

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
YOUTHREACH CO-ORDINATORS

# NEWSLETTER

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**Dundalk Students Win National Engineering Awards.**

**Ballyfermot Youth Reaches For The Stars.**

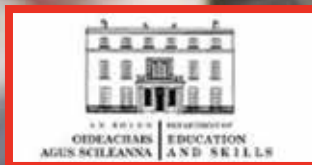
**Sligo celebrate 150th Birthday of W.B. Yeats.**

**Poetry From Youthreach Kilbeggan.**

**The Garda Band Entertain In Ballymun.**

**Ballina Student Visits Strasbourg**

**and much much more**



# News From Our National Co-Ordinator Gerry Griffin.

## EUROPEAN PROJECT

### Second Chance Schools Working with Systematic Measurement of Outcomes (The SMART Project)

I would like to bring to your attention the following European Project that I am involved with Shane Cullinane, Youthreach Co-ordinator, Limerick City through the auspices of LCETB (Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board). The project has been developed by Euricon in conjunction with the partners. A huge amount of work had been done by all partners before the project was accepted by Léargas and other national agencies.

At this stage, the project is just at its infancy and we just had our first official partnership meeting in Copenhagen, Denmark just before Christmas to set out the overall action plan for the development of the project over the next two years. It is hoped that the outcomes of this project will be embedded into the practices and policies of the Youthreach Programme going forward depending on the intellectual outputs of the project that are planned. I am hoping to keep you updated on the project at various intervals over the life of the project, through a number of articles, newsletters and the project website/Facebook page. The website/Facebook page is presently under construction. The project is titled "Second Chance Schools Working with Systematic Measurement of Outcomes". We are using the acronym "SMART – Systematic Measurement of Achievements and Results". The SMART system will provide the justification and improvement of the measurement tools for the overall project. The duration of the project spans from September 2014 to July 2016. The project is funded under the new Erasmus+ programme through Léargas.

The project consists of the following partners:

- ART27,
- Bräckegymnasiet Lindholmen,
- CESIE,
- Copenhagen Youth School,
- Euricon,
- Limerick and Clare Education & Training Board
- Aalborg University.

For further details on the project, please check project website at [www.edu-smart.eu](http://www.edu-smart.eu)

Gerry Griffin, National Co-ordinator  
January 2015



Second Chance Schools Working with Systematic Measurement of Outcomes



## Positive Mental Health Week in Youthreach Balbriggan

As part of Youthreach Balbriggan's SPHE Programme, 'Positive Mental Health Week' was held in the Centre from 10th to 15th November. In preparation for the week students drew up a 'bucket list' of what they felt staff and students could do to create a positive attitude and atmosphere in the Centre. Suggestions from this list were incorporated into the week.

The week started off with the Centre being decorated with balloons, banners and music being played. Daily affirmations were read out each morning at assembly. Throughout the week students were involved in the preparation of healthy breakfasts and healthy lunches.

Spot prizes were given for random acts of kindness and 'smiles of the day' photos were displayed for all to see. Key events during our 'Positive Mental Health Week' included a talk by Stephen Maguire from Smart Performance who shared his life experiences and spoke about the importance of Positive Thinking. Also during the week students held a bake sale in aid of Jigsaw Balbriggan (Headstrong) and raised €160.

'Positive Mental Health Week' was a great success in the Centre and we are looking forward to holding a bigger and better week next year!



## Youthreach Ballinrobe Hotel Catering and Tourism Task



*Leaving Cert year 2 students from Ballinrobe Youthreach*

On 25th November 2014 the LCA year two Hotel Catering and Tourism class organised a soccer tournament in Ballyheane Sports Centre. They invited 12 Youthreach centres to participate in the event from the Western Region Youthreach centres.

All hands were on deck the previous day, cooking scones, muffins, vegetable soup, soda bread and brownies. Staff and students had to endure the aroma from the kitchen and settle for tea and toast.

All the hard work paid off on the day. There were gale force winds and the soup proved to be very popular with all concerned. All the centres complimented the catering staff on their wonderful display of food, and went away happy.

The event was a fundraiser for Temple Street children's hospital in Dublin. The proceeds from the day were €320.00.

### Selection of Goodies for Tournament



## **Tralee's Paulina Takes Part In National Balloon 'One in Five Women' Action**

I am second year student on Leaving Cert Applied programme with Tralee Youthreach in Co. Kerry. As a part of my Contemporary Issue Task, I had to do an action to create awareness about a topic I have chosen. My task was about sexual assault and I decided to participate in the National Balloon 'One in Five Women' action, for solidarity with Women Living with Domestic Violence. National Balloon action is a nationwide solidarity campaign to highlight the levels of domestic violence against women in Ireland. The campaign is run for 16 days all around the country. During the 16 days most organisations dealing with domestic violence in everyday life have come up with different events and provide information to create awareness around the area they are based in. You can take part in the campaign or make your own small event if you want. It is totally free of charge and it is not time consuming. Everyone can volunteer and help create awareness among people they know. Also as a part of my task I invited a speaker from Kerry Rape and Sexual Center to speak to my class so they could better understand the point of this action. On the same day we blew up the balloons with helium so they will fly up when we released them. Everyone from my group got one balloon and we went to Small Park next to the KDYS building and counted from three. All of us released balloons at once so they all flew up in to the sky in a bunch. I was happy that I could organise a small event to help create awareness among young people that knowing about Domestic Violence is important and is a very serious cause. I really enjoyed the day and it was important to me that all of my class took part.



*By Paulina Mroczek*

### **Students help bring Christmas to children who have never experienced anything like it before!**

On Friday 24th October 2014, the Tralee Youthreach Leaving Cert Applied students took part in the Team Hope Christmas shoeboxes appeal. TEAM HOPE is an Irish aid charity, working with children, their families and communities in Eastern Europe, former Soviet Union and Africa. Team Hope ask people to fill a shoebox with a range of simple Christmas gifts, and drop it off to a local drop off point before November 10th, they will do the rest to make sure the boxes meet all requirements and are delivered to the children .

As this was my task I was responsible for telling the students what was involved. I decided to invite and organise a speaker from Team Hope to come and talk to the Students. She explained they had to save money and bring in new or unused gifts from home that they didn't want any more as this was for a good cause. They also had to go get a shoebox and wrap it so they could put their gifts into it. They had to pay €4 before we could send the boxes away.

Everything worked well as everyone brought in something. We filled 20 boxes which I delivered to the local drop off point. I think this event went well because students were telling me how good they felt having the chance to help children who are in need. I enjoyed doing the Team Hope shoebox Appeal because we were helping out to ensure the kids could receive something for Christmas so they could celebrate it.

Selina Coffey  
Tralee Youthreach LCA

### **Work Experience at Sam Mc Cauleys Chemist.**

As part of my Leaving Cert applied programme I was required to complete 2 weeks work experience in December 2014. I decided to do my work experience in Sam Mc Cauleys Chemist which is located in Manor west Tralee Retail Park in Co. Kerry.

I had the opportunity to work with many different staff members and I mainly worked with Christine, Aoife, Sarah, James and Leon. Each day I did something different. My role involved doing stock take, pricing items and reducing products in the store. I learned a lot about cosmetics about all the different types of skin tones and how to test for allergic reactions to the skin. I also got experience in taking orders for stock around the store and how to check if items were in stock through the tills. I was always on my feet working. Another area I liked was dealing with customers and learning about customer care.

This really was a great experience of working life. There was absolutely nothing I disliked about this work experience. Overall I learned a lot of skills that I will use in many years to come and I enjoyed every minute of my work experience. In my future I can see myself deciding to do a course on beauty.

Cheyenne Cunningham  
Tralee Youthreach LCA.

# Shanagolden Hold Mental Health Awareness Day

We had a Mental Health Awareness Day here in Youthreach Shanagolden to celebrate the week that was in it and it was a great success. Together with the students we ran workshops in Mindfulness, Art Therapy, Gratefulness; Naming & Letting go of our worries, fears and anxieties. The students gave 7 Oral Presentations on Post Natal Depression, Skin Cancer, Bullying, Suicide, Smoking cessation, Healthy eating, Healthy Heart; the students completed an expectation and evaluation of the day and this will be used to complete a contemporary issues task for LCA and to work towards getting an Amber flag for our centre.



# Dundalk Students Win National Engineering Awards



*Photographed left to right: Noel Woods, Engineering Teacher, Dundalk Youthreach, Helen Anderson, 3rd place, Laura Engele, 1st place and Margaret McDonnell, Dundalk Youthreach Co-ordinator*

On Saturday last 15th November, two Dundalk Youthreach students from the class of 2014 were presented with National Awards. The Awards Ceremony was organised by the Engineering and Technology Teacher's Association (ETTA) sponsored by Eirgrid. It took place in the Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Co. Kildare. Helen Anderson was awarded third place in Ireland for her Leaving Certificate Applied Engineering results while Laura Engele was awarded first place in her Ireland for her Leaving Certificate Applied Engineering results. Both students were presented with certificates and Helen was presented with a Bronze medal while Laura was presented with a Gold medal. Their proud teacher Noel Woods was also present at the Awards Ceremony. This is the fifth time Noel's students won awards for their Engineering results. The co-ordinator and staff of Dundalk Youthreach are very proud of their achievement and wish them well in their future studies.



# Monaghan Youthreach Christmas Events, December 2014



Richie Heffernan, Tyrone Mc Cann, Naomi Byrne, winners in the Monaghan Youthreach spelling comp'



Throughout the month of December students were busy working on the Monaghan Youthreach annual Christmas display which can be viewed in the window of Cavan & Monaghan ETB, Market Street Monaghan.



The winning entry created by Kirstin Mc Quaid



Monaghan Youthreach says NO to Drugs. Some of the entries to the art competition which involved designing a poster with an anti drugs message.



Anne Davenport pictured with student Kirstin Mc Quaid. Congratulations Kirstin on your achievement. Monaghan Youthreach staff and students bid a fond farewell to Anne who retired from the centre in December 2014 after 11 years of service. Wishing you every happiness in your new adventure Anne

## Ballyshannon Host Presentation of Awards

Ballyshannon Youthreach learners (past and present), parents, guardians, officials, supports and colleagues came together to celebrate the fantastic achievements of the learners at their Presentation of Awards held in the Lakeside Centre on 12th November. It was a great afternoon for all who came. An organising committee of learners was set up a few months previously and they organised the whole presentation from contacting speakers, booking the venue to their own MC! There were various awards handed out, including FETAC Level 1, 3 & 4 certificates, GAISCE medals, FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid certificates, Manual Handling awards, Basic Food Preparation certificates and in-centre awards including Outstanding Leadership, Best Attendance, Most Improved and many more. A special word of thank to Aaron Fee (our MC on the day) who did an outstanding job, speakers Ciara Heraty, Rebecca Timony, Andy Halliwell (work experience employer from the Organic Centre), Mark Granaghan (parent of past and present learners), Michael Collins (Gaisce) and Cróna Gallagher (AEO). They helped to make the day a huge success and highlighted to all who attended just exactly what we are about at Ballyshannon Youthreach. Just a few photos from the day; have a look at our Facebook and Twitter pages for more!



## Busy Year in Cootehill Youthreach

Once again Cootehill Youthreach are having a busy year! We had three learners complete the programme having achieved their QQI Level 4 National Certificate and we welcomed three new learners to our programme.

All staff participated in the Quality Framework process which has assisted us in focusing on the year ahead.

Learners and staff attended a very informative 'Roadsafe Roadshow' organised by Cavan County Council which aimed to highlight the dangers and consequences of dangerous driving.

It proved to be very beneficial as the Roadshow was geared exclusively to young drivers which was particularly relevant to our Learners.

Cootehill Youthreach had the Irish Heart Foundations 'Happy Heart Award' successfully renewed for another two years. The Happy Heart Award was awarded because the centre provides the Learners with the knowledge and skills to both choose and prepare healthy food options, meeting the Irish Heart Foundation's national standards.

### Team Building & Ice Skating



The staff and learners organized a Team Building day at Lilliput in Co. Westmeath in November which was good fun. Both staff and learners took part in team building exercises that were difficult (and mucky!) It was an excellent opportunity for all concerned to develop their team working and group skills whilst immersing themselves fully in the concept of experiential learning. As a reward for their hard work throughout the year we brought the Learners Ice Skating in Dublin before Christmas and had a great day out.



## The Cappawhite Brigade: Jason And His Merry Men



Little did Jason Kelly know that by hinting at an interest in going to the AVIVA stadium that he would actually be responsible for himself and 21 other Youthreach students also going to see Ireland and USA. Our students were wholly entertained by a majestic performance against one of the world's superpowers. This superpower, however, are not considered a superpower in terms of playing football or as they call it 'soccer ball' in the States. The U.S. did make it to the quarter finals of the World Cup and thus are a force to be reckoned with. Youthreach Cappawhite made their entrance to the stadium and joined in on the familiar chants that are of the Irish Soccer supporters. There was much delight as local man Shane Long made his entrance to the pitch and in the end Ireland managed a convincing win of 4-1. The day was marked by copious foot long hot dogs, bugel blowing and chants of ole ole. The day was a great success and will live long in the memory of the 'soccer ball' fans from Cappawhite. We in Youthreach Cappawhite would like to thank John Delaney of the FAI and Anne Bourke of Youthreach Cappawhite for making the day possible.





# Youthreach Birr/Banagher Awards Ceremony:

On Friday 12th December 2014, Youthreach Birr/Banagher held their FETAC/QQI Awards Ceremony. The ceremony was held in Doolys Hotel, Birr, Co. Offaly and was well attended by students past and present, parents/guardians, staff and friends of our centre.

All our students looked amazing on the evening and there was a great air of excitement around the whole event. Laois and Offaly ETB's Youth Officer, Padraig Boland presented the students with their awards and gave a motivating speech to the audience about the importance of progression after Youthreach. Padraig spoke about how well some students do in Youthreach on both a personal and academic level and unfortunately on completion of the programme, for whatever reason, they don't move on in life with what they have achieved in Youthreach. He stressed the importance of continuing to progress and to develop personally and to become productive members of society.

We then had speeches from Leanne Mc Donagh and Philip Carroll, both present Youthreach students, about how important Youthreach is to them and how it has helped them both develop on a personal level. Both of these speeches were heartfelt and very moving.

Next up was our presentation to our 'Student of the Year Award', this award went to Ian Kelly and he was presented with the award by staff member Maureen Kelly. In Maureen's speech she commended Ian on his "maturity and kindness beyond his years" and how the centre would not be the same without him.

Last but by no means least was the showing of a short film made by some of our students in May 2014 called 'The Importance of Being'. This film was funded by the National Office of Suicide Prevention and done in collaboration with The Sub Project in Birr. The film focused on the story of a girls spiralling depression which eventually led to her taking her own life. The film was a very real reflection of the problems that can affect any of us and how if we don't reach out for help, the end result can be disastrous for all concerned. The acting in the short film was of an excellent standard and I wouldn't be surprised to see some of the wonderful actors and actresses on the big screen some day!!

The evening ended with a hot buffet for all in attendance, all in all a fantastic evening was had.



*Student of the Year Ian Kelly receiving his award from Celina Casey and Maureen Kelly*



*Birr/Banagher Youthreach students past and present and staff*



*Philip Carroll delivering his speech*



*Jake Jones receiving his award from Padraig Boland*

## Fundraising & Fun at Ballincollig Youthreach

Pictured opposite is Urla Coomey presenting €140 to Joanna Crummie, secretary of Penny Dinners, Cork, on behalf of Ballincollig Youthreach. Last summer Urla did work experience at Penny Dinners and found it very rewarding. Urla is also part of a terrific team of fundraisers applying their acquired FETAC Teamworking skills. Learners and staff were honoured to raise essential euro for this outstanding service in Cork city. Joanna spoke to all at Ballincollig about the importance of donations and fundraising for Penny Dinners. She stated that Cork Penny Dinners was founded during famine times as a soup kitchen. It is currently serving well over 1000 meals per week, compared to 150 a week two years ago. Its aim is a simple one – to give everyone who calls to the centre a hot nourishing midday meal. Joanna concluded 'there's an open door and a warm welcome and we never judge – we serve'.



*Left – right: Darren Shanahan, Joanna Crummie, Jessica Carmody, Urla Coomey, Beverly Collins, Thomas Jones and Michael Carmody*

## Memorial Museum Moments for Ballincollig Youthreach Learners



Learners contrasted with the horror & bleakness background of 'World War One, Life in the Trenches' at the Public Museum, Fitzgerald's Park, Mardyke, Cork. All agreed this exhibition is well worth a visit to remind us all of the importance of peace – not to be taken for granted!



*Robyn points to 'Cork Faces of World War One' 100 years on – and not forgotten!*



*Manuel points to Michael Collins' gun – a reminder of the Irish struggle.*



*Linda & Robyn in the Barrel Top wagon – a reminder of Traveller culture*

# Festive & Fearless Activities for Ballincollig Youthreach



*Top right: Graceful & Stylish Skaters at Cork on Ice*



## Ballincollig Climbing Challenge at the Mardyke Wall

*Successful climbing by teachers as Ballincollig lively learners demonstrate impressive climbing skills during their FETAC Health & Fitness class.*



# Ballyfermot Youthreach

## Homeless for the Holidays

Every Saturday evening, Jillian Reilly-Hickey, along with her daughter Aishling Hickey of Ballyfermot Youthreach give up their free time to help the homeless. Rain or shine, they travel into Dublin City Centre loaded up with hot food and hot drinks donated via Jillian's Facebook page, Helping the Less Fortunate. Inspired by their generosity, and moved by the tragic tales about homelessness that have dominated the news recently, students and staff at Ballyfermot Youthreach decided they wanted to do something for Christmas to help out in some small way.

A 'Fun Day' was organised to raise money to put together Christmas gift bags for the homeless. Each pack included hats, gloves, socks, toiletries and a Christmas treat to eat. Students also wrote Christmas cards for the homeless that they themselves had designed. In total over a hundred gift packs were assembled and on a cold, wet Saturday, 20th December, students Aishling Hickey, Ann Marie Farrell, Ciara Roche and Michelle Harte, along with teacher Lily Heller and Mairead D'Arcy from Blanchardstown I.T., joined Jillian and her crew on Capel Street Bridge. Braving the bitter cold and dressed in Santa hats and high visible vests, they hit the streets! Covering both North and Southside of the city, food and hot drinks were served as packs and Christmas cards were distributed to over 100 homeless people that night. The reactions were amazing. One homeless person brought tears to a student's eyes when she said, "this is the only card I will get this Christmas. I feel so special and blessed. I cannot thank you enough."

Homelessness is a complex issue. If you are at risk of becoming homeless or are sleeping rough, please talk to someone. According to the Dublin Regional Homeless Executive, people can become homeless for a variety of reasons: family breakdown, social exclusion, mental health problems, drug or alcohol misuse, difficulties with sexual orientation and poor physical health. Structural reasons can also lead to homelessness due to low income, rent or mortgage payments, debt and unemployment. Focus Ireland reckon there are up to 5,000 people homeless in Ireland at any one given time. Peter Mc Verry believes that people sleeping rough on the street only represent 2% of this overall figure. Behind these figures lie real people. People no dif-



*Students write Christmas cards for the homeless*



*Getting ready to deliver Christmas Gift packs*

ferent from anyone, who sipped warm cups of tea in the freezing cold. They chatted and laughed and were very grateful for the small gifts they received. This was all made possible by Jillian, her crew, the Youthreach students and a kind, generous woman in Lidl Ballyfermot who, seeing students buying toiletries in bulk asked what they were for. When told, she reached into her purse, took out forty euro and donated it to the appeal. "The world is full of nice people. If you can't find one, be one" (Nishan Panwar). Sometimes you will find the nicest people huddled in a cold doorway.

# Ballyfermot Youth Reaches For The Stars



Each journey begins with a first step. Aspiring actress Zoe Kelly's first step was taken when she walked into Ballyfermot Youthreach. A few months later Zoe was threading the boards in the New Theatre as part of Ballyfermot Youthreach's Streets and Stories by the Unknown Theatre. And now we are delighted to congratulate Zoe as the winner of the Olympia Theatre's 2015 Rising Star Award delivered by the Gaiety School of Acting.

The aim of this inaugural award is to give one young person aged between 13 and 18 years of age who is passionate about the arts, the opportunity to develop their love of acting and help them realise their dreams of becoming a professional actor. Zoe was selected based on an application statement and an audition. The award was formally presented by Brian Whitehead, CEO of the Olympia Theatre with actors Brian, Domhnall and Brendan Gleeson in attendance.

Zoe's training will be delivered by the prestigious Gaiety School of Acting – The National Theatre School of Ireland over the course of the year. The award includes One Full Year of Actor Training at the school and is sponsored by The Olympia Theatre.

The training itself includes:

- 3 terms of the Youth Theatre Saturday School
- A week long Easter Make A Movie course
- The winners choice of 4 week long Summer courses
- 2 weekend Masterclasses
- 

Additional benefits:

- 2 tickets to 10 shows of your choice at The Olympia Theatre in 2015
- Representation by the Gaiety School of Acting Agency for castings
- Professional photo shoot and headshots provided
- A Leap Card - topped up monthly
- Lunch provided for every full day attending the Gaiety School of Acting
- Mentoring by a School of Acting drama facilitator

Brian Whitehead, CEO of the Olympia Theatre notes "The aim of the Olympia Theatre Rising Star Award is to find a talented & passionate young actor and help them advance their career in the arts with top notch training at The Gaiety School Of Acting, and hopefully someday see them perform on The Olympia Theatre stage. This is the inaugural Rising Star award, but we aim to continue every year. We are delighted to offer this award to Zoe Kelly, who immediately impressed with both her application and audition. Expect to see great things from Zoe!"

Patrick Sutton, Director of The Gaiety School of Acting said 'We are delighted to have Zoe onboard and her training at the school has already begun. Our school is successful and the recognized and proud leader in the field of actor training, because of the extraordinary success of our graduates – young and vibrant actresses like Charlie Murphy (Class of 2008), Sarah Greene (Class of 2006) and even American Actress Olivia Wilde, have all trained at the school. We hope Zoe's time with us will afford her the opportunity to develop her love and understanding of the art form and assist her with establishing herself in the industry.'

Zoe's achievement highlights that if you really want something and are prepared to go for it, anything is possible. That opportunities are available in Youthreach that can lead to amazing places. That great success awaits you if you can just take that first step.



## Ballymun Students Entertained by the Garda Band



Ballymun Youthreach were treated to a rare concert by the esteemed Garda Band to celebrate certifications for current and ex-students recently. The Garda band treated the audience to an eclectic mix of Amy Winehouse, Acker Blik and Michael Buble before certs were handed out by Jacqui Caulfield (centre co-ordinator) and Bernadette Reilly (regional co-ordinator) for a variety of achievements and certifications from students. Ballymun Youthreach would like to extend our appreciation to the band and hope to see them again someday soon.



## Sligo Students Celebrate W.B. Yeats 150th Birthday Celebrations



On Monday 9th March, three students from Youthreach Sligo joined in the W.B Yeats 150th birthday celebrations in Hargadon's Pub, O'Connell Street. Anna Irwin and Rebecca McLoughlin gave a beautiful rendition of "Down by The Salley Gardens", followed by Tom Ward's recital of "Sixteen Dead Men". The young people were warmly complimented by an audience visiting from Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. All at Youthreach, a full time education programme for Early School leavers, are very proud of their achievements. The learners were facilitated and supported by Judith Keys (English Teacher) and Sinead McLoughlin (Literacy Tutor). Youthreach Sligo is also hosting a national poetry competition for all Youthreach centres across the country to celebrate Yeats Poetry.

## Bandon Youthreach



December proved to be another busy month for the students of **YOUTHREACH Bandon**. A number of assignments and projects were undertaken and successfully completed and one of those being **TEAM HOPE's** Christmas Shoebox Appeal. Each year at **YOUTHREACH Bandon** the students are encouraged to participate with a local or national charity event or fundraiser. This year after much research the student council decided to get on board and involved with **TEAM HOPE's** Christmas Shoebox appeal.

The whole centre quickly became involved and overwhelming generosity was displayed by students and staff. Over 30 boxes were collected and filled with items that would suffice to making many children of varying ages very happy during the festive season. The parcels were filled with small toys, colouring books, crayons, items of clothing such as hats, socks, underwear and gloves etc.

**TEAM HOPE** awarded the centre with a certificate of appreciation which is now proudly displayed in front entrance to the centre. Well done and thanks to all who brought in full shoeboxes, items for the shoebox or who helped out in any way over the past few weeks.



## YOUTHREACH Bandon

Each year our centre hosts a Christmas lunch for students and staff to enjoy together. This year the event was held on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> of December. Numerous guests are also invited to the centre to join in the festive fun. This year we had the pleasure of the company of Julie Cummins the local Drugs Task Worker and Ruthanna Crowley our resident beautician. The annual lunch always proves to be an extremely enjoyable day and the student body are allowed to thoroughly relax while the staff serve them a freshly prepared 4 course lunch.

Cyril McSweeney is the master behind the whole operation and lots of preparations are required to make sure the day goes smoothly. Many of the students were only too happy to help with preparing and organizing for the lunch and their efforts are as always greatly appreciated by everyone.

This date was also the ideal opportunity for the Coordinator Larry Dorgan to present well deserved awards to a number of students, and some of whom had come the end of their Journey at Youthreach. We were both sad and proud to say goodbye to Luke O'Donovan and Emma Kehoe who both completed their level 4 FETAC General Learning Certificates and also a major award in Business Studies Level 4. Both students have secured full time jobs and we wish them every success in the future.



## Blanchardstown Students Visit Child Vision

This year Blanchardstown Youthreach students are participating in the Gaisce Presidents Award. Community involvement is part of their accreditation, so the students visited Child Vision in Drumcondra which is a school for young people with visual impairments and multiple disabilities. Students were given a tour by the speech and language therapist Suzanne Byrne. Suzanne explained to the group "our students have a visual impairment, or no vision and they need sensory and visual signs to help them get to different areas around the campus. The signs need to be big, bright and tactile to cater for all students". Blanchardstown Youthreach students are now in the planning stages of developing appropriate signs and also helping to transform the garden areas. We will keep you updated with their progress



## Minister James Reilly Visits Kells Youthreach

Thursday October 27th saw a momentous occasion for Kells Youthreach when Minister for Children and Youth Affairs Dr. James Reilly visited our centre. The visit, organised by Councillor Sarah Reilly and TD Regina Doherty, was in recognition of a very special piece of sculpture currently being worked on by a team of Youthreach students and their wood carving teacher, Patrick Morris. The sculpture is a piece of work being completed in partnership with the town council and will be displayed in a prominent location in Kells early in 2015. Minister Reilly spent time with students Tyrone Ward, Carmel Beatty and Shane Freeman chatting about the project and the inspiration behind it. Students and staff alike were very excited to welcome Minister Reilly along with some other special guests including TD Helen McEntee, LMETB CEO, Peter Kierans, Nick Killian and Caroline Lynch, Chairman and Vice Chair of the LMETB Board as well as Brian Curran, former Chairman of the Kells Youthreach Board and Audrey Delaney, our parent representative on the Board. Following an enjoyable tea and scones break for Minister Reilly, our guests, centre staff and students, gathered together while centre Co-Ordinator Louise Cole and student Shay Duignan addressed the group. Students took the opportunity to show the Minister our Award Winning Irish Cancer Society X-Hale short film in recognition of his passionate anti-smoking views. Minister Reilly was presented with a beautiful piece of wood carving by student Tyrone Ward in memory of his visit. In addressing the students of Kells Youthreach, Minister Reilly reminded them of how important their voice is to the future of our society saying "you often know better than we do what is needed for young people in Ireland, so don't ever be afraid to speak your mind".





# A Busy few months for Kells Youthreach Student Council

The inaugural year of the Kells Youthreach Student Council (KYSC) has been very busy thus far. The goal of the KYSC has been to establish and develop closer ties with the local community here in Kells. Our first events took place in October with our Coffee Morning and Halloween Fancy Dress Party. The Coffee Morning was well attended with parents, local politicians, work experience partners, and residents of the neighbourhood enjoying the beverages and confectionary made by the students.



At the KYSC coffee morning (from left, back) were: Deirdre Rogan, Shay Duignan, Cllr Sarah Reilly, Garda Pat Farrelly, Paddy Jarratt, Ebbie Reilly and Sgt Dean Kerins; (middle: Audrey Delaney, Garda Aoife King, Katherine Kerins and Carol Murphy; (front): Tyrone Ward and Fionnuala Ryan

Our first ever Halloween Fancy Dress Party was also very successful. The prize for best dressed was awarded to Tyrone Ward for his Post-Apocalyptic Man costume with Jacob Harding finishing a close runner-up with his equally terrifying Fionnuala Ryan Cooking Teacher costume.

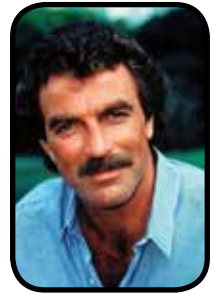


Kells Youthreach students and staff dressed up for Halloween

Although it was not an official KYSC event, the month of November saw the Student Council Liaison teacher, Paddy Jarratt, participate in the Movember campaign. Despite the huge increase in female admirers and the unprovoked aggression from male

colleagues incapable of growing facial hair, Paddy managed to raise over €100 for the Irish Cancer Society!

*How Paddy Jarratt thought he looked during Movember!*



In December, the KYSC participated in the ISPCC's Holly Days campaign. The students dressed as Santa's Little Helpers and braved the cold weather to hit the streets of Kells. In the end, over €600 was raised for the worthy charity.



Courtney Curran, Joseph Stewart and Shane McEnroe pictured with their teacher Anne Darcy collecting for the Holly Days campaign

The month of December also saw the KYSC partner up with Kells Meals on Wheels to bake Christmas goodies and treats for some local residents.



Louise Cole and Jacob Harding hard at work in the kitchen baking Christmas treats for Meals on Wheels Kells

It was a very worthwhile experience and the KYSC is looking forward to working with Meals on Wheels again in the near future. Last, but by no means least, the KYSC would especially like to thank Enda McDonnell, who has volunteered to be the official dishwasher for all KYSC events



## Galways Dyllon Grogan Visits "Man Up" Exhibition

Wednesday 4th November I went to an exhibition in the library called 'Man Up'. Man Up is a campaign to promote a safer Ireland for women and children. It shows us men how we are equal to women and must make an effort just as much as women. The campaign consisted of 20 photos with captions relating to how men can help women and children. My favourite picture was captioned, "I'll be there for you..". It shows a woman crying over the death of one of her loved ones while a man is holding her in his arms. We don't know who this man is but I'm guessing it is her husband or partner. This picture tells men that they should be there for their partners no matter what and help them through any rough patches



By Dyllon Grogan

## Galway Student Visits Jigsaw



Wednesdays in our Youthreach is an activity day. This Wednesday 12th November 2014, we were told to meet at 10 in the morning at Jigsaw, we were here to learn about what they do for young people. Jigsaw is a drop in centre for young people from the ages of 15 to 25. They help young people in many ways. Jigsaw is here so that if you need to have a chat about anything that's bothering you, you can either drop in to the building or you can make an appointment: either way is ok. When you come to jigsaw they bring you into one of their private consultation rooms, which have colourful couches and they give

you a cup of tea. It is very much a relaxed atmosphere. The lady at Jigsaw was giving us some information on mental health. She told us that a scary 1 in 3 young people have experienced mental health distress, but this can be easily helped by just having a talk with someone. Sometimes it's just a case of keeping everything bottled up and then just feeling alone, most of the time once you let it all out its ok then. In other cases, if you do need help to decide what to do or to make a new plan for your life that's ok too, and that's what jigsaw are here to help you with. Everything in Jigsaw is completely confidential, unless you're putting yourself or someone else at risk of danger. The lady at Jigsaw told us that many people think that it's mainly girls who go there but this is false. They have a fifty:fifty boys to girl ratio. If you don't want to drop into the building you can also text call or email. So the pressures off of you. Oh and it's free.

Aoife Redpath

## Donegal Youthreach Restorative Practices Work Presented to Harvard Academic

On 12 December, Youthreach County Coordinator, Dr Sandra Buchanan, had the opportunity to present Donegal ETB's restorative practices work to Harvard academic Dr Ofrit Liviatan (Department of Government). Dr Liviatan was visiting Co Donegal to find out more about the peacebuilding work which has been taking place in the county, funded through Peace III. Sandra provided an overview of Donegal ETB's Restorative Practices project which ran from August 2012-October 2013 and March-September 2014 and also showed her the short film made by Lifford Youthreach during this time entitled Lifford Youthreach Presents a Journey in Restorative Practices. Both the presentation and film were very well received.

## VIP's From Roscrea

The Youthreach group in Roscrea Education Centre received an invitation to visit Áras an Uachtaráin during October and enjoyed the hospitality of the President of Ireland. This further linked with our Heritage awareness initiative as it was an eye opener to realise the history surrounding the magnificent building and surrounding area.



*LtR in front of Áras an Uachtaráin: Jasmine Ffitch, Sapphire Ffitch, Ester Mackey, Peadar Walsh, Stephen Gleeson, Stephen Doyle, Ned Doheny, Christopher Pratt, Nicole Hutchinson, Joshua thorne, Aide de Com, Darren Tynan, Aide de Com, Maria Kirwan, Celina Harty, Bridie Malone, Maggie Knowles, Noel King, Helen Donoghue, Danny Chapman, Cameron Walsh, Erin Ffitch.*

## Team building in Roscrea Youthreach

During November, as part of a team building initiative, students from the Youthreach centre in Roscrea visited the Delphi Adventure Centre in Connemara. Students participated in various unusual activities, such as bog surfing, and discovered capacities in themselves that they did not know they had. It also was a great way of building relationships.



*LtR: Nicole Hutchinson, Helen Donoghue, Maria Kirwan and Victoria Tooher figuring out a challenge at Delphi*

## Youthreach Roscrea Students Achieve



Helen Donoghue and Cheyenne Ffitch received awards at the recent ETB Awards held in the Horse and Jockey Hotel: Cheyenne received an award for the Best Leaving Certificate Applied (88%) and Helen received one for Personal Achievement for excellent results in her Junior Certificate and also for her dedication to her personal development and her work.

*Helen Donoghue with her ETB Award for Personal Achievement*

## Practical Achievement in Youthreach Wexford



For this task I decided to help something that was weak and fragile to become a finely tuned machine. I decided to make a dips bar for myself and a workout plan. I googled the net to find out what other people had done. I found a website, trinity training group, that showed the plans of a dips station made from waste water pipe.

This is the dips station as I made it from the website. When I was using it I found that it was very unstable. I modified the design and put in two extra stabiliser bars. My improved design was very successful and the last part of my task was to design a workout program to go with the bars. The picture on the right is the before picture without the stabilisers !!



# Kilbeggan Youthreach Presentation of Certificates

On Friday the 24th of October in Kilbeggan it was a big day for Youthreach students because on this particular day students were accepting an award or a certificate for the hard work which they had done throughout the year. These awards and certificates were presented to the students by Gerry Griffin the National Youthreach Co-ordinator and Gareth Buckley the EO of Longford and Westmeath ETB.

The big event was held within the centre. The LCA students had been planning this event for two months. They organised and prepared for the entire event.

A number of invitations were sent out to parents, past students etc. It was great to see the number of people who took time out of their busy schedules to attend and support our students, for this we are grateful.

The co-ordinator gave a speech outlining the importance of the centre, the paramount relationships between students and teachers and the massive improvements that can be seen in students as they develop both academically and socially. He also thanked all the staff members for their dedication and hardwork throughout the year.

The Education Officer Mr Gareth Buckley and National Youthreach Co-ordinator Mr Gerry Griffin also gave a speech expressing their full support of Youthreach and how brilliant it is to give teenagers the opportunity of a second chance at education.

The event was a huge success and enjoyed by all who attended.



*Fetac Level 3 & 4 Students*



*LCA students*

## *The Man With the Cup*

*Kicked on the streets for not paying the rent,  
alcohol and drugs is where my money was spent,  
I never thought once that this would be me,  
I was a working man with a family of three.*

*Some say I am foolish,  
That I should of woke up,  
But I fell down a slope & struggled to get back up.*

*Was once one of you, which would look down their nose?  
At the man with the cup and the horrible clothes,  
Don't get me wrong some people are nice,  
But there are others that wouldn't think of looking twice,  
They say I'm greedy, that I just want more,  
But most nights I wish I was at death's door.*

*I wish this on no one,  
I just hope your could see,  
The struggle I have for just being me.*

*It gets lonely being homeless,  
You don't understand,  
I don't need your money,  
Just a helping hand.*

*I really don't care about whats in my cup,  
I just don't want you to look down on me  
Unless your helping me up.  
Mark my words,  
Please don't be shy,  
It would be nice if someone would at least say hi.*

*So the next time your out,  
Or down at your lows,  
Come have a chat with the man with the cup  
and the horrible clothes.*

*by Shane McEnroe  
Kilbeggan Youthreach*

## Life in the sea

Life in the sea is nothing like it seems  
It's not swimming in some river or streams  
Predators lurking searching for food to eat  
And then there's me just being pretty prude  
Hiding here isolated, still alive so I appreciate it

Scared to move so I stay very still  
In case something is out there that wants to kill  
I want to be brave and just go on my way but then there's a  
fear that's making me stay  
I'm horrified, shivering, stuck under a rock  
Trying to make a move but I freeze on the spot  
In my life I've learned a lot  
Gravity on land is nothing down here  
You rely on your power, your will, your scare  
Even though there's a lot to scare down here, beware.

Scavengers all around, lucky I am underground  
Still lying under this rock scared to death, paranoid off my  
chest

I want to know what this feeling is, could it be stress?  
That has me thinking all this; I just got to get the gist of  
what's all in my head  
Wishing I could be bigger instead of a little tiny fish swim-  
ming in the big blue sea

I want to show you from this harsh reality, where I am,  
where I stand, where I want to be.  
Life is like stepping stones you got to be precise, always stay  
smart and always think twice.  
Watch what you do and watch how you speak  
If you see trouble just turn the other cheek

Swim as fast as that little fin can take you, you don't want  
any one coming up and mistaking you for someone who is in  
the wrong place at the wrong time Society has gone downhill;  
it is really critical what's going on in life today  
I want to reach home, my haven, my sanctuary

By Tommy McCarthy  
Kilbeggan Youthreach

## Harsh Reality

It seems to me I've got to wake up from this dream,  
Get back to reality so fed up with these fantasies,  
Nobody standing by, living in this lie,  
That look in your eyes when you said I was your guy

I know you liked to party I know you liked to drink  
I know you were a flirt every fella got a wink  
Let the past be the past that's what you said  
But every night when we lay in bed  
I get these thoughts in my head  
Are you thinking of me or thinking of him instead

Words can't describe how you make me feel  
Sometimes I question are these feelings real  
I can't begin to say what I feel all day  
When you come in late and you're off your face

Nothing I can say will change your ways  
Lies upon lies that's all I hear  
When you whisper you love me in my ear  
Why can't you let me go, why can't you see  
You and I were never meant to be.

Aaron Williams  
Kilbeggan Youthreach

## Faking a Smile

Ever feel like most times you're two foot tall  
Plenty of people around you but it feels like none at all,  
And every single step feels like a mile,  
Sick of putting on a mask and faking a smile.

There are plenty of places to go,  
But nowhere to be,  
Stuck on land but drowning at sea  
And you don't really care if you even wake up,  
Cause every day is a struggle and you feel like giving up.

You sit there wondering and that's all you ever do,  
You doubt yourself day after day,  
And your biggest enemy is you.

It's like drowning except you can see everyone around you breath-  
ing,

The people you care about are constantly misleading,  
They tell you stuff like "It's all in your head, you will be fine",  
You just need to clear your mind.

They don't see your pain it's like they're blind.

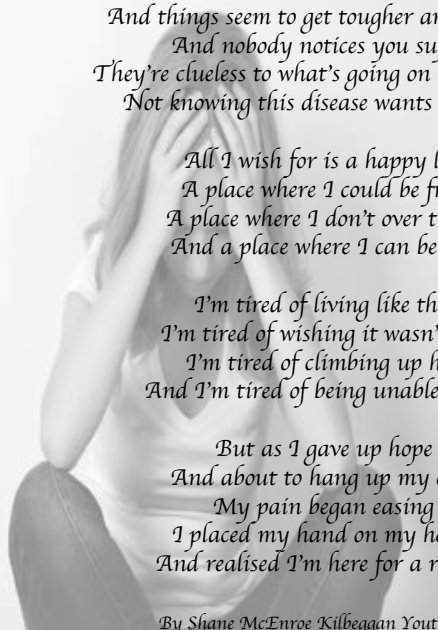
And things seem to get tougher and tougher  
And nobody notices you suffer,  
They're clueless to what's going on in my head,  
Not knowing this disease wants me dead,

All I wish for is a happy life  
A place where I could be free,  
A place where I don't over think  
And a place where I can be me,

I'm tired of living like this  
I'm tired of wishing it wasn't me,  
I'm tired of climbing up hill  
And I'm tired of being unable to see,

But as I gave up hope  
And about to hang up my coat  
My pain began easing  
I placed my hand on my heart  
And realised I'm here for a reason

By Shane McEnroe Kilbeggan Youthreach



# Edenderry Visit National Ploughing championship 2014



We left Youthreach at 9.30am, we got a bus to the ploughing in Stradbally. It took us an hour to get there. When we arrived we got our wrist bands to show we paid. People from all over Ireland came to see the stalls, livestock and ploughing. There was 80 thousand people already there when we arrived that morning, but as the day went on it got a lot more packed. 200,000 people were expected to attend the ploughing over the three days it was on. We did enjoy the day, even though when I went in and saw all the tractors and cows, I thought "This is for farmers!"

There were interesting things like the carnival, the bird exhibition and the wood craft area. It was so big, I actually know we didn't see half of it. You would definitely need to get a map when you went in. Some of the other trainees got loads of free samples of food. I reckon I must have walked about 10 miles in the four hours we were there, I was wrecked that night and my legs were really sore.  
*Cassie Power and Graham O'Brien, Youthreach Edenderry*

## Mask Making In Edenderry



*Samantha and Avril sitting under our wonderfully creative mask display*

## Youthreach Kiltimagh Student receives top 10 Junior Certificate Metalwork Award



On Saturday the 15th of November 2014 Patrick McDonagh Youthreach Kiltimagh, was presented with an award for earning one of the top ten Junior Certificate Results in the Country at Ordinary Level Metalwork.

At the Engineering and Technology Teachers Association (ETTA) Awards Ceremony Patrick was presented with a Certificate of Distinction. Patrick's teacher Donald O'Brien received the reward on behalf of Patrick McDonagh in the Glenroyal Hotel, Maynooth, Co. Meath.

The Staff and Students of Youthreach Kiltimagh would like to Congratulate Patrick on his fine achievement. He has done himself and his family proud and everyone looks forward to supporting Patrick to even greater successes in the future

# Youthreach Knocknaheeny, Cork

Two LCA students from Youthreach Knocknaheeny won Special Commendation Awards at The CORK ETB National Awards Ceremony held in Rochestown Park Hotel, Cork on the 9th Of January 2015

The two students attended the Awards with their families to receive their Award. Well done to both students who have now progressed on to the local PLC to further their studies.



Shauna O Flaherty was a well-liked, friendly student who always showed great interest in her work. Teachers described her as; "a pleasure to teach," Shauna used her time in Youthreach well and always participated in our extra-curricular activities. She completed

a fabulous work experience with Cork City Partnership, who described her as, "a great girl, well dressed, helpful and interested". Her attendance was excellent and over her two years she won many awards for, English, Home Economics and Art.

Aoife Goldsmith was a committed student who always worked hard. She was a very pleasant and kind student, popular with both students and staff. Aoife was always willing to help and go that extra bit. In her final year Aoife was voted Student of the Year and she was a deserving



winner. The Student of the Year award is for a student who has shown academic and social development throughout the school year and as she had an excellent attendance and disciplinary record. Aoife ticked all of these boxes.



## Youthreach Knocknaheeny

The following Letter by LCA Student Chantelle McCarthy was on 'The Examiner' Newspaper and their Facebook Page

### More Funding And Resources Are Needed To Tackle Heroin Use In Cork

There has been a significant rise in the number of heroin users in the last five years with approximately 500 heroin users in Cork now and this is contributing to homelessness, crime and death.

Crimes in Cork were up by about 40% by July and September 2014 compared with the previous year and it has been linked to increase of drug use in the city.

There are users shooting up in public places and throwing away needles carelessly where there are children at play. It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, black or white or what community you are from — if you take heroin you can become addicted fast and end up either homeless, dead or in prison. We need to do something about this. We need to stop heroin becoming a bigger problem in Cork and taking over communities like it has in Dublin.

We need to make sure there is enough funding and resources to contain the problem. I am a student living on the northside of Cork and I don't want to see people shooting up or have children grow up in a city where they are surrounded by the worst kind of drugs.

*Chantelle McCarthy - Youthreach Knocknaheeny Cork*



### Knocknaheeny In The Snow



# Centre for Education Dean Street

## Boat Building



The year of 2014 has been a very productive one in Dean Street with a number of standout events throughout the year. As part of their Gaisce Personal skills component students had the opportunity to learn new skills in the art of Boat Building through the local organisation Meiteal Mara. Here students firstly learned about the various parts of the boat such as the bow, gunnels and the stern. They then built the boat on Wednesdays for two hours over a 13 week period. The students went through the process of building the frame, fitting out the boat with rods and laths, skinning the boat and creating oars to steer the boat. On the Thursday the 22nd of May the students launched their boats in the River Lee in what was a very proud moment for the students.

## Charity Walk/Run



On Wednesday the 5th of November both Youthreach students and BTEI students came together for a charity 5km walk/run in aid of the Jack and Jill foundation. The project which was called 'up the hill for Jack and Jill' raised over €120,000 nationwide with the students here in the centre raising over €125 for the Jack and Jill foundation. This was a challenging event for students as many had not done a walk or run like this before but despite the apprehension among the students it proved to be a massive success. Thanks to all involved

## Paintballing

On Wednesday the 17th of December the students and staff departed from the centre at 9.30, their destination was the East Cork Adventure Centre to participate in Paintballing. The Journey took about thirty minutes and on our arrival we were greeted by our friendly instructor Liam and his wonderful dog Sunday! The necessary clothing and equipment was then made available to us and we quickly got ready. Liam then divided us into two teams, yellow and red, and the battle began. Team yellow was victorious on the day. Before we returned to the centre we had our lunch. On the journey back we were tired but happy and determined to repeat what was a great experience again soon





# Glenthworth Street Youthreach

## Leaving Certificate Established (LCE)

The Introduction of the Leaving Cert Established (LCE) Programme to the curriculum in September 2014 has been a very positive addition. This programme has been established on a two year pilot basis. This group are due to sit their Leaving Certificate in June 2016. The introduction of this programme offers learners a clear educational progression route.



Limerick City of Culture.



Centre staff and learners fully embraced, enjoyed and got involved in the Limerick City of Culture. Pictured above is the Giant Granny as created and performed by Royale Deluxe Street Performance group.

## Gaisce Bronze Medals Winners

Three learners worked towards achieving their Gaisce Bronze medals and this culminated in a 23k hike and an overnight in a log cabin in the Ballyhoura Mountains which was enjoyed by the three learners and Youthreach staff.



Leaving Certificate Business Studies

The Leaving Certificate Business Studies class ran an enterprise mini company for the Limerick Youth Service Christmas Fair 2014. The aim of this activity was to encourage students to brainstorm business ideas. As it was on the run up to Christmas learner's decided that the product would be Christmas themed hot chocolate cones which were sold at the annual Christmas Fair in Limerick Youth Service. The management structure of the company was decided by the learners themselves by a democratic vote. Learners found out about working as part of a team and the need to work hard to achieve success. They gained an understanding of different business terms such as delegation, profit margin, raw materials and the importance of marketing strategies. The learners worked to their teams strengths and chose tasks that suited each individual. Overall the mini company was a great success and a fantastic learning experience; one which was enjoyed by all. Well done to all Involved.



# Award-winning Ballina Youthreach student travels to Strasbourg

Ballina, Youthreach student, Bryony Clarke, has recently returned from a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg where she participated in the Euroscola programme along with students from all other member states. Each year the Michael Sweetman trust host a competition and award 24 Leaving Certificate Applied students from all over Ireland this once in a lifetime chance to have the opportunity to spend a day in the shoes of an MEP. The students got the opportunity to learn about the workings of European institutions from the inside, to discuss democracy and fundamental rights with other students from all over the EU and to express their personal views in the chamber of the European Parliament. Bryony was elected spokesperson for the Irish Contingent and described the experience as "incredible and invaluable".



*Bryony Clarke with Co-ordinator Paul Large*



*Pictured on the left are the students and staff from Youthreach in Ballina on the occasion of their visit to the Bord Gais Energy Theatre in Dublin for a production of Blood Brothers. A great night was had by all.*

## Buncrana Youthreach

On the left is a photo of some of our learners wearing their new Youthreach hoodies!! The picture on the right is of our learners when they were out and about shooting promotional video of tourism in Inishowen! The bottom left is a photo from our county quiz. Buncrana Youthreach came first..beating off competition from the other Donegal centres!! The picture on the bottom right is a photo of our learners receiving their fetac awards at our annual Presentation of awards ceremony.



## A New Recruit To Cabra Youthreach

Cora is a 9 month old setter cross puppy introduced to Cabra Youthreach as a training service and therapeutic dog for a member of staff with epilepsy (myself). Service dogs are becoming more common for people with epilepsy due to their natural calming nature and ability to sense seizures before their handler is aware and give warning or alert other people after a seizure has occurred. Cora was an immediate hit with staff and Youthreach attendees, her therapeutic value stretched across the centre and I'm asked questions all day long from students when Cora is not in the centre. In the six months Cora has been at Cabra she has made a remarkable bond with several students and they look for each other every morning. Cora comes to my classes with me and is a calming and playful influence but on occasion when that is needed elsewhere Cora is free to bring other students on a walk or play. Cora means a great deal to me as her handler but I know she means just as much to the students in Cabra Youthreach, she is part student and part teacher. *Oisín Costigan –Resource, Cabra Youthreach*



### A "Tail" To Tell!

See the thing is my Youthreach is nothing like your Youthreach. Your Youthreach may have a woodwork room or more facilities but we have something that none of the other Youthreaches have, we have "Cora".

Cora is one in a million, She is there for you when times are rough you can always count on her to be at something. Cora will know how to calm you down, or when you're feeling down in the dumps she will lighten up your day.

But the thing is Cora isn't like you or me she's special. She is all black with four legs and a tail and a lovely smile. In case you didn't guess Cora is in fact man's best friend, a DOG. Cora is a great addition to our centre. Due to the fact that her owner has her trained very well! Cora is like a "Therapy dog" For those that don't know what that means basically Cora is there for you when your head is "melted" and what a better way to cheer you up than going on a walk with an all black pup. I love having Cora in the centre. It's something new and not what you are used to.

She could sit in a class with 200 students and still not distract a single student but at the same time gets all of the attention!. I think other Youthreach centres should get themselves a "Therapy Dog" but I don't like to call her that because to me Cora is our centre mascot and should come everywhere with us when we are representing Cabra Youthreach. We are all a team when it comes to competitions and every team needs a mascot. Since the day Cora joined this centre there is a completely different (better) atmosphere.

I love when I'm feeling like I'm going to get sent home or get into any type of trouble all I have to do is ask is it ok if I bring her out on a walk to clear my head and it's no problem at all. *Adam Finane - Student Cabra Youthreach*

### A Dog's Life!

I was in Cabra Youthreach one year before we got our dog Cora and since the day i met Cora we have had a great bond. Every time I walk into the centre she is waiting there for me and runs at me and jumps all over me making me smile to start my day off.:) As I'm writing this about our dog Cora she is sitting beside me looking at me wanting me to play with her. When there's a bad atmosphere in the class we just get Cora and she gives us a good atmosphere she's funny and very playful.

Cora comes to our Youthreach because she is an assist dog for one of the teachers with epilepsy. She is being trained as a service and seizure dog. This means that when and if Oisín, Cora's owner, has a seizure Cora will find someone to help him to wake up. She can also get Oisín's phone or medication and stay with him through the seizure.

If we had not got Cora in our Youthreach we would really miss her because we love having Cora around the centre and coming to Youthreach in the mornings.

If ever your head is 'recked' we can just ask is it ok to take Cora on a walk to make you feel better. Cora is a special dog she loves the attention and fun she gets. She's a good 'Buzz' in the Youthreach. *JJ Reilly – Student Cabra Youthreach*



## Cavan Student Shines a light on homelessness

Cavan Youthreach learner Jamie Mullarkey shone a new light on the homelessness crisis at a ceremony in Dublin, where he was awarded first prize in the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) Youthreach Human Rights Competition, for his uniquely creative lightbox installation entitled 'Have you ever felt invisible before'. The installation – a mixed media piece combining Perspex, wood, photography and lighting - is “designed to encourage the public to consider the invisibility and anonymity of life on the streets for those experiencing homelessness”, explained Jamie. At the ceremony, held at the Ombudsman for Children’s Office in Dublin on Friday 12th December 2014, Jamie received his prize – a tablet computer courtesy of DID Electrical, as well as a work placement – from RTÉ’s Bláthnaid Treacy. ICCL Director Mr Mark Kelly said: “The entries to this year’s competition were of an outstanding quality, but Jamie Mullarkey’s remarkable work captured the imagination of the judges from the outset. It shines a light on the spectre of homelessness in a truly haunting way”. Cavan Youthreach learner Declan Kelly was also highly commended for his submission, a creative writing piece dealing with the theme of grief and loss. Both learners put in an outstanding amount of hard work in preparation for the competition in order to develop their initial ideas through to completion. The ICCL/Youthreach Human Rights Competition, run jointly by the Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL) and Youthreach since 2011, encourages young people in Youthreach centres across Ireland to apply their creative talents to explore human rights themes they are passionate about.



## Youthreach Trim Go ICE Skating

As part of our programme on the run up to Christmas, Youthreach Quality Centre of Education Trim went Ice skating to Blanchardstown ice rink. A great day was had by all, we were on the ice with two other Youthreach groups, Cavan Youthreach and Leixlip. It took the students a while to get the hang of the staying vertical on their skates. Once the students had acclimatised some of them could have been mistaken for Torvill or Dean. The three centres got on well and really enjoyed the slippery experience. All students had a great day and were a credit to Youthreach Trim and their families. We all look forward to repeating the experience this time next year.



## Busy Start for Longford Youthreach

Granard Youthreach relocated to Longford in August and since then the Centre has experienced a very interesting 5 months. We went on a trip to Liverpool to see Everton take on Hull City in the Premiership including a tour of Anfield on the following day. Our annual ice skating/shopping and Gaiety Theatre trip were also hugely enjoyable. Some students also had the privilege to meet with and listen to Tomi Reichental recount his gruesome experiences as a child in Bergen-Belsen concentration camp – thanks to Roscommon Youthreach who invited us to attend.

