

MEATH VEC

ISSUE 4. VOL. 1 APRIL 2007

NEWS

EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

- COLÁISTE NA HINSE, LAYTOWN NEW 1,000 PUPIL SCHOOL
- O'CAROLAN COLLEGE, NOBBER BUILDING PROJECT FOR 500 APPROVED
- DUNSHAUGHLIN BUILDING FOR 1,000 PASSED STAGE II
- DUNBOYNE BUILDING FOR 1,000 PASSED STAGE III
- ENROLMENT AT OLDCASTLE & NOBBER HIT 100 1ST YEARS FOR '07



DUNSHAUGHLIN SCHOOL OF THE FUTURE

On Wednesday January 31st 2007 Mr. Seamus Ryan, Principal, Community College, Dunshaughlin met with Mr. Bill Gates in the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh where it was announced that Dunshaughlin Community College was selected as one of twelve schools worldwide to take part in Microsoft's Innovative Schools Programme - See pg 9

RATH AR BHUR SAOTHAR

School year 2006/07 is now into the final term. A great deal has been achieved throughout the county in schools and programmes so far. There is a lot to be proud of. We have been asked to build a new 1,000 pupil school in Laytown and hope to start this school in 2008. The awarding of Enterprise School of the Future to Community College, Dunshaughlin, brought great credit to all the business of County Meath VEC. The county has approval to appoint an Education Officer. We have been awarded full county-wide Fetac Accreditation. Once again a school, St. Peters, achieved maximum 600 points at Leaving Cert. Meath VEC county team are in the All Ireland Final for the first time in 49 years. St. Oliver have won the All Ireland final



in Section B senior football for the first time in their history. Teams have also participated in provincial finals and higher in basketball and soccer. Alongside these achievements stand school musicals, drama, public speaking and participation in football, hurling, basketball, cross country. Students have visited

France, Italy, Germany, Spain and China. To all, for excellence at the Chalkface, and for your participation in academic, cultural, sporting and outward bound activities, a thank you on my own behalf and on behalf of County Meath Vocational Education committee.

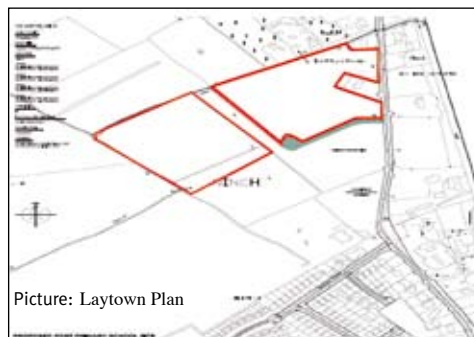
Peter Kierans

Le gach dea ghui
Peter Kierans Chief Executive Officer.

NEW SCHOOL FOR MEATH VEC - COLÁISTE NA HINSE

County Meath VEC received formal confirmation in December that it is to be the patron of a 1,000 pupil new school catering for the East Coast of County Meath. The area in question is Laytown, Bettystown, Mornington, Donacorney, Julianstown and Stamullen. The awarding of the school to County Meath VEC represents a milestone in our history. It also indicated tremendous confidence by the Department of Education and the Minister in the capacity of Meath VEC to build and run a school of this size. It is recognition of the achievements of all of our schools in the County because the work and success of existing schools is the basis for that confidence.

Our county student numbers have risen from 2,400 ten years ago to 3,500 in 2006/07.



Our estimations are that student numbers will increase by an average of 150 per year for the next ten years. We are very confident that with the increased population in Navan, South Meath, along the East Coast and on the South side of Drogheda that the VEC will be called upon again to open further new schools in the future.

ADULT EDUCATION OFFICER



County Meath VEC has appointed Mr. Christy Duffy to the position of Acting Adult Education Officer. This is a new position created

to cater for the demands of a growing VEC scheme particularly in the area of Further Education. Christy leaves a very vibrant Community Education position where he has built up strong partnership links. He was responsible for the delivery of the County Meath VEC Education Plan and for FETAC Accreditation, overseeing the registration of County Meath VEC as a provider with FETAC.

RECENT APPOINTMENTS

THE WELCOME PROJECT - Welcome is an action-based research project that aims to develop integrated support services for disadvantaged women that enhance their capacity to avail of higher and further education opportunities. The following posts have recently been filled:



**WELCOME PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR
MS JUDY HALFORD**

Judy will have responsibility for the overall co-ordination and management of the Welcome Project.



**WELCOME PROJECT OFFICER CURRICULAR
DEVELOPMENT MS CLAUDIA DARLEY**

Claudia joins the Welcome team and will be responsible for the achievement of the project objectives with particular emphasis on the curriculum development aspect of the Welcome Project.



**WELCOME PROJECT OFFICER INTEGRATION
OF SERVICES JO TOOMEY**

Jo also joins the Welcome team with responsibility for the achievement of the project objectives with particular emphasis on the development of the integration of services aspect of the Welcome Project.

CIRCULAR LETTERS

C/L 0137/2006 - EARLY RETIREMENT SCHEME FOR TEACHERS, RETIREMENT AT THE END OF 2006/2007 SCHOOL YEAR - Details of the scheme are outlined and closing dates for receipt of application for 2006/07 school year are as follows: Strands 1 and 2 - Thurs 18th Jan 2007. Strand 3 - Thurs 15th Feb 2007.

C/L 0135/2006 - Payment of an allowance to recognised Post-Primary Teachers who hold Graduate/Higher Diploma in Special Educational Needs

C/L 0139/2006 - Incremental Credit Scheme for Special Needs Assistants

C/L 0150/2006 - Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 and 2001 - Requirements under the Ethics Acts for Committee Members and certain staff of Co. Meath VEC to furnish annual statements of registrable interests.

C/L 0001/2007 - Graduate Certificate in the Education of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders for teachers 2007/2008

C/L 0002/2007 - Masters in Special Educational Needs 2007/2008

C/L 0003/2007 - Combined Post-Graduate Diploma Programme of Continuous Professional Development for Teachers involved in Learning Support and Special Education 2007/2008

C/L 0009/2007 - Secondment of Teachers to the European Schools

VEC TERM TIME LEAVE SCHEME for non-academic grades - Brief Outline of the scheme per C/L 38/06

The scheme provides for unpaid leave to allow working parents or primary carers to match their working arrangements to the main summer holidays of their children or care for family member who has a disability.

Department of Education and Science circular letters may be viewed at www.education.gov.ie/ under education personnel/ post primary circulars and information booklets/circular listing



HR Team: L-R, Trish Kavanagh, Martina Vaughan, Mairead Talbot, Nuala O'Neill, APO, Mary Keane.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION FACILITATOR



County Meath VEC are pleased to announce the appointment of a new Community Education Facilitator, Ms. Shauna O' Reilly. Shauna is a native of Kells, County Meath and a graduate of UCD. Ms. O' Reilly has worked with County Monaghan VEC in their Adult Literacy and Adult Education programme. She also has experience with the Navan Advanced Programme for adults with special needs. Shauna has set-dancing, swimming and gardening as hobbies. She replaces Mr. Christy Duffy who has been appointed as Acting Adult Education Officer.

PROJECT OFFICER



Ms. Sinead Murphy has been appointed to the position of Project Officer in County Meath VEC, Head Office. This position has been created to deal with the wide range of developmental projects which are ongoing at this time. Sinead previously worked in the Corporate and Education Services and as secretary to CEO.

EDUCATION OFFICER

The VEC is delighted with the news that a new position of Education Officer has been approved by the Department of Education and Science.

The Education Officer position is the senior management role of Deputy CEO. The granting of this senior position to County Meath VEC is recognition by the Department of Education and Science of the growth and strength of this VEC as an education service provider. Details of the appointment will be notified shortly.

UPDATE ON: GOAL 1 - EDUCATION PLAN 2006 - 2010

GOAL 1: DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS AND CENTRES. PLAN PROACTIVELY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS AND CENTRES IN RESPONSE TO THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES IN COUNTY MEATH.

	SITE ACQUISITION	NEW ACCOMMODATION LIST APPROVED	STAGE 1 & 2 APPROVED	STAGE 3 APPROVED	COMMENCE DESIGN	PLANNING PERMISSION	PROJECT TO TENDER	BUILDER ON SITE	BUILDING COMPLETE	STOCKING	COMMENCE USE
ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, DUNBOYNE	✓	✓ AUG' 05 REVISED	✓ JUNE 06	✓ NOV' 06	✓ NOV' 06	JAN' 07	IN HAND	JULY 07	SEPT 08	SEPT 08	OCT 08
RATOATH COLLEGE, NEW 900 PUPIL SCHOOL	✓ FEB' 04	✓ APRIL 04	✓ AUG' 04	✓ NOV' 04	✓ JULY 04	✓ DEC' 04	✓ JUNE 05	✓ OCT 05	✓ MAY 07	SUMMER 07	SEPT 07
COMMUNITY COLLEGE, DUNSHAUGHLIN € MILLION EXTENSION	✓	✓ SEPT 05	✓ APRIL 07	✓ JAN' 08	✓ SEPT 06	OCTOBER 07	APRIL 08	MAY 08	SEPT 09	SEPT 09	SEPT 09
ST. FINTINA'S POST PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONGWOOD	IN HAND	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA	TBA
O' CAROLAN COLLEGE, NOBBER MAJOR EXTENSION	✓	MARCH 07	DEC' 07	SEPT 07	JAN' 08	JUNE 08	SEPT '09	JAN' 09	JUNE 2010	FEB / MAR 2010	EASTER 2010
LAYTOWN NEW 1,000 PUPIL SCHOOL	✓	✓ APRIL '07	OCT 2007	FEB 2008	JUNE 07	MARCH 09	MAY 09	SEPT 2009	MAY 2011	JUNE 2011	SEPT 2011
YOUTHREACH KILLS NEW BUILDING	✓	✓ SEPT 07	N/A	N/A	✓	✓	✓ APRIL 06	SEPT '06	✓ APRIL 07	✓ MAY 07	✓ MAY 07
COMMUNITY EDUCATION NEW BUILDING NAVAN	✓	✓ FEB' 07	✓ N/A	✓ N/A	✓ JULY '06	✓ JAN '07	✓ DEC '06	MAY 07	SEPT 07	OCTOBER 07	OCTOBER 07

LAUNCH OF VEC STAFF EMAIL

County Meath VEC in January 2007 announced the launch of email accounts or mailboxes for all staff working with this VEC. All staff will now have a dedicated school or centre email address. The format of your email address is firstname.surname@school/centre.meathvec.ie all lower case, no hyphens or apostrophises.

This facility is being provided on a trial basis free of charge by Hosted Exchange, the MIT and Microsoft communications solution. It will run from early January until June 2007. Each staff member will have a mailbox capacity of 100 megabytes. This capacity is sufficient for normal communications, however it would quickly be consumed by photographs or other visual material.

It is recommended that you retain your external mail account for commercial notices such as budget flights etc. County Meath VEC is the first VEC to extend this service to all staff and if it proves worthwhile for internal and countywide communications we will tender publicly for a host to take on the project as a long-term service. We will contact you further regarding the full email listings for your school or centre. We are also drawing up a protocol for use of this facility. I would like to thank MIT for this generous gesture which enables County Meath VEC to meet another of the objectives laid down in the Education Plan.

As part of the hosting arrangement MIT will install, configure, maintain, update and monitor the system. They will also back-up and archive mail and provide anti-virus and anti-spam solutions. I hope you find this email service of assistance to you as teacher, special needs assistant, caretaker, cleaner or administrator. The overall objective is that we are enabled to undertake our various tasks as effectively as possible for the benefit of the many people who look to us for education and support.



Guidance Counsellors at Grants Seminar

THIRD LEVEL GRANTS

On 11th January, 2007 a meeting was held with Guidance Counsellors in advance of Leaving Certificate students completing their CAO forms for 2007/2008 academic year.

All guidance counsellors throughout the County were invited to attend.

The purpose of this meeting was to discuss ways to create a greater awareness among students of the range of grants available to them.

Following the meeting an information document was placed on our Website.



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CHECK YOUR MAIL!
ARE YOU THE
WINNER OF THE €80
DINNER VOUCHER?

<http://email.meathvec.ie/exchange/>

OLDCASTLE SCOOP ALL-IRELAND TITLE

St. Olivers PP Oldcastle fielding two current Meath minors and three from Cavan, controlled matters from pillar to post as they secured the All-Ireland Vocational Schools SFC B final at Dr. Cullen Park Carlow with a convincing 1-18 to 1-3 win over St. Ailbe's, Tipperary.

St. Olivers posted notice of their intention to lift the cup by scoring the opening four points of the game with particularly good points from Patrick Rahill and Kieran Kiernan.

Spurred on by the dominance of midfielders Graham Patterson and Tom Lynch, the Meath-based side went onto lead by 0-10 to 0-3 at the interval. While Patrick Rahill, Kiernan Kiernan, Patrick Coakley and David Givney were impressive in attack.

By half-time St Oliver Post Primary was in a clear lead 0-10 to 0-3. St. Ailbe's tried to lift their game in the 2nd half and two converted frees by Kevin Fox and Stephen Quinn did help their cause.

But a missed penalty in the 47th minute by St. Ailbe's signalled the end of their hopes of winning their game of catch-up.

Within a minute, a lovely flowing movement was displayed by St Olivers with Patrick



Coakley superbly finishing off. A brilliant goal a minute later by St. Oliver's Patrick Coakley served to leave the issue well and truly decided.

Even though Stephen Quinn fired home a neat goal for the Munster lads in the 50th minute, St Oliver Post Primary highlighted their superiority by kicking six unanswered points before the end of the clash to secure the title.

St Oliver Post Primary:

N. Mc Nellis, C. Caffrey, R. Geraghty, T. Mc Cabe, E. Smyth, B. Curren, C. Mc Partland,

G. Patterson, T. Lynch, S. Bardon, K. Kiernan, P. Rahill, N. Galligan, P. Coakley, D. Givney

Subs: D. Hawden for S. Bardon, P. Gilsean for P. Rahill, J Shortt for N. Galligan, E. Brody for Coakley.

Scorers

St Oliver Post Primary:

P. Rahgill 0-5 (2f); K. Kiernan 0-4 (1f); P. Coakley 1-1; T. Lynch, D. Givney, P. Gilsean 0-2 each.

St Ailbe's:

S. Quinn 1-1 (0-1f); K. Fox 0-2 (2f)

LOCAL YOUTH CLUB GRANT SCHEME 2006

Each year Co. Meath VEC invites applications for grant aid from youth clubs and organisations which are based in the county. The grants are funded by the Department of Education and Science from the proceeds of the National Lottery. The scheme is open to all organisations that have youth work as their primary focus. However disadvantaged and marginal groups are priority targets. An advertisement is placed in the Local Press inviting application. In 2006 the VEC awarded a total of €41,900

Number of clubs applied = 65

Number of clubs funded = 53

An awards ceremony was held in the Newgrange Hotel, Navan in November 2006. Cheques were presented to the successful clubs by Mr. Graham Geraghty, Meath County GAA footballer and Ms. Blathnaid Ni Chofaigh, TV Personality. Both presenters are past pupils of our own Beaufort College, Navan. Entertainment was provided on the night by St. Catherine's Youth Club, Carney School of Irish Dancing and Ms. Tina French. Two clubs were singled out for special awards, St. Catherine's Youth Club Gibbstown for Club of the Year and Navan Traveller Workshop Ltd. for most enterprising club.



Dan Keane, VEC Member, Blathnaid Ni Chofaigh, Graham Geraghty, Ms. Jenny Darcy VEC Member and Peter Kierans at the local Youth Club Awards

CO. MEATH VEC FINANCE REPORT FOR 2005 v 2006

	EXPENDITURE JAN - DEC 06	EXPENDITURE JAN - DEC 05	YR ON YR €CHANGE	YR ON YR % CHANGE
PAY (SCHOOLS & HO)	18,434,689	15,806,892	2,627,798	16.6%
OTHER NON PAY (SCHOOLS & HO)	1,521,905	1,062,996	458,909	43.2%
YOUTHREACH	2,597,221	2,269,114	328,107	14.5%
TRAVELLER TRAINING	1,056,974	906,480	150,494	16.6%
VTOS	452,630	385,108	67,522	17.5%
SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS	967,595	911,347	56,248	6.2%
CAPITAL	9,293,818	2,891,105	6,402,713	221.5%
ADULT LITERACY	593,198	450,365	142,833	31.7%
COMMUNITY EDUCATION	204,283	189,751	14,533	7.7%
BACK TO EDUCATION	278,800	231,923	46,878	20.2%
ADULT EDUCATION - NON PAY COSTS	56,664	52,723	3,941	7.5%
OTHER COSTS	1,496,778	1,282,680	214,098	16.7%
TOTAL	36,954,555	26,440,482	10,514,073	39.8%
RECEIPTS	36,114,097	28,541,295	7,572,803	26.5%
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(840,458)	2,100,812		



Frank Smith Head of Finance



Ann Malone Senior Staff Officer

NOTES: 2006 expenditure was significantly higher than 2005. Increased school enrolment generates higher teacher numbers, rates of pay are higher reflecting national pay agreements. Non pay costs are higher reflecting significant investment in IT, the provision of temporary accommodation in Fairyhouse and Dunshaughlin and cost inflation particularly oil, gas and electricity. The construction of a new school in Ratoath accounts for €8.85 million of capital expenditure of €9.29million. Other costs have risen reflecting new programmes which were either not operating to the same extent or not part of County Meath VEC this time last year, including WINNER and Mobile IT unit, Dunboyne Plc in its new location and Navan School Completion Programme. We finished 2005 with a surplus of €2 million: primarily advance funding for Ratoath College construction. The deficit of €0.84 million in 2006 is funded out of this.

2007 Expenditure to date this year is 30% ahead of this time last year. Pay costs are higher reflecting national pay agreements and staff numbers. Teacher numbers are higher led by increased enrolment in our schools (3,509 in 2006/2007 vs 3,227 in 2005/2006). Renovation of Kells Scout Hall to serve as a new cen-

FINANCE REPORT CONT. ON PG 6>

tre for Kells Youthreach is almost complete and leads to increased expenditure. 2007 spend to date on Ratoath College is €1.17million. Total forecasted spend this year is €44m.

AUDITS

Co. Meath VEC are subject to annual audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General. They completed the audit of the 2005 financial statements in December 2006. Their report goes to the audit sub-committee. Co. Meath VEC Internal Auditors (VSSU) have increased their staffing and can carry out more audits. As a result they performed two internal audits in 2006 and one so far this year. Again their report goes to the Audit Sub-committee.

OTHER NEWS

The finance department are working with schools and centers to introduce central buying deals with suppliers where practical and worthwhile. Recent agreements include waste disposal and recycling (saving €21,000), water dispensers (saving €5,500) and sanitary bins (saving €4,000). We changed phone company to Pure Telecom, started Central heating oil purchasing and bought photocopiers centrally. We are presently reviewing pest control, fire extinguisher servicing and electricity. We have just installed an enveloping machine in head office which can fold and insert up to 5 sheets into a standard business envelope. Maximum capacity is 2,000 inserts per hour. It is available for VEC use, please contact Emma McCabe for further information. Schools centres and programmes now send their monthly accounts data to head office and this has greatly reduced processing problems.

THE ADULT LEARNING AND CAREERS EVENT A HUGE SUCCESS! MAEGS



The Learning and Careers Event for Adults which was organised in the Ashbourne House Hotel, Ashbourne on January 18th was a tremendous success. Exhibitors from a wide range of educational, training and support agencies were present offering information, guidance and advice on their services. In all, 58 exhibition stands were erected for the occasion. This total includes 12 displays which were constructed by Co. Meath VEC. Staff members from all Co. Meath VEC Adult Education Services readily volunteered their participation in order to provide the best possible level of information to those who attended.

This Event, the first of its kind conducted in Co. Meath, was initially proposed by Meath Adult Education Guidance Service (MAEGS). Support for its eventual planning and organisation was agreed by MAEGS with Co. Meath VEC Community Education Service and with MITE (Meath Investment in Training and Education). The Event

commenced with the official launching by Minister of State for Education and Science Mr. Sean Haughey, T.D. Minister of State for Agriculture and Food Ms. Mary Wallace was also present at the occasion. Other representatives included members of Co. Meath VEC, Ms. Maria Keogh from the Dept. of Education and Science, and Ms Ursula Kearney from the National Centre for Guidance in Education.

The Event was arranged with a view to providing information on Learning, Training and Career opportunities to those adults who are living and working in Co. Meath. It is estimated that approximately 600 people attended the Event. It is hoped that each one, returned to their homes or places of work with a renewed vision of future possibilities and pathways to progression.

Michael O'Shea
Adult Education Guidance Counsellor.



Ministers Haughey and Wallace at the Learning and Careers Event

Most frequently asked questions in PAYROLL

1	How do I stop paying emergency tax?	When an employee submits a p.45 to payroll, part 3 is completed and returned to the inspector of taxes. If an employee cannot submit a p.45, they must get in contact with the inspector of taxes giving details of where they are employed and also giving the employers registered number.
2	I think I am on the incorrect point of the salary scale?	If an employee thinks they are on the incorrect point of the salary scale they should get in touch with Human Resources section of Co. Meath VEC for more information.
3	When is the midmonth advance paid?	The midmonth advance is normally paid on the 15th day of each month, provided the day is a bank work day, if not the advance will be paid on the bank day prior to the 15th.
4	Why is my monthly salary not always paid on the last day of the month?	The monthly salary is always paid on the last banking day of each month irrespective of which date it falls on.
5	Why can I not work more than 22 hours per week?	Department of Education states that a teacher can only work 22 teaching hours per week.

IMELDA PRUNTY B.T.E.I. BACK TO EDUCATION INITIATIVE CO-ORDINATOR



Imelda was appointed Co-ordinator for the Back to Education Initiative in November 2006. Before taking up this position Imelda was Co-ordinator for the very successful WINNER Project which is an initiative of the Community Education Services Department and is still currently running in RAPID areas in Navan.

Imelda was also responsible for co-ordinating and delivering the equally successful Pathways to Progression Project and the CAIT Project in various communities throughout North Meath. The aim of the Back to Education Initiative is to provide part-time Further Education programmes for adults who did not complete their education and to give people an

opportunity to combine a return to learning with family, work and other responsibilities.

This year Co. Meath VEC is delighted to have received an increase in the funds allocated under the Back to Education Initiative; the total allocation is €377,027. This means more courses and progression opportunities for those already on courses.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP WEEK

5TH – 9TH FEBRUARY, 2007

The VEC National Partnership Forum, in co-operation with the VEC sector promoted the Core Values of Partnership during the week 5th – 9th February, 2007. The aim of the week was to encourage, through fun, the core values of Teamwork, Leadership, Customer-centred Participation and Co-operation. On Tuesday 6th a table quiz was held in the VEC main hall, and on Thursday morning a coffee morning was held in the hall.



TRAINING FOR BOARDS OF MANAGEMENT



Mr. Diarmuid O'Neill
CEO, Co. Offaly VEC

Following on from the production of a handbook for members of Boards of Management, County Meath VEC undertook two training sessions in early February for Board Members. The sessions were jointly presented by CEO, Mr. Peter Kierans and the CEO for County Offaly, Mr. Diarmuid O'Neill.

The two sessions were well attended with a mix of Committee Members, staff representatives, parents, teacher representatives and Community and Church nominees. The training session covered the statutory basis for Boards of Management as set out in the Education Act 1998. They went on to deal with the Board's responsibility, school ethos, curriculum, delivery of quality education, the Board's role in Whole School Evaluation, Section 29 Appeals and the Board's responsibility for lease, loan or use of school property. Board members participated fully in the sessions which were interactive and workshop in nature. There was particular interest in the matter of subject inspections and whole-school

evaluations and how the Board has responsibility to see that the recommendations in these processes are implemented. The Board must handle Section 29 Appeals against failure to enrol and exclusion or suspension of students with great care. Mr. O'Neill pointed out that the Board must afford every opportunity to the parents of students to state their case on behalf of their son or daughter. If the Board fails to afford due process to parents, the decision to exclude will likely be overturned if they proceed with a full Section 29 appeal to the Department of Education and Science.

Each training session lasted approximately three hours and members were provided with the Board of Management handbook and the notes from the training sessions.

HAVE YOU GOT MAIL?

Log on <http://email.meathvec.ie/exchange/> and catch up on the latest staff news & information

The department of education and science evaluation of centres of education visit **YOUTHREACH Trim**

Two Inspectors from the Department of Education and Science Mr. Brendan Doody and Dr. Pdraig Kirk conducted a three day Evaluation of Trim Youthreach which is based in the Old Vocational School, Trim on Wed. 7th, Thurs. 8th and Friday 9th Feb. 2007.

The purpose of the evaluation was to affirm good practice, make recommendations to improve on existing service delivery, and influence policy for the future. The inspection commenced with a Pre-evaluation meeting during which time the Co-ordinator and staff were briefed on the process of the inspection and the rationale for same.

During their three day visit the inspectors visited all classes periods, chatted with students during class time, gave feedback and offered tips/suggestions to Teachers/Tutors, interviewed both past and present students/parents, met with representatives of community bodies, reviewed Policies and Procedures, and conducted formal interviews with Ms. Elizabeth Lavery, Centre Co-ordinator, followed by Mr. Peter Kierans, CEO and Mr. Christy Duffy, AEO.



YOUTHREACH Trim Centre

Following this a Post-evaluation meeting was scheduled for Tuesday March 6th 2007. This meeting was attended by all centre staff, CEO and AEO. The purpose of this meeting was to provide feedback of the evaluation under the headings of: Ethos, Character and Atmosphere, Community links, Student supports, Centre Management, Quality of Centre Planning, Quality of Teaching and Learning and Summary of main findings and recommendations. The findings were very positive and staff were delighted with the results of the inspection. Mr. Brendan Doody particularly praised the young people of the centre and thanked them for their participation.

YOUTHREACH ASHBOURNE'S VISIT TO ROME



DUNBOYNE COLLEGE OF FURTHER EDUCATION

Dunboyne College of Further Education this year moved into its new campus in Dunboyne Business Park and now has an enrolment of 140 students with an expansion into many new areas planned for 2007. The very successful Nursing, Social Studies, Art, Business and Pre Arts programmes will now be joined by students who want to study in the areas of Childcare/Special Needs Assistant, Pre Science, Sports and Recreation, Theatre, Auctioneering and Beauty Care. There will also be a new general Health Care course which will offer a foundation for many higher education health sector courses.



Mary Hibbits and Jean Kennedy, YOUTHREACH Trim, who recently attended the Specific Learning Difficulties Seminar in Blanchardstown I.T.

FETAC ACCREDITATION

County Meath VEC has been notified that its quality assurance procedures have been agreed with FETAC. County Meath VEC now has 14 centres registered with FETAC to offer programmes leading to FETAC awards. The VEC was conferred with its FETAC Quality Assurance status at a ceremony in Clontarf Castle on Thursday, 26th April 2007. Special credit goes to Mr. Christy Duffy, Acting AEO for preparing the submission and to each FETAC co-ordinator for your work in co-ordinating policy preparation.

DUNSHAUGHLIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE SELECTED FOR MICROSOFT PROJECT

Dunshaughlin Community College is one of 12 schools worldwide to be selected for development by Microsoft as a "School of the Future" through use of technology in education. This two year project will commence in Dunshaughlin Community College in September 2007. It is aimed at facilitating learning through technology. Research emerging from the programme will be used to develop best practices worldwide.

Dunshaughlin Community College will pioneer student laptops, develop e-portfolios and work on an internal school network, possibly with a virtual teaching assistant. Digital lesson plans will be accessible to students and it is expected that eventually

there will be greatly reduced need for schoolbooks. On the internal school network, students and teachers will be able to access assignments, class schedules, grades and community announcements. Parents can see their children's class schedules, grades and teacher comments.

This internal school network is already established in Dunshaughlin Community College where teachers can post lesson plans. Some teachers already work from tablet PCs. A tablet PC is a mini-laptop multimedia device that operates as a keyboard, electronic pen and pad, audio recorder and camera and will largely replace pens, paper and textbooks for the 897 pupils in Dunshaughlin.



Bill Gates and Seamus Ryan

FACILITATING THIRD LEVEL ENTRY

Three FETAC Level 5 students from the Hi-Way have applied for college places on the standard CAO forms this year to colleges such as Dundalk I.T., Dun laoghaire College of Art and Design and Carlow I.T. Further applications will be made by students to some of the VEC Post-Leaving Cert. Colleges

such as Ballyfermot College of Further Education and St. Kevins College, Crumlin. Students are interested in applying for a variety of course choices, depending on the Certificate area for which they are currently studying, including Fine Art, Photography and Social Studies.

ICT AND SPECIAL NEEDS

The integration of ICT into the curriculum needs careful planning and consideration to ensure it meets the educational needs of each student.

ICT has potentially a major role to play in teaching and helping to identify students with special needs. There are a variety of software programs available that target very effectively literacy and numeracy skills but it is important to remember that they should not be used to replace teacher instruction, but reinforce it.

Assessment software is used to assess students ability and can be helpful in the identification of learning difficulties including dyslexia and dyspraxia. Results of assessments can be used to develop individual education plans (IEP's).

Literacy and numeracy software provide a lot of benefits for the struggling student. It is non-judgemental and allows students' to work at their own pace. It provides a motivating and stimulating learning experience and gives immediate feedback to students' responses. It encourages independent learning and provides a multi-sensory approach to the teaching of essential skills whilst at the same time reinforcing basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Most importantly, it improves students' self-esteem and helps them gain confidence in their work.



Mary Everard, teacher, Community College Dunshaughlin

DR. GARETH FITZGERALD VISITS RATOATH COLLEGE



Dr. Gareth Fitzgerald visited Ratoath Students recently as part of the Visitors Programme

Ratoath College had a very distinguished visitor visit to their school as part of their Visitor Programme. Previous visitors were Bill Cullen, Gay Byrne, Charlie Bird, Mary Kennedy to name but a few.

Dr. Gareth Fitzgerald's visit to the school was a fantastic success. This 81 year old man held a very captive audience of 12-14 year olds for over an hour and he also answered every question (and there were many) in an honest and simplified way to enable the students to understand him. He gave both students and teachers a very informative and personalised account of his career to date along with his very strong views on corruption in politics. His message to the students was that if they were considering a career in politics they must realise that it is a vocation to serve the people in the best way you can casting aside all personal aims and achievements. The students listened intently and were given very valuable advice about life and the road to happiness.

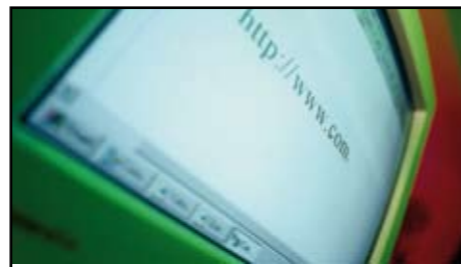
The staff were amazed at his energy and enthusiasm as well as his dry wit and his personalised accounts of his political dealings with Margaret Thatcher, Charlie Haughey and many more too numerous to mention.

CHANGING TIMES

Pictured below are VTOS students who took part in a photography exhibition in Meath County Library entitled 'Changing Times'.



Picture: Noel Byrnes, Phillipa Gilson, Tommy Grimes (Chairman of Kells Town Council and member of Meath VEC Committee) Dolores Cernigliaro and Brian Mullen



Why not contact fellow colleagues in other schools to share expertise and knowledge? log on to: your mail <http://email.meathvec.ie/exchange> and communicate through the net.

ELMA MCMAHON YOUTH OFFICER FOR CO. MEATH VEC

Elma McMahon was appointed as Youth Officer for County Meath VEC on the 1st December 2006. She was employed under the Youth Work Act 2001 to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities of Meath VEC. Under the Act, the VEC assumes statutory responsibility for youth work in the County.



budgets, local youth club grants, seeking additional grants for clubs and societies and then assessing and processing of same. As well as promoting youth work for all young people, Elma will encourage and

support volunteerism at community level. Meath is a County evolving and changing and youth work will reflect this diversity with the encouragement and provision of a wide range of youth organisations.

One of the Elma's primary functions will be to draft a 3 Year Development Plan and to implement that plan. This involves assessing the changing needs of the young people in addition to appraising the existing and potential youth services and programmes in the County. Voluntary Youth Councils will be established later in the year to act in an advisory capacity to Elma and the VEC during the development of the 3 Year Development Plan. The Youth Officer will also be responsible for youth

Elma will play a key role in building up the youth work services throughout the County, creating linkages among Youth Clubs and those working with young people. She will support the development of good youth work practice through assessment, monitoring and review of youth work programmes and services.

STOCKTAKING

Under the terms of the Vocational Education (Account, Audit and Procedure) Regulations 1931 each VEC is obliged to carry out an annual stocktake. Stocktaking is currently underway in all our schools and centres. Thanks to all staff for your co-operation.



Sonya Ní Chomartúin, Mícheál De Brún agus Siobhán Barcar, moltóirí ag an gcomórtas talainne eagraithe ag scoláirí ón dara bliain i gColaiste Pobail Rathcairn ar mhaithe le na Samaritians. D'éirigh leo os cionn €600 a bhailiú.

RATOATH COLLEGE - SNEAK PREVIEW OF THE COLLEGE!

The building project in Ratoath College is nearing conclusion. Main energies are now concentrating on finishing out the gymnasium and the central concourse area. Car parking, tarmac and kerbing has already been laid and work is underway on basketball court playing areas and general landscaping. A handover date of middle to late May is now projected.



YOUTHREACH TRIM WIN PRIDE OF PLACE AWARD



Youthreach students and staff proudly receiving their award for 'Restoration of best Derelict Site' presented to them as part of the Pride of Place Awards.

Youthreach Trim achieved yet another top award at the 2006 Awards Ceremony held just before Christmas at Warrenstown College. Youthreach won the Best Derelict Site Improvement Award for the second time in three years. Their project was created and produced by the Art Group under the excellent leadership of teacher Kelley McCormack and erected by the Woodwork group under the direction of teacher Cyril Nolan. The project is located on Navan Gate Street and its message is to encourage us all to 'Preserve, Observe and Respect' our environment.

MEATH VEC PRINCIPALS VISIT GERMAN SCHOOLS

Chief Executive Officer of County Meath VEC, Mr. Peter Kierans led a one day expedition of VEC school Principals to view schools in Dusseldorf and Bonn in Germany. The purpose of the visit was to see modern practice in school building and get ideas about new ways of organising schooling. The German schools chosen were picked because they were leaders in thinking on how schools should be designed. The Head of Finance from the VEC, Mr. Frank Smith also accompanied the group.

The first school visited was the international school in Dusseldorf where a Dundalk man, Mr. Pat D'Arcy heads up a large ICT Section. In this location they saw both Primary and Post-Primary schools. Features of interest were the overall brightness of the school created by extensive use of glass in roof lights and glass panelling throughout. Wide corridors added to the spaciousness of the schools. The schools had extensive art work displays.

Next stop, the international school in Bonn. Just two years completed the school is headed up by Mr. Peter Murphy an Englishman with Irish connections. This school on the banks of the Rhine was designed in a colourful curved formation to pick up the flowing theme from the river. It differed from Irish schools in its generous allocation of space for student canteen, music auditorium and large spectator area in the school gymnasium. The gymnasium is used for competitive inter-community basketball matches at night-time and



L-r: Tom Stack, St. Fintina's, Peter Kierans, CEO, Seamus Ryan, Community College Dunshaughlin, Brian Goggins, O'Carolan College, Nobber, Máire Ní Bhróithe, Ratoath College, Frank Smith, APO Finance Dept, Mardara O'Duilearga, Coláiste Pobail Rathcairn, Eamon Gaffney, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne

at weekends. Storage which is a constant issue in Irish schools was well planned in the schools visited. The music rooms were also well planned and were very generous both in size and equipment. Irish school planners could certainly learn from this.

All three schools visited had restricted access to the school buildings where visitors had to be signed in and wear identification tags. Even parents coming to collect junior students had to be buzzed in at the front office.

LITERACY AWARDS

Mr. Tommy Reilly, Lord Mayor of Navan, recently presented FETAC Certificates to a group of asylum seekers from the Reception Centre at Mosney. Co. Meath VEC established an educational facility in the centre in 2001 under the direction of Alan O' Hanlon, with one volunteer tutor. At that time there were 300 residents from 25 nations with 17 languages represented in the centre. Since then the service has expanded to the extent that there are now 5 paid tutors and 6 volunteer tutors delivering language classes at various levels, art & craft classes and basic computer skills. Two of the volunteer tutors are residents of the Centre. The Centre is home to c. 750 residents at the moment- a decrease from a high of 1,000 in 2005 - who come mainly from Eastern Europe, many African countries and the Middle East.



Alan O'Hanlon Adult Literacy Organiser, Marie Condon, Tommy Reilly, Mayor of Navan, VEC Committee member, Rosemary McLoughlin, Christy Reilly, VEC Committee Member

YOUTHREACH TRIM RECEIVE GENEROUS DONATION

Youthreach Trim is very grateful to Mr. Myles Sweeney, Group Marketing and Communications Manager with Anglo Irish Bank for their generous donation of €2,000.

The donation was made to Ms. Elizabeth Lavery, Co-ordinator of the programme after representation was made to Mr. Sweeney by his mother, who is currently living in the town. Mrs. Lily Sweeney visited the centre after the Christmas break, met the students

and staff, visited the classrooms and presented the cheque to the Co-ordinator.

Mrs. Sweeney had observed the work completed by the Youthreach students through involvement with community projects and recommended the donation to the programme. Neither Mr. Sweeney nor Lily had any previous connection with the centre.

This money will be used to provide materials for the current years projects and the students and staff are very grateful for this donation and deeply appreciate this kind and generous gesture.