



# MEATH VEC NEWS

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EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

## SALUT, DZIEŃ DOBRY, DIA DHAOIBH



These are exciting times to work in the VEC sector. As our Irish state matures and becomes more structured, the awareness grows that the centre cannot continue to micro manage thousands of primary and post-primary schools.

Belief is growing in the capacity and professionalism of VECs both as educationalists and as education service providers and as the natural local agents of the Department of Education and Science. More and more we are evolving into Local Education Authorities working generously with all existing providers and building strong

relationships with statutory bodies and partners.

The strategic plan for the county (The Education Plan) is now at mid-term review and we are performing well against all the targets. A formal re-visiting of targets is underway linking with school development plans and with Centre plans.

Thank you for another great year of committed work for County Meath VEC. Whether your role is a teacher, a student, support staff or in administration I would like to compliment you on your dedicated service and great team work which brings such great benefits to all our learners.

Peter Kierans Chief Executive Officer

## Principal appointed for Coláiste Na hInse.

Ms. Anne Marie McCarrick, a native of Coolaney, Co. Sligo, has been appointed as the first Principal of Coláiste na hInse, Laytown. Ms. McCarrick is a graduate of NUI Maynooth where she studied Geography and Sociology and was awarded a First Class Honours Degree. She has recently graduated from NUI Galway with an honours Masters Degree in Education Management and completed her thesis on the topic of "Whole School Improvement".

Ms. McCarrick was Acting Principal in Coláiste Iascaigh, County Sligo and was Deputy Principal there since 2003. Prior to this she taught in a range of schools, Deele College, Co. Donegal, Summerhill College, Co. Sligo and Limerick Tutorial College. Her broad experience in both private and public sector schools and in single sex and mixed schools gives her the ideal background for this new challenging position.



Ms. Anne Marie McCarrick

## COLÁISTE NA HINSE – COMMENCEMENT



On Friday, 4th of April the Minister for Education and Science, Ms. Mary Hanifin planted the inaugural tree, denoting the start of Coláiste na hInse, as a physical reality, as a School Community in Laytown/Bettystown.

The community celebrated the event by turning out in significant numbers with at least one student from every national school in the area representing the community of local schools.

## Civic Reception

Meath County Council has decided to afford County Meath VEC a Civic Reception to mark 100 years of State Education in the County. The County Committee

of Agriculture and Technical Instruction existed before the VEC was set up under the 1930 Act, 78 years ago. The Civic Reception will be an opportunity to respect the work of all those teachers and support staff who have brought County Meath VEC the very high reputation which it now commands.

## Second Adult Guidance Counsellor Appointed



County Meath VEC is delighted to announce that Ms. Michelle Magnier, a native of Blarney, Co. Cork has been appointed as the second Guidance Counsellor for Meath Adult Education Guidance Service (MAEGS).

Michelle is a graduate of University College Cork where she completed an Honours Degree in Economics and French and a Higher Diploma in Education. She has recently graduated from Trinity College Dublin with an Honours Masters Degree in Educational Guidance and Counselling. Michelle completed her dissertation on the topic of Guidance in the context

of Lifelong Learning. She holds qualifications in commercial translation, Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Occupational Testing.

Michelle moves to her role with Co. Meath VEC from ibm.com Dublin where she worked primarily in the operations section. Her work there focused on customer satisfaction, education and training, and also within sales as a Team Leader.

As part of obtaining her professional qualification as a Guidance Counsellor, Michelle completed student internships with Dublin Institute of Technology Careers Service, and with Meath Adult Education Guidance Service.

## NEW MEATH VEC CLERICAL STAFF



Ms. Ciara Flood has been appointed to the position of Clerical Officer in the Human Resources Section of County Meath VEC, Head Office. Ciara

is a past pupil of St. Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle. Ciara studied in Dublin City University and graduated with a Bachelor of Business Studies, specialising in Human Resources in the final year of her degree.



Ms. Marie Reavey commenced employment in Beaufort College in March 2008. Previously Marie worked as a consultant and also

lectures part time in Event Management. Marie worked for 13 years in Baileys Irish Cream and while in Baileys Marie undertook further studies graduating with a degree in Marketing from Marketing Institute of Ireland.



Yvonne Gray Smart has recently joined the administration team in Ratoath College. Yvonne has gained previous work experience while working

as a Clerical Officer with the Health Service Executive and more recently in the area of Personnel/Payroll. Yvonne has previous experience both as a medical secretary and personal administrator.

## RECENT YOUTHREACH APPOINTMENTS



County Meath VEC has recently appointed Sharon Maher-Bordalo as a new Resource Person in Youthreach Progression. She has an Honours Degree in Fine Art and has worked in Youthreach Progression for a number of years. Sharon has been responsible for two major exhibitions of Youthreach work in the Solstice Arts Centre in 2006 and 2007.



Kate Geoghegan a native of Navan has been recently appointed to the position of Resource Person in Laytown Youthreach. Kate commenced her employment in Meath VEC in May 2006 in Youthreach Navan where she taught Drama, Communications and Video Expression. Kate also tutored Junior Cert English, CSPE, Preparation for Work and Work Orientation.

## ST. OLIVER POST PRIMARY TEACHERS APPOINTED IN 2007/08 SCHOOL YEAR

Left to right: Tomás Barrett (Woodwork, Technical Graphics), Orla Brogan (Irish, French), Teresa Murtagh (History, Geography), Gemma Mc Stay (Maths, Biology), Eoghan Coll (English, History), Niall Breslin (Metalwork, Maths)



## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE FOR TEACHERS

The new Employee Assistance Service for teachers managed by VHI Corporate Solutions is available to teachers of Co. Meath VEC. The service provides access to a confidential counseling service 24 hours a day/365 days a year. Details of the service available by email [eas@vhics.ie](mailto:eas@vhics.ie) or see website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)

## STARS IN THEIR EYES

Beaufort College presented Stars in their Eyes Grand Final on the 2nd of April in the Solstice Arts Centre. It was a huge success. The host was Sorcha Furlong of 'Fair City' (Orla) fame and the three judges were Seamus Quinn (Gaiety School of Music), Clelia Murphy (Fair City) and Barbara O'Toole (Fair City). There were 11 acts in total, with acts from Elvis, Leona Lewis, Robbie Williams, Britney Spears, Amy Winehouse, Rihanna, Alicia Keys, Abba, Leon Jackson, Atomic Kitten and the Spice Girls. There were 30 students involved, who put on a fantastic show to a full house.

The winner was Susan Hedderman who sang 'Amy Winehouse's Valerie', and was according to the judges, 'the full package of acting and singing'. She won a walk on part on Fair City and also a day in a recording studio to record a cd. Producer: Mary Galvin, Assistants: Tomas Neylon and Gordon Weldon.



## ABBA COMES TO NAVAN!

County Meath VEC was uniquely honoured recently by a visit to Navan by the world famous pop group Abba. In a further act of astounding generosity the group took to the stage as an interval act in the Beaufort College "Stars in Their Eyes" show. Maria Flynn, Home School Co-ordinator in Beaufort College has worldwide rights for this photograph.



ABBA singing "Ní thagann ciall riomh aois"

## Dunshaughlin - Microsoft Innovative Conference

Over 180 people were in attendance at the 21st Century Learning Conference in Dunshaughlin Community College, including teachers from across the country, from Kerry to Donegal. Also present were representatives from the Department of Education and Science and the Inspectorate, staff of the N.C.T.E and representatives from many VECs also, together with all of our Technology Partners.

The day consisted of an opening address by Minister Michael Ahern, our CEO Peter Kierans, EO Seamus Ryan, Principal Padraic Browne and Deputy Principal Janice Corrigan. This was followed by a number of different workshops led by teachers, students and our Technology Partners, allowing participants to see how our IT initiatives work on the ground and the benefits they bring to both students and teachers alike.

Some of the workshops included; 21st Century Classroom, One-to-One Computing, Tablet P.C. as a Teaching Aid, Using Video in Learning, Learning 24/7, Sharing Learning Resources, Digital Textbook.

A special word of thanks to the teachers and students who gave of their free time during their Easter Holidays to participate on the day, to our Technology Partners for their continued support and finally Rita and her team who provided everyone with a fabulous lunch! A great day was had by all.



Rose Lawlor teacher of Business Studies in Dunshaughlin Community College presenting a workshop



Ms. Andrea Maher, IT Tutor and Mr. Thomas Hennessy from Studywiz

# COUNTY MEATH VEC – BUILDING REPORT

County Meath is a centre of major population growth. The population increased by approximately 28,000 during the four years from 2002 to 2006 the period of the last census. Overall the County population has increased by more than 60,000 in the last ten year period. Initially the growth was confined to the South County but now all of the towns

and villages of North County Meath are experiencing growth resulting in increased numbers in almost all Post-Primary Schools in the county. As a result almost all schools are under pressure in their existing accommodation and are seeking to extend.

## St. Oliver Post Primary School

St. Oliver Post Primary has received approval from the Department for an additional four classrooms. These can be either temporary or permanent depending on the VECs ability to get maximum returns from a set grant given by the Department. In consultation with the Architect of the main school, Ms. Ann Blackwell, and the school Principal Mr. Martin O' Reilly, we have decided to submit a planning application for four general classrooms and male and female toilets. It may be necessary to augment the Department's grant with both school and central VEC funds in order to achieve the completion of this plan.



## O' Carolan College, Nobber

O' Carolan College has been approved for a major extension of more than 3,000m<sup>2</sup> including a gymnasium of 604m<sup>2</sup>. This schedule of accommodation has been signed off at school and VEC level and awaits Ministerial approval to proceed to the stage of appointment of Design Team. Meanwhile enrolments continue to reach just short of 100 for the 3rd successive year bringing an increase of more than 50 students to the enrolment numbers in the school. Short-term accommodation is required and three additional classrooms have been approved by the Department and a planning application has been submitted to the County Council. The planning application is for 7 rooms in order that the same exercise will not be necessary when additional rooms are approved in required years.



## Beaufort College, Navan

Beaufort College enrolment increased in 2007/08 with 100 students entering 1st Year. Enrolments for 2008/09 are expected to reach that level again. This will see numbers on the rise significantly in Beaufort College and put pressure on their current use of accommodation. Beaufort College has commenced Breakfast Clubs, School Completion, Home School Liaison and these programmes require accommodation. For the time being the accommodation in Beaufort is being kept under review. An application has been made to the Department of Education and Science for an additional second level school in the town.



## Community College, Dunshaughlin

The Dunshaughlin project is with the Department for almost a year, a 3,000m<sup>2</sup> extension has been approved and Stage II Design Plans submitted last summer. Progress through the Department has been slow and we await the outcome of the Department's own Technical Teams recommendations.



## St. Peter's College, Dunboyne

St. Peter's College extension passed the tender stage last September and tender reports were submitted to the Department for approval. In advance of that exercise work was carried out at the front of the college to open up the front section and to give the front of the college a stronger presence in the town of Dunboyne. The extension of over 3,000m<sup>2</sup> is ready to commence once the Ministerial instruction has been received to proceed.



## Ratoath College

Ratoath College is still in the settling in and snagging stage of the building. Minor works continue to be completed in the college but the overall building is working out very well. The Royal Institute of British Architects have short listed Ratoath College into the last 14 of all Architectural projects throughout Europe during the previous year. Three members of that association, all Architects, visited the college 2 weeks ago, interviewed the Principal and the CEO, took many photographs and studied both external and internal structures and designs. We have no doubt that the school deserves all the accolades which come its way as it is an exceptional educational environment. The Architects were high in their praises of both the quality of structure and of design.



## Coláiste na hInse

As noted in the national press the plans for Coláiste na hInse, temporary school have run into serious planning objections. Planning permission was actually granted for the temporary school but a local land owner who sold the land originally on which the school will stand objected and had his objection rejected by An Bord Pleanála. He has now taken judicial review to the High Court and an injunction is in place preventing any building of the temporary school until the High Court proceedings are complete. In the meantime Coláiste na hInse will relocate to Ratoath College in September 2008 for what we hope will be a short stay.

## St. Fintina's Longwood

All of the groundwork for the purchase of site for the new St. Fintina's is complete. We await the Ministerial instruction to conclude the negotiations and sign off on the deal.

## VEC, Head Office, Abbey Road

The VEC Head Office has completed a new interview suite at its Head Office. Such were the number of Interview Boards and Competitions held last year that it was necessary to have a dedicated interview waiting room and suite.

# RECRUITMENT WEBSITE FOR VECs LAUNCH OF [vecjobs.ie](http://vecjobs.ie)



Meath VEC have recently launched a new website [vecjobs.ie](http://vecjobs.ie), a recruitment initiative devised by County Meath VEC, one of the country's fastest growing VEC's. Graduates entering the work market are now more inclined to seek positions on-line rather than through daily or Sunday newspapers. The concept has been devised and designed by County Meath VEC. This initiative will primarily promote employment within VEC's and will also reduce the advertising costs for all 33 VEC's nationwide. Each year VECs spend as much as €1 million in combined advertisement costs. Each of the 33 VEC's will be able to post their job advertisements as they arise from their own VEC office. The [vecjobs](http://vecjobs.ie) website will be a one-stop shop for all vacancies, teaching and support within the Vocational Education Sector.



Pictured are the Head Office Human Resource Team who recently undertook training for the VECjobs website. (l to r): Ms. Nuala O' Neill, APO Human Resource, Ms. Mairead Tablot, Ms. Ciara Flood, Ms. Mary Keane.

# 86 Staff participate in Defibrillator training

Meath VEC recently purchased 9 defibrillators for schools and colleges in County Meath.

86 personnel from various schools and services completed the initial training last week. These personnel included teachers, students, administration and support staff. Training involved an intensive CPR module as well as actual training with the defibrillators.

In Ireland, it is estimated that 7000 people every year have a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) with only 1% surviving. SCA can strike anyone at anytime, at any age without warning. Defibrillation is the single most effective treatment for SCA. Although not everyone can be saved from Sudden Cardiac Arrest, studies show that the survival rates can be dramatically improved by more than 780% with early defibrillation. The Irish

Heart Foundation recommends defibrillation is delayed by no more than 3-5 minutes of an SCA. If there is a Defibrillator on site, this can deliver a life saving shock while the ambulance is on its way.

The VEC schools involved were from all corners of the county and included Dunshaughlin Community College; St Oliver Post Primary Oldcastle; St Peter's Dunboyne; Colaiste Poball Rathcairn; Beaufort College and Abbey Road Administration Centre in Navan.

Training is approved by both the Irish Heart Foundation and the American Heart Foundation. The Youth Officer with Meath VEC, Elma McMahon, will undertake training to become an AED teacher so that the skills learned by staff and students alike can be updated and



Picture shows a group of participants on one of the defibrillator training courses. Back row: (l to r) Christy Reilly, Sandra O' Rafferty, Orla Calvey, Hazel Leahy, Bernie Cahalane, Catherine Moore, Esther Prunty, Tony Murphy. Front row: (l to r) Annette Coffey, Emer Mc Gowan, Carmel Mc Evoy, Mary Reidy, Colm Colleran.

# SIX THINKING HATS

On Thursday, 17th April 2008 County Meath VEC staff participated in a training seminar entitled "Six Thinking Hats" a concept developed by Edward De Bono. Edward de Bono's thinking hats were developed in order to illustrate the various methods of thinking utilised by individuals within problem solving processes. Each of the hats represents a method of thinking commonly used by individuals within problem solving. Through such representations individuals will be able to recognise the various methods of thinking that they utilise and therefore better understand their own thinking processes. Individuals will also be able to better understand the thinking processes of others and therefore even incorporate some of these processes within their own thinking and into classroom and meeting situations



Principals and Coordinators at the training seminar

# RECENT DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE CIRCULAR LETTERS TO NOTE

C/L 29/2008 2007 Teacher Fee Refund Scheme – Closing date for applications is 30th May 2008

C/L 0011/2008 Revision of Teachers Salaries with effect from 1st March 2008

C/L 47/2008 Revised rates of pay in respect of Supervision and Substitution in post -primary schools with effect from 1st March 2008

C/L 0004/2008 Special Needs Assistants Payment arrangement for July

and August annually in VEC Schools

C/L 0003/2008 Post Graduate Diploma – Programme of Continuous Professional Development for Teachers involved in Learning Support and Special Education 2008/2009

C/L 0102/2007 Early Retirement Scheme for Teachers at school year end 2007/2008

All DES circular letters can be found at [www.education.gov.ie](http://www.education.gov.ie)

# MAEGS Open Day/Information Roadshow

On February 27th 2008, Co. Meath VEC hosted an Open Day/Information Roadshow in order to promote Educational Services available in South Meath. This Event took place in Dunboyne College of Further Education. Dunboyne College of Further Education is a well-established College of Further Education providing full-time courses accredited at FETAC Level 5. The college is now located in a new premises in Dunboyne Business Park with 160 students. This year the College is happy to include new programmes in Auctioneering and Estate Agency, Beauty Specialist and Special Needs Assistant. Our graduates in Nursing Studies, Childcare, Applied Social Studies, Business, Art Portfolio, and the Pre Arts courses have been very successful in securing places in employment and in the Third Level sector. Post Leaving Certificate courses commence in September 2008. Courses are open to both young people with Leaving Certificates and also to mature students with an interest in any one of these areas. Special thanks to all Co. Meath VEC Staff, Trinity College, Dundalk IT and Blanchardstown IT for their attendance.

## SEACHTAIN NA GAEILGE

Ratoath College had a very lively Seachtain na Gaeilge in March 2008. Students and staff very much enjoyed all the activities. The ceili on Thursday 13th of March was the highlight of the week for staff and students.



Pictured in the photograph: Bernadette White, Michael Moroney and Mairead Ryan teachers in Ratoath College enjoying the Céili

# Musical Extravaganza in the Solstice Arts Theatre 9th May 2008

100 years ago the Meath County Joint Committee of Technical Instruction founded the Technical School in Navan. These committees became the precursors of the VECs and were the first attempts at training up a cohort of people in trade and technical skills.

As a celebration of this important anniversary, we are proposing to put together a celebratory concert in the Solstice Arts Theatre in Navan using the many talented young people from our Meath VEC schools. Elma Mc Mahon, Youth Officer will coordinate the event but with the assistance of all the teachers in all of the schools.

This exciting project is the latest innovative education development initiative for Meath VEC.

It will also create integration between the schools and promote the young peoples self confidence. It is a wonderful opportunity for them to develop their social and performance skills, make new friends and of course perform in front of their parents, teachers and friends.

It is expected that up to 125 young people will be involved in the event. To date the talent presenting itself to us include 45 piece choirs, 25 piece orchestras, dramatic productions, excerpts from plays and musicals, freestyle dances, pianists, Irish dancing champions, traditional music, rock bands and solo singers. It really is going to be a night to remember not only for the participants but by every staff member of Meath VEC.



## Musical Directors from around the County

Back Row: (l to r) Mr. Tom Stack, Principal, St. Fintina's Post Primary School, Longwood, Ms. Carmel Quigley, O' Carolan College, Nobber, Ms. Sheila Ryan, Dunshaughlin Community College, Ms. Pat Morris, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne, Ms. Paola Cullen, Ratoath College, Ms. Fidelmia Gibney, Deputy Principal, St. Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle, Ms. Michelle Conway, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne, Ms. Kate Geoghan, Youthreach Resource Person, Laytown/Bettystown. Front Row: (l to r) Ms. Elma McMahon, Youth Officer, County Meath VEC, Ms. Caitriona Feeney, Youthreach Trim, Ms. Nessa Olanhan, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne, Ms. Philomena Lynch, St. Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle.

# Stiofán Ó Méalóid



Tháinig Stiofán ar an saol ar an 10/12/1989. De bhunú Chonamara a thuismitheoirí, Mairtín agus Caitlín a rugadh i Rath Chairn. D'fhreastal Stiofán ar Scoil Náisiúnta Uí Ghramhnaigh agus ar Choláiste Pobail Rath Chairn. Dalta stuama ab ea Stiofán agus peileadóir den scoth chomh maith. Bhí sé ina bhall de Chumann Peile Chlann na nGael. Maraíodh Stiofán i dtimpist bóthair ar an 29/10/2007. Tá gach a bhfuil i gColáiste Pobail Rath Chairn faoi bhrón i ndiaidh a bháis. Bhí beirt dhearthair, Tomas agus Máirtín (nach maireann), agus beirt dheirfiúr Nóra agus Caitlín ag Stiofán.



Picture shows the presentation of an award to Rafal Zanarski a student in Dunshaughlin who won first prize for his short story entitled EDI. Rafal won €200 and €400 for his school library.

# An Appreciation Mr. Jim D'Arcy



County Meath VEC and Navan VEC Traveller Education Centre was shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Horticulture teacher, Jim D'Arcy on Monday March 10th last.

Jim was a friend and colleague to both staff and students alike for over fifteen years, during which time he instilled a love of gardening and a respect for the environment amongst all under his care.

Jim served as a member of County Meath V.E.C from 1991 to 1999. He always had the interests of the Centre at heart and staunchly pursued many Traveller issues while serving as a councillor on Navan Town Council.

Today Jim's daughter Jenny is a Public Representative and a VEC member as well as a member of staff of Beaufort College School Completion programme.

On behalf of the County Meath VEC, students, teachers and Board of Management in the Centre, we wish to express our sympathy to Frances and her family.

# Meath VEC - Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2007 Presentation Night

On the 6th December 2007, Meath VEC hosted a Presentation Night for the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme 2006 for 82 Youth Clubs and Organisations. The Solstice Arts Theatre in Navan was packed to full capacity. Our very special guest on the night was Mr. Trevor Giles

Master of Ceremonies on the night was the Youth Officer Elma McMahon who gave a warm welcome to members of the VEC committee, the VEC staff, Trevor and most importantly all the youth groups. She applauded Mick O Keefe, the VEC staff and the Youth Sub Committee for all their hard work in processing 82 clubs. This is an increase of 30 clubs from this time last year which shows how important and significant youth work is becoming in Meath.

The clubs in attendance ranged from Foroiges to Macras, arch clubs to scout & guides, orchestra bands to youth clubs. Trevor Giles and Jenny Darcy made the presentation to each of the clubs and societies.



# Minister Mary Hanifan visits Youthreach Bettystown/Laytown

Back from left to right: Thomas Byrne T.D., Lorna Beatty, Alison Tracey, Pat Boshell, Noelle O'Kane. Front from left to right: Kate Geoghegan Resource, Vivienne Branigan Co-ordinator, Minister Mary Hanifan and CEO Peter Kierans.



## OUR HEAD OFFICE RECEPTIONIST CLAIRE KENNEDY'S MEMORABLE TRIP TO CALCUTTA

Claire shares her experience with us. To go or not to go that was the question? But go I did, and I am so glad I did! I have recently returned from a trip to Calcutta where I spent ten days doing voluntary work. I travelled along with two other ladies and a group of students and teachers who were on an immersion trip.



My trip started with a flight to London at 6.30am and then a ten hour flight to Calcutta. We were all shocked at our first glimpses of the city which we saw on our taxi journey to our hotel. People lay on the street, asleep. Cows, goats, dogs and wild cats roamed the streets and the blaring horns of the taxis filled our ears. The rooms were small, with a bed, bathrooms, some cockroaches and geckos! Our day started every morning at five o'clock. From the hotel we walked fifteen minutes to Mother House, the home of Mother Teresa. This walk took us through the poverty stricken city showing us every aspect of the lives of the Indian people. People were washing, cleaning, setting up shop for the day. Taxis and rickshaws

brushed by, a little too close for comfort at times! Small children would follow us everywhere, begging for a few rupee, and we felt terrible as we were not allowed to give them any money. After a beautiful mass in the Mother House we went to work in Shishu Bhavan, which is an orphanage for children with mental and physical disabilities. This work was trying but very rewarding as you were immediately comforted by the happiness of the children who were elated to have you there to help them.

After lunch in the Blue Sky Café we returned to the hotel for an hour or two to rest. We then set out for Loreto School Sealdah for street children. Here we worked, laughed and played with these amazing children ranging in age from two to seventeen. We also visited and worked with The Bridge Foundation, an organisation which looks after a number of the poorest children by providing a safe place where they can do their homework every evening. The ultimate aim of The Foundation is that the students will be able to pass their state exams and get good jobs.

This will enable their families and them to escape the poverty cycle. I am so glad I had the opportunity to travel to Calcutta, on what was a life-changing experience. I have mixed emotion since coming home, happy that I made the journey, glad I was able to work, help and play with the children, sad when I think of the thousands of children that have so little and need so much and hopeful that I will return soon to do the same again.

## RATOATH COLLEGE SUPPORT GOAL

Mr O'Hare is pictured here in a special Jersey made for him by Amy Brady in second year. He is now half a Meath man!! - but still supporting Dublin at the back of it all. Jersey day was run by him to support the Charity Goal, Well done Mr O'Hare!!



## HEALTH & SAFETY

VEC's are required to comply with the Safety Health and Welfare Act 2005. Health and Safety Statements for all schools/centres should be reviewed annually, and where significant changes take place and/or risk reviews are carried out.

We have engaged a consultant who is currently carrying out an audit in our schools and colleges to ensure that we comply with all the relevant legislation. If there is any Health & Safety issue which should be drawn to the attention of the consultant, please inform Principal/Coordinator or Head of Section.

## Strategic Planning for County Meath VEC - PLC College and another school in Navan

The VEC Education Plan adopted in 2006 had within its aims the forward planning for the needs of centres of growth in County Meath. One of those areas identified was Navan.

The VEC conducted an assessment of primary school enrolments in Navan and the wider Navan feeder area during Autumn 2007. Data was collected to make comparisons between the current 6th class enrolment and the current Junior Infants enrolment. The data showed that there are almost 200 additional students at Junior Infant level as against those in 6th Class. This would suggest that there will be a dramatic increase in numbers of students seeking Post Primary places in Navan over the next 8 years culminating in an additional 200 students transferring into Post Primary in 2015. On foot of this information County Meath VEC passed a resolution requesting the Department of Education to immediately put in place plans for at least one additional Post-Primary school under the patronage of the VEC. The areas identified for this new foundation were Clonmagadden to the North of Navan or Johnstown to the East of Navan.

Within the strategic planning process County Meath VEC has been exploring the possibility of a stand alone PLC college in the town of Navan. As student numbers increase in Beaufort College pressure grows on the existing PLC courses. Allied to this are the demands externally for PLC places from students who are travelling to Cavan or to County Louth PLC colleges. Research has been undertaken with a view to identifying possible locations to commence a PLC college in permanent or in temporary accommodation. This work is ongoing with a view to a commencement in 2009.

## CO. MEATH FINANCE REPORT AT END MARCH

	Jan - March 08	Jan - Mar 07	Yr On Yr €change	Yr On Yr % Change
Expenditure				
Pay (Schools & Ho)	5,936,130	5,271,481	664,649	12.6%
Other Non Pay (Schools & Ho)	758,417	548,473	209,943	38.3%
Youthreach	876,524	942,998	(66,474)	(7.0%)
Traveller Education	284,350	250,211	34,139	13.6%
VTOS	195,068	160,123	34,945	21.8%
Scholarships And Grants	550,666	580,341	(29,675)	(5.1%)
Capital	298,150	2,191,104	(1,892,954)	(86.4%)
Adult Literacy	194,192	115,116	79,077	68.7%
Community Education	71,221	106,559	(35,338)	(33.2%)
Back To Education	178,533	117,075	61,458	52.5%
Adult Education - Non Pay Costs	33,797	43,230	(9,433)	(21.8%)
Navan School Completion Programme	123,657	104,347	19,310	18.5%
Other Costs	721,132	374,020	347,112	92.8%
Total Expenditure	10,221,836	10,805,077	(583,241)	(5.4%)
Receipts	9,874,309	10,692,584	(818,275)	(7.7%)
Surplus/(Deficit)	(347,527)	(112,493)		

Notes  
Expenditure to the end of March this year is 5% below this time last year. This time last year we were spending significantly on the construction of Ratoath College, its completion has dramatically reduced capital expenditure. Pay costs are higher reflecting national pay agreements and higher staff numbers. Teacher numbers are higher led by increased enrolment in our schools (3,771 in 2007/2008 vs 3,502 in 2006/2007). Other non pay costs are over €200,000 higher; this reflects site work and crane hire for the prefabs in Nobber, renovation of the old vocational school in Kells and increased heat and light costs. While Youthreach student numbers are higher due to growth throughout the county and our new centre in Bettystown, costs are lower because 2007 included the renovation of Kells Scout Hall. Higher Traveller Education and VTOS costs are mostly due to investment in IT. Costs in Adult Literacy, Community Education, Back to Education and other costs include share of the cost of the new Further and Adult Education building at Abbey Road. Other costs comprise self financing programmes, expenditure under smaller programmes and various school budgets.

## St Brigid's Athletic Club Make A Very Generous Presentation to St Oliver Post Primary

St Brigid's Athletic Club presented St. Oliver Post Primary with a team strip, comprising of 50 t-shirts. St Oliver Post Primary has many fine athletes and the team strip will without doubt help in promoting athletics within the school.



Pictured below left to right: Pat Plunkett (Chairperson, St Brigid's Athletic Club), Tomas O'Reilly (Student, St Oliver Post Primary), Michael Heery (President, Athletics Ireland), Elaine Plunkett (Student, St Oliver Post Primary), Marin Heery (Secretary, St Brigid's Athletic Club) and Sean Dolan (Teacher, St Oliver Post Primary)

## Blathnaid Ni Chofaigh honours Beaufort Reading Challenge.

On Monday, March 10th, a ceremony was held at Beaufort College to celebrate the achievements of first and second year students in a recent 'Reading Challenge'.



Pictured, Blathnaid Ni Cofaigh. From left Pattie O'Mahony, Dereck Curran, Eoghan McDonnell, John Condon, Principal, Catherine O'Shea.

# TRAVELLERS EDUCATION CENTRE – CENTRE OPEN DAY

The Navan Travellers Education Centre (NTEC) is the new name for what used to be NTTC.

This year's Open Day helped the centre showcase their hard work over the last year and to promote two new Level 5 courses, Hairdressing and Secretarial Skills.

The Minister for Transport, Noel Dempsey TD, a long time supporter of the Centre came along to commence the proceedings.

The event was opened by Centre Director, Declan Clarke with speeches from Mr. Noel Dempsey TD and C.E.O Mr. Peter Kierans, congratulating all those

involved and thanking the N.T.E.C for providing a necessary service for Travellers locally and appreciation to all Centre nationally. The Open Day gave an excellent opportunity for the public to view portfolios and courses that are on offer at the N.T.E.C. as well as the tremendous effort

and achievements of students and staff alike.

Director Declan Clarke closed another prosperous Open Day by congratulating all who took part and thanking all who attended. He mentioned how events like this are always a group effort and thanked everyone involved for their endeavours.



## FAST MEATH BTEI



10 participants received FETAC certificates for Computer Literacy at a recent presentation in Abbey Road Navan. They had completed their course in Laytown under the Back to Education Initiative and are currently attending an Office Administration course in Laytown. Photo shows some of the participants who received certificates and Lord Mayor of Navan Mr Christy Reilly who is also a Meath VEC committee member.

## MEMBERS OF LOCAL WORKING GROUP

A Local VEC Partnership Working Group comprising of equal numbers of management and staff representatives has been established by Meath VEC. Part of their function is:

- to implement the Partnership process in accordance with the guidelines and suggestions of the VEC National Partnership Forum
- Implement Performance Indicators
- Develop a Customer Service Plan



Front row (l to r) Mary G. Keane (CES), Peter Kierans (CEO), John Fannig (Chairman VEC), Sheila Dunne (Dunshaughlin), Ciara Flood (HR) Back Row (l to r) Breda Garvey (CES), Bernadette Walsh (CES), Lorraine Peyton (CES), Christy Reilly (Support Staff), Nuala O' Neill (APO, HR)

## GRADUATION CEREMONY AT BEAUFORT COLLEGE, NAVAN

An official conferring of FETAC Awards Level 5 took place at Beaufort College, Navan. Fifty students from Secretarial, Childcare, Art Portfolio and Adult Education were presented with their certificates. Present at the ceremony were Bartle O'Curraoin, FETAC Co-ordinator in Beaufort College, Seamus Ryan, Education Officer with Meath VEC, Ann Devlin, Representative from FETAC, John Condon, Principal of Beaufort College, Christy Reilly, Chairman of Navan Urban District Council.

The Secretarial Course is co-ordinated by Margaret Burke. Outstanding results were achieved by these students. Some students have progressed to Dundalk Institute of Technology while the majority have secured employment in the

business sector.

The Art Portfolio Course is co-ordinated by Betty Newman-Maguire and is now in its fifth year. Record results were achieved by the students who are presently studying at third level art colleges throughout Ireland – The

National College of Art and Design, Dublin, Dublin Institute of Technology, Limerick College of Art, Dun Laoighaire College of Art, Galway-Mayo and Athlone Institutes of Technology.

The Childcare Course, is co-ordinated by Ruth Armstrong. Some students are furthering their studies at Childcare Colleges in Dublin while the majority have secured employment in the childcare sector.

All courses commence in mid September and consist of eight Modules. Interviews take place in April/May.

Applications from Leaving Certificate students, those wishing to return to education and mature students are welcome. Telephone Olivia Clinton, College Secretary, at 046 9028915 for the relevant application form.



PLC Graduation 2007

## New Further Education Centre at Abbey Road

A new further education centre is now in operation in Abbey Road, Navan. It is located at the back of the main VEC building. The services of Adult Literacy, Community Education and BTEI are all housed in this purpose built new training and administration facility.

The building comprises of five offices, two large multi-purpose IT training rooms, a meeting/training room and a one-to-one or small group training room. In an ongoing effort to facilitate student learning there is an open access computer in the main reception area which is free for all students to use to research course work or improve their IT skills.

Tutors will enjoy more freedom and resources in the centre with a designated tutor workstation and well stocked resource area. It is envisaged that as well as being a training facility the building will also be an area for students, tutors and staff to meet and network.

Our first courses have already begun in the building. The inaugural course was the NUI Certificate in Integrating Literacy, which started on Wednesday 12th March. We are looking forward to holding an official opening during the summer where staff, students and members of the public will be invited to see the facilities on offer. We look forward to seeing you then.



## ECDL awards



Pictured in the photo are Head Office staff who recently received their ECDL Certificates having completed all 7 modules. Congratulations to all staff involved. Front row (left to right): Elma McMahon, Claire Kennedy, Mary Keane Back row (left to right): Jackie Breen, Patricia Kavanagh, Mairead Talbot, Sinead Murphy

## ADULT LITERACY



Pictured in the photograph is a literacy student Nuala Burns who won three gold medals for swimming in the Special Olympics with Head Office staff Geraldine Smith, Breda Garvey, Mary Keane and Alan O' Hanlon (retired Adult Literacy Organiser)

# Study Visit to European School Brussels

Principals and Deputies spent two days on a study visit to European schools in Brussels. The first day was spent in Brussels II Woluwe, where Richard Galvin is Director of the school. Mr. Galvin is originally from Cork and became Director of this school

the European School System". On the second day we visited Brussels I in "Uccle" which is slightly larger than Mr. Galvin's school. Once again we were shown an insight into other aspects of the European School System



Picture shows Mr. Eamon Gaffney, Principal, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne and Ms. Anne Marie McCarrick, Principal, Colaiste na hInse, Laytown who travelled to Brussels.

last September. There are 3000 students in the school from early primary to late teens. He has a staff of over 400 teachers drawn from all over the European Union. There were presentations and discussions with key members of staff on a variety of topics including "Teaching English as a second Language", "School Pastoral Systems", "Assessment in

including "ICT in teaching and learning" and the school counselling system. The Directors of both schools were welcomed at the 21st Century Learning day in Dunshaughlin on March 19th. It is hoped to expand the links between Meath VEC schools and the European School System in the future

# Meath Vocational Schools inter-county football

The Meath Vocational Schools inter-county football team were unsuccessful in their attempt to reach a second successive All Ireland final, when they were defeated by Monaghan in the semi-final, which was played at Darver, Co Louth on Sat. 23 Feb.

Having reached the All Ireland final last year, where they lost out to Tyrone in a closely contested game, they had high hopes of going one better in this year's campaign. The team, representing all vocational schools and one community school in the county, started off well with fairly comfortable wins over Offaly and Dublin in the early rounds of the Leinster championship.

Next up was the Leinster final against Kildare. This final was played in Pairc Tailteann on the 2nd Feb and the Meath boys defeated Kildare by 2-12 to 1-7 to retain their Leinster title. With twelve of last year's panel still available, the team were very confident facing Monaghan in the All Ireland semi-final. However, things did not go well on the day and despite having the lion's share of possession, particularly in the second half, they were beaten by 2-6 to 0-11.

Well done to all the lads on the panel who showed great commitment in turning up for trials, training sessions and challenge matches throughout the year.



The Meath Vocational Schools Inter-County Football - Pictured (l to r) Mr. Ultan Fitzpatrick, retired teacher, St. Oliver P.P, Oldcastle, Mr. Pat Kenny, Dunshaughlin Community College, Mr. Kit Henry, GAA County Board, Mr. Joe Gibney, Ashbourne Community School, Mr. Peter McCormack, O' Carolan College, Nobber

# O' Carolan College Autism Centre

The O' Carolan College Autism centre opened its doors to its first students in December 2006. Ongoing planning and consultations were in place from the previous September. Currently, the centre has two students and this number will no doubt expand in the years ahead. The centre is self contained and has its own kitchen, bathroom, sensory room and classroom area. This is a huge resource for the students and highlights the importance of life skills to students with Autism.

The classroom is divided into different sections. Each student has an individual workstation, where they get one to one tuition and there is a group work table where the students



Picture shows Mr. Ian O' Brien, Ms. Jackie O' Brien, Autism Unit, O' Carolan College Nobber, Mr. Brian Goggins, Principal, O' Carolan College, Nobber, Mr. Peter Kierans, CEO at the Valentine's Ball in aid of the Autism Unit in Nobber

work together in various subject areas. The kitchen area works well in the corner of

the room, where each student enjoys cookery lessons and practicing of various life skills.

The sensory room is beside the kitchen and is used each day for various therapies.

The classroom itself is a wonderful resource for the students and is equipped with various other resources to aid the students with their learning. Recently, the Department of Education funded an interactive whiteboard for the centre, which has been of great benefit to the students. The Autism Unit has also purchased other teaching aids with money raised through fund-raising. Recently they had a very successful Valentines Ball at the Headfort Arms Hotel in aid of the Autism Centre. The proceeds of this event will help purchase a bus for the centre.