

News

County Meath VEC

Excellence and Innovation in Education

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Big advances on school buildings

Co. Meath VEC are delighted with the announcement that Planning Permission has been received for the new 1,000 pupil permanent school for Coláiste na hInse, Laytown. Work will commence on-site shortly and it will be built and equipped to the highest standards to meet the needs of today's learners.

Three major building projects have been listed for advancement in the recent Capital Projects list announced by the Minister - Dunshaughlin Community College, O' Carolan College, Nobber and Ratoath College. For more turn to page 5.

Ádh mór le Coláiste na hInse



Coláiste na hInse first opened its doors to incoming first years in September 2008 and three years later is now preparing for its first ever state examinations. County Meath VEC would like to wish the Coláiste's first exam class the very best of luck in their forthcoming exams. We would also like to thank the management and staff of Coláiste na hInse for their outstanding commitment to quality learning in Laytown.

Education Plan 2010 - 2015

County Meath VEC has now completed its second five year plan and it is now available on our website (www.meathvec.ie). We have refined our major goals into three connected areas

- 1). To provide appropriate educational services in County Meath
- 2.) To provide quality learning in every service and
- 3.) To provide a comprehensive continuous professional Development Plan for all the staff of County Meath VEC.



Seamus Ryan Acting Chief Executive Officer

Over the coming months we will be adding more detail to these three goals and defining actions that will be required to meet them. You will be asked for your views and contributions in various ways starting with a questionnaire on your own CPD requirements. I would ask that you complete these surveys when you get them (by email) and help us to meet the needs of our learners for quality engaging learning.

At this difficult time for our country we hope that the educational sector can continue to be recognised as a key player in any strategy for national

recovery. For our part it is vital that we maintain the positive learning environment that we have in all our schools and programmes. Education and learning continues to give people a sense of fulfilment and purpose in these very difficult times.

Finally you are probably aware that our CEO, Peter Kierans is on sick leave at the moment. He is making a very good recovery at home and hopes to be back very shortly. We wish him well at this time and look forward to his speedy return.

Seamus Ryan
Acting Chief Executive Officer

TOMORROW'S WORLD FOR LONGWOOD STUDENTS



Forget copybooks, pens and pencils - St. Fintina's Post Primary School in Longwood is leading the way with tomorrow's technology and has become the first school in the country to equip students with tablet PC's.

Each of the 60 first year students in St. Fintina's has a Fizzbook Spin tablet-style laptop, with seven of their textbooks installed, negating the need to carry around heavy school books.

Mr. Tom Stack, Principal of St. Fintina's says that there are many benefits associated with the technology, "it makes learning more enjoyable for the students and significantly reduces the weight of their schoolbags". He says that there are no issues of students forgetting their books as all of their work is saved on the computers and is easily accessible.

VEC Member joins the Dáil

County Meath VEC would like to congratulate Mr. Ray Bulter on his success in the recent General Elections and to wish him every success in his new parliamentary role. It is a great honour for County Meath VEC that one of its members has been elevated to a national parliamentary role. County Meath VEC would like to acknowledge the contribution and work of Mr. Bulter to date with County Meath VEC and wish him all the best.



Deputy Principal for Coláiste na hInse

Ms. Leona McCormack has been recently appointed as Acting Deputy Principal in Coláiste na hInse, Laytown. Leona graduated with a primary degree from NUI Maynooth and completed her Higher Diploma in NUI Galway. She completed a Middle Leaders Diploma in Management in the United Kingdom where she was a Deputy Year head in a school of 1200 students.



Leona was the first Science and Maths teacher in Coláiste na hInse where she along with the other members of staff helped to established the ethos of Coláiste na hInse. We wish Leona well in her new and challenging role as Deputy Principal.

Congratulations to Annemarie McCarrick

County Meath VEC would like to congratulate Ms. Annemarie McCarrick, Principal of Coláiste na hInse, Laytown on the birth of her baby boy Marcus. Anne Marie is the first Principal ever to go on maternity leave from County Meath VEC.



Retirement – Bríd Molloy

Bríd Molloy started in O'Carolan College in 1995. Bríd taught various subjects over her time in the school including Maths, English and Learning support. She was the Co-ordinator of JCSP in the school. Bríd was always available to attend enrolment and assessment days in the school and her generosity in this regard was always appreciated. Bríd served the staff on more than one occasion as the TUI school rep. County Meath VEC would like to wish Bríd every happiness in her retirement which we know will be busy as she will become a grandmother twice this year.



County Meath VEC Youth Awards

On 7th March 2011, the County Meath VEC Youth Awards night was held in the Ardboyne Hotel, Navan. The awards were presented to Youth Clubs who were eligible for funding under the Youth Club Grant Scheme. The Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs allocated an additional €6,000 to Meath VEC for distribution to youth groups in County Meath to bring the total allocated in 2010 to €54,000. The Local Youth Club Grant Scheme is an annual event and the allocation was calculated having regard to the cohort of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 in Co Meath VEC area as per the 2006 Census figures.

Ms. Celine Smyth, the Meath Rose presented the awards to the various Youth Clubs along with the Chairman of County Meath VEC, Mr. Tommy Grimes and Ms. Jenny D'Arcy, Chairperson of the Youth Committee.

At their recent meeting the VEC Committee complimented County Meath VECs Youth Officer, Ms. Elma McMahon for all the work she has undertaken during the past year and emphasised how important volunteering is in County Meath and how well all the Youth Clubs are doing.

Youth Person of the Year Ms. Linda McLoughlin receiving her award at the Youth Awards.



Picture shows (l to r) Mr. Christy Reilly, VEC member, Ms. Celine Smyth, Meath Rose, Ms. Jenny D'Arcy, Chairperson Youth Committee, Linda McLoughlin, Youth Person of the Year, Mr. Tommy Grimes, Chairman of County Meath VEC, Ms. Maria Murphy, VEC member.



Picture show local Youth Club with Mr. Christy Reilly, VEC member, Ms. Celine Smyth, Meath Rose, Mr. Tommy Grimes, Chairman, Meath VEC and Ms. Maria Murphy, VEC member

SPRAOI NA MÍ - A NATIONAL FIRST FOR COUNTY MEATH VEC

County Meath VEC is no stranger to innovation and excellence in education and in January 2011 it claimed another first with their inaugural Spraoi na Mí.

The idea of Spraoi na Mí came from the CEO of County Meath VEC, Mr Peter Kierans who back in 2010 suggested an evening of entertainment especially from the Youthreach Centres. A production like this has never happened before in Ireland so it was indeed a daunting task for County Meath VEC to undertake. But like everything else that this innovative VEC turns its hand to - it was a complete success. There were 17 different acts to enjoy in Spraoi na Mí. The talent on show included solo musical performances, Irish dancing, dramatic and artistic performances, rapping and drumming. Kells Theatre was packed for the occasion with proud parents, students and distinguished guests which included members of the VEC Committee. It was certainly a day that would be remembered for a long time. There were almost one hundred young people involved in the production and 11 teachers who got the stage bug and supported their students throughout the event.

The event was hosted by Christy Duffy and Elma McMahon. Christy Duffy works with the Youthreach Centres and spoke of his pride in all the centres for cooperating to bring this production to fruition. The CEO of County Meath VEC Peter Kierans thanked all those involved in the production and made particular mention of the high level of cooperation between centres in this venture. He assured everybody that the Spraoi na Mí would become an annual event in the VEC calendar.



County Meath VEC's Youth Officer



Picture left shows Ms. Elma McMahon, Youth Officer receiving an award from the Vice-Chairman of County Meath VEC, Mr. John Fanning at its recent monthly meeting. Co. Meath VEC's Youth

Officer, Elma Mc McMahon is employed under the Youth Work Act 2001 to fulfil the obligations and responsibilities of Meath VEC. Under the Act, the VEC assumes statutory responsibility for youth work in the county.

The Committee praised Ms. McMahon for the tremendous work she has done over the past year and for organising two great productions for County Meath VEC; the Musical Extravaganza and Spraoi na Mí. We would like also to congratulate Elma on the birth of her second child Dualta.

County Meath VEC Education Plan 2010 -2015

The Education Plan of County Meath VEC for 2010 - 2015 lays out formally the strategic intentions of the County VEC. County Meath VEC was greatly assisted in its forward planning and development of education facilities, programmes and services over the last 5 years through the structured planning encompassed in the 2006 - 2010 Education Plan.

There are at this time more than 700 staff employed by County Meath VEC, the schools, programmes and Adult Education. They are exceptional people, extremely dedicated, highly professional and sharing fully the ideals and the mission of County Meath VEC "committed to excellence and innovation in the education of young people and adults through the provision of dynamic services delivered by professional staff".

We hope that the plan for the next 5 years will help us to step our way with vision, direction and wisdom through difficult times and against a backdrop of harsh economic conditions and social challenges.

The Education Plan can be downloaded from County Meath VECs website www.meathvec.ie under the publications section.

Goal 1
Development
of Schools
and Centres

Goal 2
Provide Quality
Education

Goal 3
Staff
Development

IT Day @Ard Rí Primary School

On Wednesday 9th February 2011, Ard Rí primary school hosted their first IT day in the school. Ard Rí's Junior infant class were lucky enough to have the use of an individual laptop for each child. The class explored the world of digital art and created some excellent pieces of their own. They also had the opportunity to play literacy and numeracy games, designed to aid their academic development. Patrick Sullivan,

Principal of Ard Rí commented: "IT is very important in our modern world and here at Ard Rí we incorporate it into our curriculum at every opportunity. The children had a great time creating their own pieces of digital art and we are proud of them all!" He continued saying: "I would like to thank Meath VEC who provided the laptops today and who continue to support Ard Rí with their expertise."



LABOUR MARKET ACTIVATION FUND

SIT SMART

The SitSmart programme has been running since September 2010. Students studying for awards through this programme, pursue a variety of options in three different locations throughout the county. Participants attend the Computer Maintenance & Networking courses in Trim and Kells, E-Business in Navan and Ashbourne, and Laboratory Techniques in Laytown. All of the courses deliver awards recognised by the National Framework of Qualifications at FETAC Level 5.

As well as making it possible for students to take up the option of further education, the SitSmart courses also enable them to enter the employment market with recognised certification and therefore with better employment prospects.

Students have over the last number of months undertaken a very wide variety of subjects, and all 100 participants have gained on-site experience through a three week work placement module. Many of the students have been offered part time or summer work, generating a real opportunity for returning to long-term employment.

Such is the engagement of students on this course that students have created a Study Group in many of the centres in order to help and support each other in a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

SMARTSKILLS

The Smart Skills programme is in its 7th month and to date over 700 people have registered on the programme and 45 new tutors have been recruited. The courses are free to anyone on the live register in receipt of a job seeker's payment. The Smart Skills programme aims to provide training for jobseekers wishing to learn new skills. At present there are 42 courses running in 8 locations around the county.

2011 began with a very successful team meeting and training session which was held in the Ardboyne Hotel on January 7th 2011.

During the mid-term week in February over 150 people completed a FETAC Level 5 Occupational First Aid Course, almost 200 people completed Manual Handling, 50 people completed the FAS Safe Pass course and over 300 people completed further workshops in Digital Photography, Skype, PC Maintenance and Driver Theory Test Training.

All courses will be completed by end of June and a certification evening will take place later in the year.



Picture shows entire SIT SMART and SMART SKILLS TUTORS at a training session.

PLANNING PERMISSION GRANTED FOR COLÁISTE NA HINSE

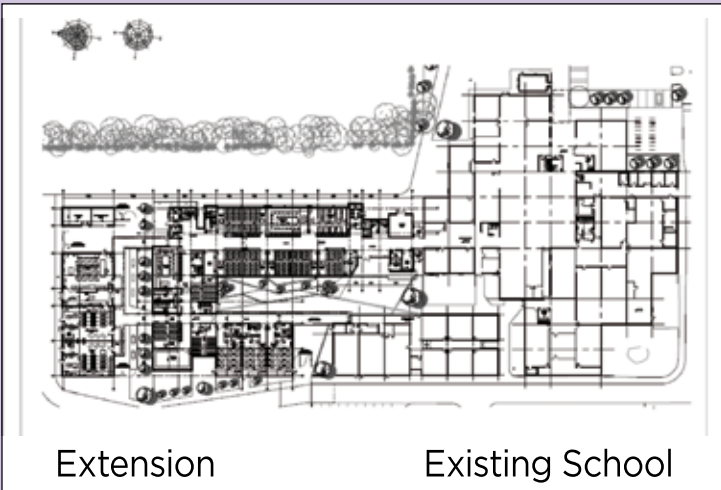
Students and staff at Coláiste na hInse, Laytown were delighted with the news that Planning Permission was granted by Meath County Council for the building of the new permanent school for 1,000 students recently. Work is due to commence on-site shortly with leading construction partners Elliott Sammon Construction Ltd. The school building programme has planned to have the school built and ready for commencement in September 2012.



Dunshaughlin Community College

Permanent Extension

The major extension for Dunshaughlin Community College was approved to proceed to Planning Stage by the Minister in January. This is excellent news as huge effort had been made to get the project to this stage. Planning permission will be lodged for the 4,000m2 extension this month. All going well we would hope to be on site by the end of the year.



Window Replacement & Major Refurbishment

Community College, Dunshaughlin recently underwent a makeover with new windows, front doors, new floor coverings, painting work, carpentry and ceiling repairs. The new image has uplifted the entire school community and has improved the working environment for both staff and students.



New flooring at Dunshaughlin Community College

Beaufort College Summer Works

Beaufort College, Navan has been successful in its application for funding from the Summer Works Programme of the Department of Education and Skills for repairs to the school's plumbing system. Work has commenced to appoint a consultant to oversee the project with the hope that the work can be undertaken during the summer holidays.

O' Carolan College, Nobber

4 Temporary Classrooms

Work on 4 additional temporary units at O' Carolan College, Nobber is complete. Student numbers in O' Carolan College are currently at 509 so this additional accommodation is badly needed. The new rooms will be used for Art, Dress Design and General Classrooms. All the new rooms will be fully equipped with new furniture and equipment for the designated subjects.



Permanent Extension

In January the Minister announced the school building list for 2011 and O' Carolan College Nobber was included on the list. The Department have forwarded a Schedule of Accommodation for the permanent extension to the VEC for approval. A Technical Team from the Department will visit the school in early May. It is hoped that approval to appoint a Design Team will be forthcoming shortly. Detailed planning for the extension can then start.

Sound Insulation at Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn



Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn was granted funding to improve the insulation and soundproofing of the school roof in 2010. The roof was noisy in rain and the rooms were cold in Winter. The comprehensive insulation and sound

proofing project has already made a major difference for both students and teachers in the rooms completed. The project is due for completion by the end of May.

ICT SUPPORT SERVICES

County Meath VEC has recently finalised its ICT Support Services which will be in place after Easter. Networking equipment in every school will be upgraded over the coming months to improve reliability, allow for WiFi as required and to introduce network based telephone services.

To help you in your work we now have the following services:

Help Desk – Your first point of contact for all ICT issues, hardware, software or service problems, new software, and training requests. Where possible these services will be self-service – 24/7.

On site technicians who will visit every Meath VEC site on a timetabled rota (same day each week) to sort out issues that cannot be remotely fixed and to install new hardware or software.

Network support provided by a 3rd party company to keep all school servers, networks and our Data Centre running smoothly as well as your PC's kept up to date for anti-virus protection, software updates.

County Meath VEC ICT Training Service

We thank you for your patience over the past year while we have implemented the new systems. As we develop



Ms. Rose Lawlor, IT Support and Sarah Wallace.

our detailed understanding of your needs we can promise you a continually improving ICT experience with many new services coming to your desktop soon. *Picture shows teacher Sarah Wallace demonstrating Lync Communications System (Video and Voice Conferencing) to Head Office staff, AnneMarie Keville.*



County Meath VEC leads the way in many ICT learning innovations in Ireland

Video conferencing for Leaving Certificate Chemistry – Dunshaughlin Community College and St. Fintina's, Longwood were the first schools in Ireland to provide distance learning of a Leaving Certificate subject between two schools.

Laptops for 1st year students with textbook pre-loaded on them. St. Fintina's Post Primary School, Longwood. 100 of the 180 students in Longwood bring a laptop to school every day. Edco Digital has pioneered digital books with County Meath VEC.

First schools in Ireland to implement a centrally managed IT infrastructure. This is done from our network hub in Navan which monitors and updates the entire estate of County Meath VEC including 1,400 desktop PC's, 700 laptops and 114 virtual servers across 18 locations.

Energy Management – County Meath VEC schools were the first in Ireland to implement Energy Management of all PC's with automatic shut down after school hours across all sites. (We hope to quantify the energy savings we are making in the near future.)

First schools to manage student laptops outside of County Meath VEC sites. Laptops now provided throughout County Meath VEC are managed through our data centre even when students are using their laptops from home. This means they get software updates, anti-virus updates and shortly they will be able to download approved software via the internet outside of school.



Picture shows Tom Stack, Principal St Fintina's Longwood (left) and Seamus Ryan, Meath VEC with first year students from St. Fintina's Post Primary School, Longwood, Co Meath.

County Meath VEC and Microsoft 21st Century Innovation Day



On the 18th April, 2011 County Meath VEC in partnership with Microsoft Partners in Learning programme will host a national conference for teachers and education leaders on recent developments in ICT in schools. The conference will be opened by the Minister for Training and Skills, Ciarán Cannon T.D. and will commence at 10.00 a.m. The conference will be addressed by Ms. Mary Cullihane, Director of Innovation and Business Development in Microsoft Corporation who is travelling from Seattle USA for the conference.

Following the opening address Mr Larry Carolan and Mr Donal Clissman will make a presentation on the new ICT infrastructure in County Meath VEC. This will be followed by a tour of the college and an opportunity to see first-hand many learning technologies from a variety of technology partners and County Meath VEC schools. The conference will close with a round table discussion on the future direction of ICT to support today's learner. All County Meath VEC teaching staff and SNA's are welcome to attend the event. If you are interested in attending please email april18th@meathvec.ie. The conference is free.

Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn introduce Laptops for Students

First year students in Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn next September will have an extra item to remember to bring to school every day, their Fizzbook Laptop! To transform the experience for the students in the classroom the school has decided to move away from the traditional text book model and make learning more relevant and engaging for the students.

The teaching staff is looking forward to this development and recently participated in a planning day facilitated by Mr Seamus Ryan, Education Officer Co Meath VEC.



Colaiste Pobail Rathcairn staff at the recent training day in Meath VEC Head Office.



acht Ó Choláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn



An Chéad bhliain 2011/12

Tá 49 dalta cláraithe don chéad bhliain 2011/2012. 29 cailín agus 20 buachaill. Tá 21 dalta as 29 ag aistriú ó Scoil Éanna na hUaimhe. Tá an chuid eile ag teacht ó scoil Uí Ghramhnaigh, Gaelscoil na Bóinne, Baile Ghib agus triúr ó bhunscoileanna nach iad. Rinneadh suirbhé ar thuismitheoirí na ndaltaí atá ag teacht. Is iad dea-thorthaí na scoile an cúis ba mhó a luadh. Bhí láthair na scoile agus ríomhairí gluaine luaithe chomh maith.

Driving Lessons at Rathcairn

As part of the Transition Year programme at Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn, students will have a number of driving lessons. Course instructor James Murray, Kells, has been giving lessons on the school grounds, over the past few weeks. T.Y. co-ordinator and principal M Ó Duillearga is very impressed by the competence shown by the class as the majority of the students do not have previous experience. The course will continue until the end of term.

Turas Scíála 2012

Tabharfaidh 40 dalta aghaidh ar Axamer-Lizun na hOstaire in mí Eanáir 2012. Beidh siad ag scíáil ar feadh sé lá. Is iad Rachel Hughes, Órla Ni Cheallaigh, an múinteoir Gearmáinise Sonya Ní Chomartúin agus an príomhoide Macdara Ó Duillearga, na múinteoirí a bheidh ag taisteal leo. Beidh 12 den 49 atá ag teacht isteach sa chéad bhliain, 2011/12, ar an turas. Seo é an tríú turas dá short ag an scoil. Bhí daltaí sa Ghearmáin i 2006 agus san Iodáil i 2010 roimhe seo.



Brat Glas.



D'éirigh le Coláiste Pobail Rath Chairn Brat Glas a bhaint amach le déanaí. Is iad Denise Kearins (Coláiste na hInse) agus Sonya Ní Chomartúin a rinne obair na gcapall ag eagrú an togra seo. Is iad daltaí na scoile a chuir na pleananna i gcrích. Fuair siad an-chuid cabhair ó fhoireann airíoch na scoile, Tomás Ó Conaire, Eibhlín Bn Uí Shiordún agus ó Ken Gillick. Bronnadh an Brat ar an scoile i bPáirc an Chrócaigh ar an 10ú lá de Mhárta. Is garr go mbeidh an brat ar follúin i Ráth Chairn glas na Mí

Coláiste Pobail Ráth Chairn Grúpa Ceoil

The picture below shows Gráinne Ní Riain music teacher in Coláiste Pobail Rathcairn with the school's grúpa ceoil. Music is an integral part of the Coláiste and the grúpa ceoil meets twice per week at lunch time. The Grúpa Ceoil recently took part in the Musical Extravangza in the Solstice Arts Centre where they put on an amazing performance.



Meath VEC's Musical Extravaganza in the Solstice Arts Centre

Over 300 young people from all over Meath took part in the Musical Extravaganza in the Solstice Arts Centre on the 9th and 10th February 2011 hosted by Meath VEC.

Schools involved were Ratoath College, O'Carolan College (Nobber), St Oliver Post Primary (Oldcastle), Coláiste Poball (Rath Cháirn), Beaufort College (Navan), St Peter's College (Dunboyne), Colaiste na hInse, St Fintina's (Longwood) and Dunshaughlin Community College. Trim, Hi Way/Progression and Kells Youthreach Centres were also involved.

Guest of Honour on Wednesday night was Brigid McManus, Secretary General of the Department of Education. Ms. McManus spoke of her pride in all the students and made special mention the co-operation between the mainstream schools and the Youthreach centres. She commended Meath VEC on their work to date with young people and said that the performances were a testament to the quality of education within these Centres.

On Thursday night, there were no fewer than four CEOs in the audience. Our own CEO, Mr Peter Kierans was joined by his colleagues from Westmeath, Kildare and Monaghan. Mr Val O'Connor attended from Co. Westmeath VEC, Mr Martin O'Brien from Co. Monaghan VEC and Mr Sean Ashe CEO Co. Kildare VEC and also President of the Chief Executives and Education Officers Association. It was Mr Ashe's third Meath Musical Extravaganza having missed only the first one. He congratulated Meath VEC on another excellent production and said that the co-operation between schools and centres and head office was commendable.

The talent on show included solo musical performances, National Irish Dancing Champions, orchestras and choirs as well as dramatic performances. The young people were rehearsing for weeks and sometimes months for this special performance. Some acts such as choirs or orchestras practice on a daily basis but some other acts including the dramatic performances and the bands were developed especially for the show.

The wonderful relationship between teacher and student that exists in all our schools was evident on the night as was the camaraderie between all the centres and schools - with all students cheering each other. This was the case also at rehearsals where the schools and centres supported each other fully.

Mr Peter Kierans, CEO of Meath VEC, gave credit to all the young people and their parents and said how proud he was of them. There was absolutely no doubt that every young person, teacher, parent and principal felt uplifted after such wonderful performances. This certainly was a night to remember for all the students, their teachers and their families.

The show was hosted by Elma Mc Mahon, Youth Officer for County Meath VEC and Glenn Flood, student from Beaufort College who himself has threaded the boards of the Solstice Arts Centre on numerous occasions.





BTEI Kells Art & Design class first Annual Art Exhibition

The BTEI Kells Art & Design class recently held their first Annual Art Exhibition which took place in the Kells ALPHA Learning Centre. Artist Paddy Sutton addressed the audience and told them of the enjoyment he got from the class, how it wasn't only painting but included a trip to an artists studio and a trip to the National Gallery in Dublin, as well as Maths and Communications. Picture below includes artist, BTEI tutor Ken O'Keefe, & Imelda Prunty, BTEI Coordinator



VTOS A Students Perspective

Adrienne McDermott, a mother of two young boys from Navan, left school having completed her Intermediate Certificate to take up employment in the Hospitality Industry. In 2009 she decided to return to learning as a student on the FIT (Fast Track to IT) programme with VTOS in Co. Meath VEC. One of the main motivators for Adrienne's return to learning was her wish to help her children with their school work and become a role model for them. Adrienne successfully completed the FETAC Level 4 FIT course, and found that it had fuelled her passion for learning. She then went on in 2010 to undertake her Leaving Certificate in one year, studying Maths, English, Spanish, Geography and Art, along with ECDL, Drama and Sign Language. She now hopes to progress to Cavan College where she intends to study Beauty Therapy.



VTOS Art students with tutor Mr. Paul McCann

County Meath VEC Family Learning Programmes

Co. Meath VEC's Family Learning programmes are proving to be a great success. A number of programmes have taken place throughout the county. Courses are provided for parents of both primary and second level schools.

Family learning courses teach parents and carers fun ways to teach their child that will help them to develop and improve good literacy and numeracy skills. It offers parents the opportunity to find out how things are taught in their own child's school, as well as a chance to share ideas with other parents and develop their own skills.



Caption: Picture shows a group of Beaufort College learners who recently completed their family learning programme with Coordinator, Bernie McKevitt and School Principal, John Condon.

Unveiling of Multicultural Picture

County Meath VEC unveiled a mural painted by Navan Traveller Education Centre teacher Mr. Paul McCann and a number of Traveller students. Mr. Tommy Grimes, Chairman of County Meath VEC and Education Officer, Seamus Ryan presided over the event. The mural represents many hours of hard work by students and teachers in Navan Travellers Education Centre and the work will be a permanent memento of the Travellers Education Centre. Mr. Tommy Grimes, Chairman congratulated the staff and students on the magnificent piece of work they created and also Ms. Caroline Lambden on running a very fine centre.



Picture shows Michelle Magnier and Michael O'Shea, Guidance Counsellors advising students on further education options.

Meath Guidance Service - Gearing up for College

SAIL - Supporting Adults Into Learning is a programme offered by MAEGS, the Meath Adult Education Guidance Service for adults who are thinking about going to college.

This year over seventy adults in Co. Meath braved the elements to get involved in a range of workshops and free support for adults at all stages of preparing for college. Between December and February a series of free preparatory workshops were offered covering key topics and concerns for the intending mature student; from entitlements and funding, to finding college courses, using online application systems, creating personal statements and preparing for college interviews. SAIL will also offer a summer study skills workshop to help mature students prepare for a successful college experience.



Gaisce President's Awards

A staff member of **Youthreach Kells** was honoured recently by President Mary McAleese for her work with young people participating in the Gaisce President's Awards programme. Ms. Siobhan Finegan, Resource person in Youthreach Kells is a Leader for the awards programme. She was presented with a Civic Merit Award by President Mary McAleese in recognition of her work with the Gaisce Awards.



EXHIBITION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS – LIBRARY

Over the past year LCA students from **Youthreach Ashbourne** have been working on a Portraits Project as part of their LCA Art and Design Course. Recently this work was exhibited in an Exhibition which opened in the Library in Ashbourne town centre. Fifteen portraits taken by students of each other went on display. The exhibition was opened by two 6th year LCA students from the centre, Victoria Clarke and Cheryl Peavoy, who made a short presentation to all that attended the opening on the 13th of January. *Picture left shows (L to R) Cheryl Peavoy & Victoria Clarke 6th Year LCA Students from Youthreach Ashbourne.*

IRELAND'S FIRST EVER STUDENT PEER COUNSELLING TEAM AT YOUTHREACH TRIM

Back in September 2010 the centre's Co-ordinator Ms. Liz Lavery invited all students to take part in the centre's first Peer Counselling Team. As a result **Youthreach Trim** is now extremely proud to present their first ever Student Peer Counselling Team. This team consists of five in-house students who took part in a peer counselling course over a number of months. *Picture below from left to right: Chloe Flynn, Paul Smith, Sam Millen, Jessica McGivern and Alan Roe*



Laytown/Bettystown Youthreach Take It To The Xtreme

Laytown/Bettystown Youthreach attended Xtreme adventure centre in Balgriggan for a Trip on the 16th of March 2011. Students and Staff took part in many different Xtreme activities such as Aerial Trekking, Ab-sailing and Zip-lining. All students and staff that took part in the activities were really challenged with each different obstacles, including conquering the fear of heights, as they attempted the 30 ft high aerial trek.



YOUTHREACH FOUNDATION ACHIEVEMENT

Students and staff from **Youthreach Foundation** gathered together with parents and members of Co. Meath VEC, the Board of Management and the wider community to celebrate the accomplishments of learners.



Picture shows (L to r) David Conor, Coordinator, Vanessa O'Connell, Resource Person and Paula Burns Resource Person.

The event was full to capacity with people who congratulated the learners for their achievements from the previous academic year. Speakers included Christy Duffy A.E.O. and Peter Kierans C.E.O. of Co. Meath VEC as well as Damien English TD who also presented the awards. component certificates and FIT (Fast Track to I.T.) awards.

The students, with the help of Youthreach Staff, worked hard to ensure that the event was a success. The comperes for the evening were current Youthreach students Fionn Fennesy and Magdalen McQuillan. The entertainment, provided by student performers Aaron Harte and Susan Wilde, was met with rapturous applause and cheering.

Student Linda Stokes commented, "Everything went brilliant! We all made the effort. The performances were fantastic and I'm glad everything went smoothly"

YOUTHREACH PROGRESSION AND ST. PATRICK'S DAY ACTIVITIES

The students from **Youthreach Progression** were involved in many aspects of the Shamrock Festival in Navan this year. Their Samba Band pictured above took part in the parade, while the Youthreach Progression Band 'Ironfilings' played at Ceol na nOg, on the Civic Plaza.



Dunshaughlin Community College - English trip to London

On the 18th and 19th of December, forty second year students, accompanied by Ms. Collins, Ms. Farrelly, Ms. McGrath and Mr. Lynchehaun, travelled to London for an English Literature trip. Despite the bad weather the group had a great weekend exploring Oxford Street, visiting the famous Globe Theatre, and taking a guided tour of London. The main focus of the weekend was to see the Royal Shakespeare Company's production of 'Romeo and Juliet' which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.



Oliver at Dunshaughlin Community College

Dunshaughlin Community College staged their first musical 'Oliver!' Following a long tradition of drama in the college, the introduction of a musical was a much anticipated event and did not fail to live up to expectations. As one exultant audience member commented, 'I expected to see a school production of Oliver! I was not expecting to see a West End standard performance'. The cast played to a full house every night with standing ovations at each performance. The director, Blaithe Fitzgerald, musical director, Sheila Ryan and choreographer, Aisling Toher must be acknowledged for their accomplishment in producing such a high standard production and for staging a truly magical musical production.



St. Oliver's French Theatre 2011

The annual visit to the school by French Theatre for Schools took place on Friday, January 28th. The company presents short, humorous French plays to students studying French. Students are also afforded the opportunity to take part in the plays, thus allowing them to showcase their fluency in the language. Two plays were performed for students, one for Junior students and another for the Seniors. Both performances were very well received by students and served as a useful tool in their language development.

COLÁISTE NA HINSE DEBATING TEAM

March has been a very busy and successful month for the Coláiste's debaters. In the Junior Debating Competition, the largest competition of its kind in Europe, Kym O'Connor and Helena Geoghegan defeated stiff competition from Mount Sackille, St. Conleth's, Loreto St. Stephen's Green and Gonzaga College to reach the final. This is the second year that Helena has made it to the final, which is due to take place in April. In the Junior Plate Competition, fledgling debaters Oisín Moloney and Leana Dolan defeated St. Kilian's and St. Michael's College to reach their first final. Picture right shows From left to right the students are Kym O'Connor, Leana Dolan, Oisín Moloney, Helena Geoghegan.



"MLL here we come!"

Staff at Ratoath College are hugely excited and enthusiastic about their first MLL inspection. Whole-School Evaluation - Management, Leadership and Learning (WSE-MLL) evaluates whole-school issues with a particular focus on the quality of management and leadership and the quality of teaching and learning in post-primary schools.

St Peter's orchestra travel to London

The Orchestra of St. Peter's College, Dunboyne travelled to London on 13th February for three nights to perform at a concert in a large secondary school in south London. They performed several new exciting pieces including the jazz classic, 'Birdland' and an especially arranged piece by Clare Carolan 'An trionaid' (trilogy) a medley of Danny boy, a jig and a polka.



Dunboyne Transition Year students visit NUI Maynooth

Professor Chris Morash, Head of Modern English, NUI Maynooth, delivered a university style lecture exclusively to Transition year students on 'The Catcher in the Rye' (J.D. Salinger). Mr. O' Leary brought the class to the newly opened 'Iontas Building'. Students were also greeted by Dr. Kieran Mc Groarty, Head of Classics Dept., NUIM.



St. Fintina's Post Primary School, Longwood

This year St Fintina's Longwood proved again they have budding entrepreneurs. After past success the School this year scooped two of the Categories in the Meath Enterprise Awards.

The Junior Category was won by Tic Toc Ltd. Ciara Ford and Amy Flynn both First Year Entrepreneurs. They made beaded bracelets and beaded watches.

The Intermediate Category was won by Bill Busters Ltd. Dylan Keating and Dillon Pender who are Second Year Entrepreneurs. They made a product which they called a bill pal. It was a gold paper clip, a gold pen and holder, and a solar powered calculator placed on a wooden desk older.



Disco Inferno

O' Carolan College, Nobber held the highly acclaimed musical "Disco Inferno" combining a hilarious script, fantastic characters and an electrifying score of hits from an unforgettable era of glitter, flares and platform shoes. O' Carolan College's 'Disco Inferno' was a high energy musical which warmed hearts, got feet tapping and left audiences with a daft grin of pleasure and the fondest memories of a sensational era. It was.....'a night to remember'!



'Give it up for Trocaire'

Over 300 Students from Ratoath College took part in the 'Give it Up for Trocaire' day on March 4th last. The annual event which raises much needed funds for Trocaire projects involves people stepping out of their 'comfort zone' for a day in order to raise money. Students in Ratoath College answered the call and truly excelled in their fundraising efforts. Activities from sponsored silences, giving up using the Internet, mobile phone and fasting for the day were just some of the innovative ways Students 'Gave it up for Trocaire.' Teachers at Ratoath College also played their part by dressing up as students for the day.



Teachers at Ratoath College dressed up as students. Back Row: Della Mannion, Declan Qualter, Dave Nelson, Patrick McAuley, Danny Dockery, Ivor Keane. Front Row: KerryLynn Martin, Paola Cullen, Nuala NiMhurchu, Lorraine Witter Nolan, Sinead Collins, Catriona Smith

Beaufort College - Seachtain na Gaeilge

Pat "The HAT" Speight travelled all the way from Cork to enthral students from Beaufort College with stories and magic to celebrate Seachtain Na Gaeilge. This very special event was held in the JCSP school library. 100 first year students gave Pat a resounding thumbs up. Pat said "thank you for inviting me to your GREAT College. I had a ball, the students were a credit to you and the other staff".



New County Meath VEC County Subject Groups

This year has seen the creation of new county subject groups for Geography, Home Economics and Maths. LCVP Co-ordinators have also met for the first time. These groups are a vital part of our new strategy to capture and share the best practice in subject teaching and subject promotion across all our schools. Each group has warmly welcomed the opportunity to get together and to start sharing learning plans and resources. This inter-school contact for subject teachers has the potential to energise the whole subject learning process through the introduction of new ideas and resources and allows on-going collaboration between schools. It also encourages student interaction in VEC wide subject projects and competitions. The recent addition of video-conferencing now allows for live class to class interaction. Maths teachers from eights schools recently took part in a three week course on developing their skills for using a tablet PC and MS Office OneNote (Office 2011).

County Meath VEC Induction Programme 2010 – 2011

All newly appointed teachers have been taking part in an enhanced induction programme over the past few months, with sessions held in Beaufort College, St. Peter's College, Dunboyne and Ratoath College. County Meath VEC is conscious of its responsibilities to help teachers adjust to the demands of a new working environment and the challenges that they pose. The sessions have focused on developing positive learning environments, integrating County Meath VEC ICT facilities in teaching and supporting differentiated learning. The programme also hopes to help new teachers get to know their colleagues in other schools and initiate collaboration around shared resources and student contacts. A big thanks to Rose Lawlor, IT Tutor and Sara Wallace who have helped to organise these sessions.



Picture shows Seamus Ryan, Education Officer presenting to new staff at St. Peter's College, Dunboyne.

ST. Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle – New Teachers



Back Row Left To Right: Jamie Owens, Ciara McConnell, Maria Hickey, Martina Kearns, Caroline Austin Front Row Left To Right: Andrea McEvoy, Aoife Moynihan, Ciara O'Shea, Grainne Farrelly and D, Mc Carty. Missing from Photo: Clare Doran, Aine Meade, David Burke



AN CHOMHAIRLE MHÚINTEOIREACHTA
The Teaching Council

REGISTRATION

In Ireland, only teachers who have met the registration requirements of the Teaching Council are permitted to teach in State recognised primary and post-primary schools and have their salaries paid from state funds. The Minister for Education and Skills directs that school authorities, as employers, ensure that teachers proposed for appointment to teaching posts for which salary grant is being sought must be

- 1. Registered with the Teaching Council in accordance with Section 31 of the Teaching Council Act, 2001 and**
- 2. Have qualifications appropriate to the sector and suitable to the post for which s/he is proposed.**

Teachers are required to retain registered teacher status. Registration must be renewed annually and the registration fee is approved as a work expense for income tax purposes.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE SERVICE

The Employee Assistance Service available to teachers of Co. Meath VEC has been extended to Special Needs Assistants of Co. Meath VEC. The service is managed by VHI Corporate Solutions and provides access to a confidential counselling service 24 hours a day/365 days a year. The service can be accessed by Freephone 1800 411 057 or email eas@vhi.ie.



Summary of payroll tax changes in recent budget

The 2011 Budget on December 7th introduced a number of payroll tax changes. The most significant of these were the new Universal Social Charge and changes to the income tax bands.

Universal Social Charge

The health and income levies were abolished and replaced by a new Universal Social Charge (USC) from January 1st 2011. The USC rates and income thresholds are as follows:

Rate	Threshold
0%	below €4,004
2%	€0 - to €10,036
4%	€10,037 to €16,016
7%	above €16,016

The USC applies to all income paid from January 1st even if related work was done in 2010. All individuals are liable to pay the USC if their gross annual income is more than €4,004 (€77 a week). People aged over 70 and medical card holders pay a maximum USC of 4%. Social welfare payments and similar payments are exempt from the USC. Income Tax Bands

The tax bands or cut off points at which taxpayers start to pay the higher (41%) rate of income tax were reduced as shown below.

	2011	2010
Single/Widowed	€32,800	€36,400
Married One Income	€41,800	€45,400
Married Two Incomes	€65,600	€72,800
One Parent/Widowed Parent	€36,800	€40,400

Income under these bands is taxed at 20%.

Did you know?

The VEC's payroll department processes subscriptions on behalf of employees to various trades union. These subscriptions are deducted from pay and remitted to the relevant trade union at the end of each month. The table shows the number of subscriptions currently in place:

Union	Number
TUI	360
SIPTU	21
IMPACT	55
ASTI	4

County Meath VEC Finance Report at 28 February 2011

	Jan - Feb '11	Jan - Feb '10	Yr on Yr € Change	Yr on Yr % Change
Expenditure				
Pay (schools & HO)	4,760,533	4,313,178	447,355	10.4%
Other non pay (schools & HO)	424,532	392,422	32,110	8.2%
Youthreach	608,457	580,671	27,785	4.8%
Traveller Training	141,233	172,824	(31,591)	(18.3%)
VTOS	153,897	180,624	(26,727)	(14.8%)
Scholarships and grants	822,645	582,121	240,524	41.3%
Capital	216,691	487,260	(270,569)	(55.5%)
Adult Literacy	109,033	86,861	22,171	25.5%
Community Education	34,480	48,613	(14,133)	(29.1%)
Back to Education	76,433	59,380	17,053	28.7%
Adult Education - non pay costs	11,273	17,585	(6,312)	(35.9%)
Navan School Completion Programme	79,803	76,260	3,543	4.6%
Smart Skills	323,352	0	323,352	
SIT Smart	98,078	0	98,078	
Other costs	631,377	366,915	264,462	72.1%
Total Expenditure	8,491,815	7,364,713	1,127,102	15.3%

Expenditure is 15% above the corresponding period last year. There are four main reasons for this. Pay expenditure has increased because teacher numbers are higher which, in turn, is due to higher enrolment. Enrolment in our schools was 5,057 in September 2010 as compared to 4,519 in September 2009.

We were awarded contracts to deliver two programmes, Smart Skills and Sit Smart, under the Labour Market Activation fund in the current academic year. Scholarships and grants payments are significantly higher reflecting an increase in the number of applicants which more than offsets the 4% reduction in grant rates introduced from January. Other costs have risen reflecting expenditure under the ICT infrastructure grant (€154k), expenditure on students laptops in St Fintina's Longwood (+€29k) and the commencement of the ORSEN Project (€81k).

The overall funding position for this year is challenging as all the indications are that most budgets will be reduced by 5%. This presents problems in all areas but particularly in schools where enrolment is increasing so rapidly. We have made this case to the Department and asked them to provide for it in their funding.



Frank Smith,
APO Finance



Anne Malone,
Senior Staff Officer

Meath VEC Senior Football Team 5th Leinster Title

Meath 0-10, Wicklow 0-8

Meath maintained an impressive five-year unbeaten reign for manager Kit Henry in the Leinster Inter-County VEC senior football championship at Roundwood on Saturday 5th February. The long trip to the Garden County was a worthwhile journey for the sizeable band of vocal Royal County supporters who packed into the compact stand at the Wicklow venue. With the home county also well supported, there was a great atmosphere as the young gladiators served up a thrilling Leinster decider in difficult conditions. Congratulations to the team and their mentors Pat Kenny, Dunshaughlin Community School, Joe Gibney, Ashbourne Community School, Ultan Fitzpatrick and Peter McCormack, O' Carolan College, Nobber.



New EU Project: Orsen



As the country recovers from the shock of its toughest ever budget, the impact, across every level of Irish society, is being keenly felt. For one out of every 10 Irish students, however, the further cut-backs merely add to an already difficult challenge. This group is the 10% of students in the country with special educational needs. Spearheaded by County Meath VEC, Online Resources for Special Education Needs or ORSEN is an exciting new project, funded under the European Lifelong Learning Programme

which focusses on the provision of innovative learning practices for special needs students from rural areas. Over the next two years we will collaborate on designing and delivering online resources aimed at giving SEN students, their parents and their teachers a fighting chance in an increasingly challenging education system.

On the 7th & 8th January 2011, staff members of County Meath VEC were proud to host the two-day conference which kicked off the project. Delegates from Spain, Cyprus, Turkey and Austria met in Knightsbrook, Trim, Co. Meath for the gathering. "We're very encouraged after this first meeting," said Mr. Peter Kierans, CEO of Meath VEC. "We have a great level of expertise and diversity around the table and we have a common goal to focus on. The fact that County Meath VEC are leading out this project demonstrates our commitment to extending every opportunity to every member of our community in these challenging times."

For further information on the project or if you wish to become involved please visit our website www.orsenproject.eu or contact the EU Projects Office at orsen@meathvec.ie or 087 6823116



Picture Shows Christy Duffy, Adult Education Officer, Mr. Peter Kierans, CEO, Ms. Caroline Lambden, Travellers Co-ordinator and Barbara Fegan, County Meath VEC with partners.

Beaufort College seal famous victory

Pictured below are the Beaufort College team who won the North East Leister Division Two Soccer Title.



"CAMÁN & RUN"

On Sunday 6th March, four Senior students from Dunshaughlin C.C. represented their school in the "Camán & Run" in Croke Park. The girls had to take part in a relay race the length of the pitch, where they had to solo the sliothar and work the ball up the pitch by hand-passing to the next player. The Dunshaughlin girls were delighted to collect their award from Joan Flynn, President of the Camogie section.



Under 14 Leinster Final Winners

Well done to Coláiste na hInse boys under 14 team who won the Leinster final in January against a school from Longford. The boys proved way too strong for the opponents winning by a massive margin,



the final score board read 9 goals 11 points to 2 points. This group of boys has serious potential going into the future and we are all looking forward to seeing how they develop in the future. *Picture shows teachers Martin McCabe and Sarah Ross with team captain Daniel Murray.*