with all selected by the competition's judges from the shortlisted entries.

This year's judging panel included Movies Editor of the RTÉ Guide, Michael Doherty; Sean Fitzpatrick of the Service User and Supporters Council (SUAS) of St Patrick's Mental Health Services (SPMHS); Tom Maher, Director of Services at SPMHS; and Tamara Nolan, Director of Communications and Advocacy at SPMHS.

John the Baptist Community School claimed the top prize with its entry 'Let's Talk about Mental Health,' in the inaugural Secondary School | TikTok category, and secured the runner-up prize with Mind Your Mind in the

Secondary School | Short Film category.

With the new TikTok category proving to be the most popular category for this year's competition, accounting for almost 50% of all entrants, judge Tamara Nolan said: 'We were delighted to receive such a high level of engagement this year, particularly from educators and young people, who, despite being faced with school closures and extraordinary challenges, have shown their commitment to prioritising mental health and wellbeing promotion, and to finding innovative ways to collaborate on film-making from their virtual classrooms'.



'Social media platforms like TikTok have been growing their influence worldwide since the pandemic began, with people looking for new ways to come together and connect socially while staying physically apart. The response and creativity shown reflects the appetite that exists to use these online communities to connect, and to create positive, uplifting and educational content to share with our peers.' Fellow returning judge, Sean Fitzpatrick, said: 'While we all continue to live with the pandemic and its challenges to our mental wellbeing, this year's Frame of Mind competition is particularly meaningful as it highlights people's ongoing dedication to promoting positive mental health and ensuring wellbeing is a top priority. I would encourage everyone to take time to view these videos, as there is something that will resonate with all ages, and many reflect how we are all feeling at the moment.'

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

LORETO COMMUNITY SCHOOL, MILFORD

Keen to remain connected and maintain the positive relationships fostered within the school, the staff at Loreto Community School in Milford, Co. Donegal, engaged enthusiastically in a series of wellbeing challenges during the current Lockdown.

The long winter days in front of the screen were taking their toll on teachers, as well as students, and the daily staffroom banter felt a million miles away. The first challenge involved staff taking photos which documented the daily walk within 5km of home. The



resulting photos could easily be included in a tourist brochure promoting the spectacular Donegal scenery. From impressive seascapes to sheep filled mountain trails, it was comforting to see Lockdown through the eyes of colleagues. The challenge of judging the competition fell to one of the retired art teachers who took on the role immediately. Prizes were sent by post to the winning budding photographers, and to all winners in the subsequent events.

The sameness of each day was punctuated by a weekly Kahoot quiz which began to bring the competitiveness of the staff into sharp focus. Questions ranged from general knowledge to 'How well do you know your school?' and 'Guess the teacher from their baby photo'. The laughter of these Friday events endured well into the weekend.

It was when the challenge turned to a kilometre team event that the competition really became fierce. Rumours began to circulate of staff members running late into the night, and the staff clocked up an impressive 5500 kilometres over a four-week period of walking, cycling, running, or kayaking. The honour of first place was worth every aching muscle to the winning team, who averaged 240 kilometres per week, for 4 team members. To end this challenge the entire school community engaged in a virtual 5k which facilitated a welcome break from screens for all.

Next came a celebrity cookery challenge. The staff were invited to cook one of two dishes chosen by Irish chef, Neven Maguire. He sent a light-hearted video



wishing the staff well and offering tips for success in the competition. Photos and videos were made documenting the culinary delights being produced all over Donegal. Look out Neven, your job may be in jeopardy!

The overwhelming success of the wellbeing initiative was found to be in the good-humoured buy-in by staff, and the positive vibes that were promoted. The variety of challenges offered a change of focus, and an escape from the challenges of Lockdown. Many were encouraged to lace up their runners and get outside on a cold, wet January, or February day. Above all, staff maintained a sense of belonging and, connection to a positive and encouraging staff community, and had plenty to talk about on the return to school.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

MOYNE COMMUNITY SCHOOL

While unfortunately schools have been forced to be quiet on the sporting front this year, one Moyne Community School student has been taking on and beating top international athletes at the 2021 European Indoor Athletic Championships held from 4th to 7th March at Arena Toruń in Toruń, Poland.



Cian McPhillips, a Leaving Certificate student and son of school Deputy Principal, Paddy McPhillips, shattered Irish records and easily bested the qualification standards earlier in February with a time of 1:46.13 for the 800m. Cian broke the Irish U20 Indoor record by a staggering 2.7 seconds and improved his personal best from 2019 by over four and a half seconds. This was also an Irish U23 record.

This success saw Cian selected for the Irish Senior Men's team for the European Indoor Championships. On Friday 5th March Cian ran in the heats of the 800m and a staggering display saw him finish 2nd and qualify for the semi-final. His display was one of the highlights of the Irish team during the championships. Many pundits covering the event for TV described his level of calmness and maturity as phenomenal in an athlete so young and in his first senior international outing.

Cian ran an impressive race in his semi-final, clocking a time of 1:48.06. In doing so, he set a new European U-20 record.

Cian is now a multiple Irish record holder across various age groups holding national youth indoor records over

1000m and 1500m, the outdoor 3000m record, U20 Indoor 800m, 1000m and 1500m records in addition to the National U23 800m record holder.

His achievements lifted the spirits of Moyne Community School, Longford and indeed the whole country who watched his progress on live coverage on RTE Sport. We are sure Cian has a very bright future ahead in elite athletics and we wish him well. First there is the little matter of a Leaving Certificate to complete!

PORTMARNOCK COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ORIGINS OF JERUSALEMA CHALLENGE

Over the past number of months in this pandemic a song by South African D.J, Master KG has been trending like crazy in the charts and on social media. The song Jerusalema began to trend when a group of fellow Africans from Angola danced to it and put it up on social media with a challenge for people all over the world to start dancing. It was known as the #Jerusalemadancechallenge on TikTok. The song has had over 2 million views now and that number is still climbing.



Recently a group of Swiss Police challenged the Irish guards to dance to it, we don't know why but in a recent interview one of the Guards involved in the challenge laughed and said that maybe it was an autocorrect and the Swiss meant to challenge their colleagues in Iceland. An Garda Síochána, in good Irish spirit stepped

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

up to this challenge and released their version of the dance which has had over one million views on social platforms.

Now to give you a deeper meaning to reflect on around this song based on an interview with its creator. This song is everywhere in the world and has taken on a very diverse and inclusive meaning for many people. In South Africa, before Heritage Day the President challenged everyone in the country to partake in a dance challenge and in doing so it was hoped that the diverse culture of South Africa could be celebrated and that their music could be more recognised around the world.



For others, this song has taken on a sense of unity and people appreciate how it brings us all together in a world that is broken and fractured. Some others have looked at the song to represent something of peace and to acknowledge countries where there is ongoing war and a desire for peace, particularly in areas such as the Holy Land.

The song itself is adapted from an old Gospel song called 'Jerusalem My Home', The song is celebrating this idea of a New Heaven and a New Earth coming together, where God has the power to restore and make all things new. We know that Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem but that was not the end of the story- there was resurrection. The hymn reflects the theme of promise and hope and expresses a prayerful tone where people are looking for salvation. A place where there is no pain and no suffering. A promised land where everything will be better and brighter. Master KG's version of the song reflects this theme where he

is calling on a utopian place. If we look at the English translation of the song, he is calling on a deity to walk with him, to keep him, to guard and protect him and take him to a better place.



When we look at how this song has brought people together through the internet, we can clearly see that all the people who have shared or partook in the dancing to this song clearly want to take people out of their heads, out of their worries and stresses, away from the struggles of this pandemic and into a better place, even just for a short while. These videos put a smile on people's faces, and as for the tune itself, it creates a mood whereby we want to dance like nobody's watching. This song without being explicit wants to take the human soul to a better place and perhaps this is why it has caught so many people's attention in the midst of this pandemic.

Master KG wrote his version so that it would reflect the present, and to remind us that we are not alone in these times that we are being held by each other and by a higher power. When we dance, we forget our troubles, life isn't about waiting for the storm to pass it is about learning to dance in the rain. Everyone can dance and we always feel better after a good dance. So as we continue to journey together during this time of pandemic, I encourage you to take some time to dance both physically and metaphorically. Dance and be free. So many different and diverse groups have taken on this challenge from school groups, to religious orders, to frontline workers, and there are some really amazing YouTube links to watch.

By Catherine Clarke, Chaplain, Portmarnock Community School.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

ST LOUIS COMMUNITY SCHOOL

YOUNG ST VINCENT DE PAUL

We are a group of students from St Louis Community School, Kiltimagh in Co. Mayo. Our group consists of nine transition year students from the Chaplaincy Team. We established a conference in September after Helen Ralph visited us and we elected a committee. We came together as a group every Tuesday up until Christmas and brainstormed ideas for Young SVP as a group.

THE SCHOOL STATIONERY SHOP

Our first project was creating a stationery shop in our school. This shop gave every student an equal opportunity to purchase stationery at an extremely low price. We sent letters out to local companies seeking sponsorship and donations. We were overwhelmed with the response we received. Our first arrival of stationery supplies came complimentary of Tacú in Ballinrobe. They had stationery supplies left over from their distributions and were very happy to see them go to such a worthy project. Helen, Young SVP Region Coordinator, also gave us stationery to get us started and soon the shop was up and running. This shop is a huge success. The young SVP students volunteer in the morning and break times along with the support from the Pope John Paul II Team and the Chaplaincy Team students. We look forward to opening up our shop once more when we return to school and adding in more items as a result of a generous donation, we received from the school's stationery supplier. Our overall hope is that this shop will be in our school for generations to come and that we will get to handover the baton to next year's Young SVP group.

SVP FOOD APPEAL

We also came up with the idea of a voucher appeal to replace the food appeal as this year we could not gather food due to Covid. Our first step was to contact local shop owners to communicate our idea to them. We got a really positive response from the businesses, so we decided to proceed with the initiative.

We created vouchers and boxes and left them in all the shops who expressed an interest in taking part. The idea was that members of the public would purchase

vouchers, the money used to make the purchase would go to the shop in question and the voucher purchased would be given to our local SVP who would distribute them to families who could then use them as currency to buy items in that shop. We raised a total of €1,275 for vouchers over the course of the two weeks leading up to Christmas. We were blown away by the generosity of our community and delighted to have had the opportunity to make Christmas a little easier for people in our community.



CHRISTMAS FUNDAY

For our third project leading up to Christmas we decided to run a Christmas Funday to lift Christmas spirits around our school. We also wanted to fundraise for the St Vincent De Paul. Students were encouraged to wear their Christmas jumpers and in return donate €2 to SVP. For the Funday we designed a quiz and gathered prizes for the winners. We also watched a movie as part of the day. We also held a raffle and prizes were distributed. The prizes for the day were sponsored by all the staff in the school. It was a really great day and again we witnessed firsthand the generosity of people, this time, in our school community.

We put a lot of effort into these projects and we are delighted that our school community and wider community will benefit from them. We enjoyed working together as a group and we hope to do more projects in the future. We learned so much from the projects and from each other with the aid of Helen and our school chaplain Ms O'Brien. Overall, it was a really rewarding experience, we all gained a lot from it. We are thankful to be part of a great group.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

DONAHIES COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Back to school at Donahies Community School - pictured include Daragh Herbert, Chaplain Con Kelly, John Lee (Coordinator ASD Unit), Karl Nolan (SEN Coordinator), Róisín Shanahan SNA, Joseph Heron, Michelle Keating SNA, Fiona Maher, Orla Butler SNA, Rachel Elueme, Evan Fagan, Eoin Conyard, John O Loughlin, Iwona Wasilewska, and students from the Leaving Cert French and Home Economics Classes.

AROUND THE SCHOOLS

BAILIEBOROUGH COMMUNITY SCHOOL

A WARM WELCOME WITH A DIFFERENCE

Bailieborough Community School's biggest achievement of the 2020-2021 academic year was to see their Leaving Certificate and Leaving Certificate Applied students return to school after the most recent lockdown.

They are our greatest assets and to see them walk through the doors again on Monday morning 1st March 2021 meant everything to us.

After all, what is a school without its students?

To mark the momentum, our care team placed a pet cloud and a wellbeing pack on each student's desk. (see below)

Our core business of quality education in a caring environment could now proceed! Long may it last...



STUDENT WELLBEING PACK CONTENTS

MOON: You are out of this world.

LOLLIPOP: Sometimes life sucks; but brighter days are to come.

PAPERCLIP/SAFETY PIN: To enable you to hold everything together.

RUBBER BAND: A reminder to stay flexible.

STARBURST/SWEET: To give you a 'burst' of energy when you need it.

CANDLE: May your light always burn bright within you.

SMILEY FACE: To remind you to keep smiling.

PLAYING CARD: To help you 'deal' with any situation.

FEATHER: To help lighten any workload!

TOOTHPICK: To remind you to 'pick out' the good qualities in others.

DIAMOND: Shine bright like a diamond.

MARBLE: To replace any you might have lost.

STAR: You are a star so aim high.

CRAYON/PENCIL: To make each day bright and colourful.

LOVE HEART: A reminder that you are loved.

BUILDING BLOCK: For laying the foundations of your future.

INFORMATION OVERLOAD!

With all the information overload, our deputy principal designed this powerpoint slide for our LC students and parents. This slide only reflects the subjects which our school offers. The template might be useful to other schools as a way of presenting information visually.

If you would like a copy of this template in powerpoint format, contact us in the school or the ACCS.

Your School Crest here

Your School Name Here
Leaving Certificate 2021 Important Dates and Information

Coursework Leaving Certificate 2021	Due Date
LCVP Portfolio of Coursework	March 12
Economics	March 15
Design and Communication Graphics	March 19
History	April 23
Geography	April 23
Agricultural Science	April 23
Engineering Project	May 7
Art	May 20
Construction Studies Project	May 28

Candidate Self Service Portal (CSSP)

Open from: 12 noon 10 March to 6pm 16 March

This is your opportunity to choose to sit the Written Exams

Choose to take the:

- Written Exams and/or
- Accredited Grades (AGS)
- Your subject levels

Note: After the 16th March you will not be able to indicate your intention to sit the Written Exams

The CSSP re-opens in late April/early May

You can choose to:

- Withdraw from Written Exams
- Change your subject levels in both Written Exams and AGS

The level chosen after this stage cannot be changed for the AGS. You can change the subject level on the day of the Written Exams.

Oral Examinations

Irish, French and German:

26 March to 15 April

Practical Performance Test

Music

5th to 9th April

Link Modules Written Exam: To be held in early May (date to be confirmed)

Written Exams begin on Wed 9th June

All students finish school 28 May

IN MEMORIAM

SR CLAUDE MEAGHER

JOHN THE BAPTIST COMMUNITY SCHOOL



Sr Claude was a vibrant, energetic woman who became a legend in the field of education. She was a visionary and pioneer with big dreams, an inspirational leader and motivator of people. Innovative, intelligent and persistent, she made an outstanding difference to the lives of those in the communities in which she worked and of those with whom she worked. Sr Claude was light years ahead in developments in education in Ireland for several decades. She was particularly to the fore in Co-Education being head of several amalgamations and also as founder Board member in the establishment of Community Schools in Cashel, Castlecomer, Heywood, Rathcoole and of course Hospital. These projects gave an outlet for her huge talents in community building, negotiation, persuasion, and forging relationships, allowing her to bring her vision to reality. She was President of ACCS from 1999 to 2001.

She involved all the partners in Education long before it was fashionable - religious communities, staffs, parents, students, local communities, Government Departments and Vocational Education Sector. The respect she showed to her fellow sisters in the Presentation Order gained her loyalty and support beyond measure. Her kindnesses to everyone, especially in times of suffering, brightened and helped those whose lives she touched. She had a tolerance and understanding of human frailty while seeing each individual's huge potential. She used her vast wisdom to guide and direct many young people in the right direction. Her ability to inspire self confidence and self belief in people doubtful of their

own abilities was evident throughout her life.

Sr Claude was born in Cappawhite almost ninety years ago. Her childhood memories were of a close and loving family. Her brother Michael was particularly protective of her, having been tasked by his father to look after his petite little sister, in a family of six boys and two girls.

She attended secondary school in Presentation Convent, Thurles and her fate was sealed. She gave many years of service as an educator and also roles with her congregation, holding high offices in the Provinciate. Her care of her fellow sisters was reciprocated in the wonderful care and attention lavished on her by her true friend Sr Declan and all her sisters in Presentation Convent, Hospital.

U.C.C. provided a wonderful opportunity to Sr Claude to flourish as a historian, scholar and lecturer. She returned to Hospital in 1972 having brought about a secondary school amalgamation between the De La Salle brothers and The Presentation Sisters, the first of its kind in Ireland.

So much development in Hospital was spearheaded and completed by her: Community School, Housing in Presentation Close, Building projects in the primary school. In all these undertakings she had the steadfast support of her sisters in religion and the local community, a testament to how she could relate to people and her affinity with rural communities.

The all-embracing love of people that directed Sr Claude's life was very evident in her work with CASA, caring for people with disabilities. Her lighter side and capacity for fun was evident in trips to Lourdes and many social gatherings.

Sr Claude had a presence, and one knew when she was about, in areas such as school corridors and yard, as an order would descend. This came from a deep respect as she was such a warm person to each individual, she met showing interest, concern and encouragement always.

Mary, Noreen, and Jim.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal dílis.

IN MEMORIAM

SEÁN SLOWEY

BALLINCOLLIG COMMUNITY SCHOOL

30 years have flown since my first meeting with Ardara native - Seán Slowey - who was at that time Deputy Principal at Ballincollig Community School. Speaking with a soft Donegal accent, Seán was enthusiastic and full of energy carrying out his many tasks. One year later I was co-opted to fill a 'Bishop's Nominee' vacancy on the Board of Management at BCS.

Today, reflecting on the life of Seán and the legacy he left to BCS we remember the life and times of a true gentleman. Since BCS welcomed its first students 44 years ago the school has seen three Principals with Seán the 'Bridge-Builder' between Dan Murray and the current Principal – Kathleen Lowney. Seán was one of the original teachers who started here at Innishmore on Tuesday, 14th Sept 1976 with teachers, Dan Murray, Michael Shields (DP), Ger Downey, Joan Lennon, Helen Walsh, Catherine Roche, Agnes Early, Mrs O'Connell, Alex Myles and Noel Sheehan along with Margaret Creedon providing clerical support.

From the small seed of 114 students the great oak tree grew and today BCS has close on 900 students, due to the endeavors of great teachers under the leadership of people like Seán. Many former BCS students are today employed all over the world. One of Seán's students was Brian O'Donovan, RTE News Washington correspondent whom we see daily on RTE Television.

In his role as Deputy Principal, Seán attended Board meetings in a 'Watching Brief' capacity to support the school Principal. He had responsibility for discipline at BCS, which was not the easiest task. He carried out this function in a professional manner and was often complimented by the BOM. Tributes paid by former school students on the RIP condolences site bear testimony to this. He was deemed to be firm but fair and dealt with students in a caring and compassionate manner.

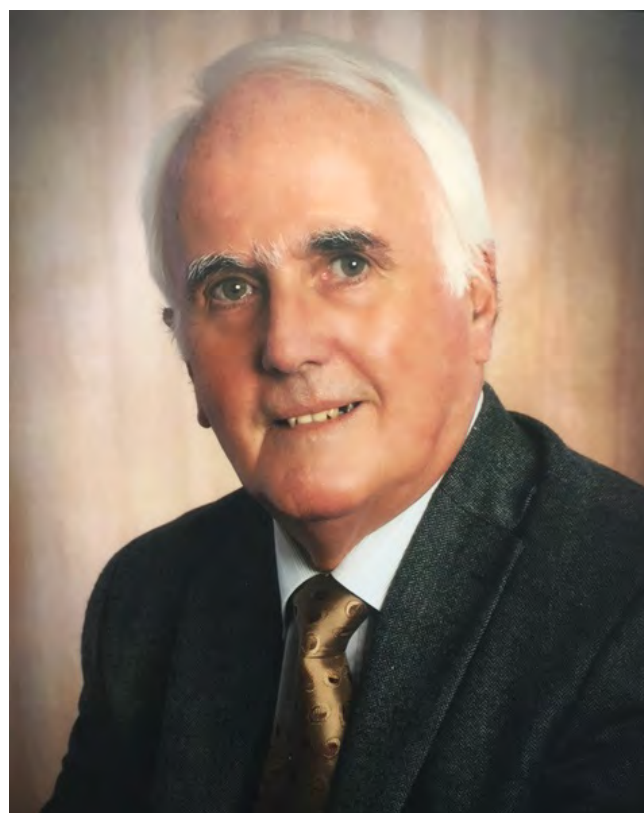
Over the years I attended a few ACCS Conferences in the company of Mr Murray and Mr Slowey. While in their company they instilled their belief that 'It takes a village to rear a child'. They were extremely proud of Ballincollig Community School, its teachers and

Support Staff and the message from them was 'It's the team effort that brings success'.

In 1995 Seán battled serious illness and after undergoing surgery he made a marvelous recovery and returned to resume his role at BCS. Students were relieved and happy to hear his whistle once again and his chant 'back to class'.

On 21st Sept 1997 members of the BOM enjoyed the celebrations that marked 'Bliain is Fiche ag Fás'. One year later we witnessed the 'Changing of the Guard' when Dan Murray, Principal retired and handed the reins to a very capable Seán Slowey. Shortly afterwards he was elected to ACCS National Executive.

Seán was a Principal with many new ideas and



established a 'Book Rental Scheme' for BCS well before the Department of Education introduced the scheme. During his five years on the ACCS National Executive he secured one of the very first Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) schools for Ballincollig.

In December 2002 history was created at Innishmore when 600 school students moved into a modern school building. In September 2003, the BOM, Teachers, Staff & Students enjoyed a wonderful day when Mr Micheál

IN MEMORIAM

Martin, TD & Minister for Education performed the official opening. One year later, with 28 years loyal and dedicated service at BCS, Seán Slowey retired. He handed the reins to the new principal, Ms Kathleen Lowney.

In his retirement years, Seán was not idle and served for close on ten years as President of 'Retired Principals & Vice Principals Association' where he looked after the concerns of its members. Three years ago Seán's health deteriorated and he was cared for and supported by his loving wife Geraldine & family. He died peacefully at home and was buried in the 'Town he Loved so Well' Ardara, Co. Donegal.

Go Raibh Leaba Aige I measc na Naomh.

Tim Bowe (Board of Management)

Seán Slowey had a profound influence on teaching staff and students alike, during his 28 years as teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal at Ballincollig Community School. He was a pioneer and leader in the field of education. Seán understood the concept of the Mission Statement, long before it became part of the lexicon of the DES. Seán's mission statement was: 'The best for the best, is the best for all'.

Seán was deeply committed to the needs of students in Ballincollig Community School. He believed passionately in the Transition Year concept, with its emphasis on alternative learning methodologies, self-directed learning, intellectual, social and personal development and exposure to the world of work. BCS was one of the first schools in Cork to make TY compulsory for all students.

Seán was passionate about politics and trade unionism. At each general election, he organised a general election for students in the school. He hoped that they would understand the concept of proportional representation and develop a lifelong interest in politics. Seán was a ball of excitement from January to March each year, in anticipation of the ASTI Convention at Eastertime. He religiously read each and every motion, from every branch in the country and had a considered opinion on each.

Seán was fair and supportive of staff and students alike. Teachers who worked with Seán, attest to his supportive nature. You always knew that Seán would have your

back. You also knew that if you disagreed with him, that he would have it forgotten in minutes.

Seán's dedication to the PPP project was legendary. We, the staff who worked in the original building, would find it impossible to describe to younger teachers, the impact the new building had on our working lives. Seán allowed us to plan the building and each subject department had an influence on the final structure. By allowing us to collaborate in the project, we all had



skin in the game, and we were as proud as he was of the finished product! It still surprises me that it took the DES so long to adopt the concept of distributed leadership! Ballincollig was lucky that Seán Slowey passed this way.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

Anne Marie Daly, Teacher

I was so sad to hear of Seán Slowey's untimely passing on the 3rd December 2020. Ballincollig Community School, the local community here in Ballincollig and the educational world in general, had lost one of its stalwarts.

Seán's legacy lives on. Many of the structures that Seán instituted, live on today and are firmly cemented in the work that we still do at Ballincollig Community School. Our school building, one of five pilot structures in the Public Private Partnership model, will be a powerful manifestation of his insightfulness and his mission to provide the very best for the young people of Ballincollig. We are hugely indebted to him.

His impact on the educational world was felt well

IN MEMORIAM

beyond BCS. This was evident through the numerous calls and tributes we received from colleagues around the country. In amongst these colleagues, were some Principals who first met Seán as they were setting out on their leadership roles. They were full of the words of wisdom Seán had imparted to them – particularly advice on dealing with the DES!

I was privileged, not only to succeed him in the role of Principal, but to grow to see him as a very wise friend and mentor. I loved our chats over coffee – even if I did have to endure Seán reminding me every now and then, of his plans for his next trip to France!

I felt such sadness as I watched Seán's cortege, drive away from Ballincollig on a windy December morning. It was a poignant departure - watching as Seán left behind the place over which he had such an influence, on his final journey to his beloved Donegal.

Seán will be much missed and long remembered. His life's work that was BCS, will be in there amongst his accolades for ever.

'What you leave behind, is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but it is woven into the lives of others'. (Thucydidas)

Kathleen Lowney, Principal

EILEEN GARVEY

ST PATRICK'S COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL PAYS TRIBUTE TO PIONEERING EDUCATOR

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a hanam dílis.

We were profoundly saddened to hear of the recent passing of Mrs Eileen Garvey, one of the pillars of St Patrick's Comprehensive School and of the wider Shannon Community.

St Patrick's was the first Comprehensive school in Ireland and shortly after its foundation in 1966, Eileen and her husband Clem joined the teaching staff. Eileen taught English and Clem taught Music.

Originally from Castleconnell, on the outskirts of Limerick City, Eileen was part of a group of pioneering educators from various parts of Ireland who came to the newly built town of Shannon and put down roots which flourished then and continue to flourish today.

They were visionary in their expectations of what St Patrick's Comprehensive could become and they worked tirelessly to achieve their goals.

Eileen was central to this vision. She was involved in every aspect of school life particularly, in partnership with Clem, in music, drama and the Arts but arguably she made her greatest impact as an English teacher in her beloved school library.

She was instrumental in encouraging generations of independent learners and critical thinkers decades before such ideas became the fulcrum of our current educational thinking, and her Library classes remain an integral element of our first-year English curriculum. Under Eileen's tutelage, students were welcomed into her world of books and introduced to the magic of reading.



Thousands of students passed through the extensive library at the heart of the school where Eileen took the time to get to know each and every one, fostering in them an interest in literature but also nurturing them and encouraging them in all aspects of their young lives. The library was and continues to be an oasis, a retreat for many from the hustle and bustle of the vibrant corridors of the Comp., where the kindness and gentleness of Mrs Garvey awaited any student who found themselves in need.

She was a lady in her dealings with everyone in the school community and supported our school in its many endeavours after her retirement. Her professionalism and genuine pleasure in the achievements of her students and of the school were very much appreciated by those of us who followed in her footsteps.

Recent Relevant DES Circular Letters

CIRCULAR NO.	SUMMARY
CL 15/21	Update to the Teacher Fee Refund Scheme – Prioritisation of Funding
CL 11/21	Post-Graduate Certificate/Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development for Teachers working with Students with Special Educational Needs (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
CL 10/21	Teacher Fee Refund Scheme 2020
CL 09/21	Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuing Professional Development For Special Education Teachers, 2021/2022
CL 08/21	Graduate Certificate in the Education of Pupils on the Autism Spectrum (AS) for teachers working with Pupils on the AS in Special Schools, Special Classes or as Special Education Teachers in mainstream Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 2021/2022
CL 04/21	Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2023
CL 03/21	Waiver of Abatement of Public Sector Pensions under Section 52 of the Public Service Pensions (Single Scheme and Other Provisions) Act 2012
CL 02/21	Arrangements for Inspectorate Engagement with Post-Primary Schools and Centres for Education January – June 2021
CL 81/20	Revised Procedures for the Upgrading of Grade III Secretary Posts in Schools to Grade IV Posts (Revision to Section 7 of Circular F39/1997)

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

MINISTER FOLEY ANNOUNCES NEW MEASURES TO SUPPORT DEIS SCHOOLS

On March 1st Minister Norma Foley TD announced the following measures to support the work in DEIS schools:

- An extension on the School Completion Programme to include the 14 post primary schools newly included in DEIS in 2017.
- A 5% increase in funding for the School Completion Programme to support the attendance and participation of vulnerable learners and those at risk of educational disadvantage.
- A reduction of the enrolment threshold for the allocation of an additional deputy principal in DEIS Post Primary Schools from 700 to 600 pupils.

