

MÉANSKOIL NA TRÓCAIRE
CNOC AN tSEABHAIC

NUACHT LITIR
AN tSAMHRAIDH



MERCY MOUNTHAWK

Summer NEWS



SciFest Overall Winner - Yasmine Odugbesan, 3rd year



Under 14s boys Basketball All-Ireland 'A' champions

NEWSLETTER

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2023



LEAVING CERT HIGH ACHIEVERS

On Saturday October 24th we welcomed back our exceptional students to receive awards for excellence in Leaving Cert and LCA 2022. With 22 students over 600 points and 4 LCA Distinctions, this was an outstanding year. Well done to them and their teachers. The students have variously gone

on to study Biomedical Science, Dentistry, Medicine, Home Economics teaching and Primary teaching to name but a few. We were delighted that 38% of our students achieved more than 500 points compared to 27% nationally. Well done to all. Missing from picture: Tim Pollmann-Daamen and Danny Jeffers.

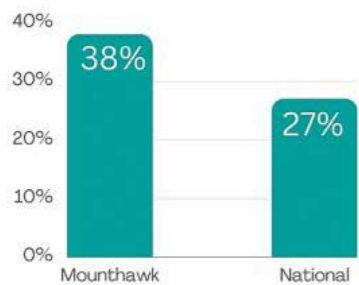


Students Over 600 Points

Leaving Cert 2022

Leaving Cert 2022 STUDENTS OVER 500 POINTS

- 10% of Students with over 600 points (6% nationally)
- 17% of Students 550-600 points (9% nationally)



PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS GETTING H1 GRADE

	Mounthawk	National		Mounthawk	National
Irish	19%	13%	Biology	24%	19%
Maths	24%	18%	Engineering	60%	13%
French	27%	14%	Accounting	29%	20%
Spanish	35%	22%	Business	28%	16%
German	18%	16%	Home Econ	16%	11%
Physics	42%	24%	Physical Ed	15%	6%
Chemistry	30%	19%	DCG	52%	20%



PRINCIPAL'S INTRODUCTION

'Sow your seed in the morning and at evening let your hands not be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well'. Ecclesiastes 11:6

Our Leaving Certificate class of 2023 chose a striking image for their graduation mass and booklet – a dandelion flower sending forth its seeds; each with its own feathered parachute to catch the winds of life. The image captures that sense of their setting forth on the journey of life and the open possibilities that lie ahead for them. I wish them well on their journeys. The image also suggests a useful metaphor for education in our school.

As with the gardener, the educator's task is not so much to determine how growth will turn out, but to provide the optimal conditions for development to occur. In Mounthawk we strive to provide good soil, and like seeds sown in good soil and tended well, the potential in individual students finds expression and blossoms forth with the individuality of each as the pages of this annual newsletter testify. It has been a wonderful year of growth in Mercy Mounthawk.

The core academic work of the school continues with focus and quality as is evident in the success of our Leaving Certificate candidates from last year. As you will read, 10% of our students (22 students) achieved over 600 points in the leaving certificate against 6% nationally and 38% achieved over 500 points against 27% nationally. On the extra-curricular and co-curricular front, seeds have been sown and the potential of students certainly blossomed in so many different arenas. In January we were treated to a wonderful production of 'High School Musical'. Students have featured in Munster debating finals, Texaco Art Awards and cookery and fashion competitions. One of our Young Social innovator teams won their category at the National awards as did our Eco-Unesco environment group.

This year saw new clubs and societies take root – ranging from a Song Writing club to a Coding and Robotics team. The latter, having won their All-Ireland title, represented Ireland at an invitational championship in California. I want to note the tremendous success of students in the BT Young Scientist competition and as overall winners of Scifest in MTU, along with a host of other team and individual awards. On the playing fields, our Senior Girls Football team won the Munster Senior 'B' Championship, our U14 Boys Basketball team are All-Ireland Schools 'A'

Champions. We won our first U16.5 Munster Camogie Championship – a great breakthrough for the school and upholding tradition we came home again the Best Boys and Girls school shields in Kerry Athletics.

To continue the metaphor, a very important initiative this year to provide optimal conditions for educational growth and development in the school was the introduction of Yondr. Initial reflections from staff and students indicate that it is making a difference to concentration and focus in the classroom. We are sowing the seeds and understanding among our students that we do not need instant access to phones to function. While internet and AI can support education, learning and wisdom come from attention and undistracted focus. Quality teaching and learning requires uninterrupted focus in classrooms. Being present in the moment is a key to being grounded and to the quality of any effort we make. We will conduct a fuller survey of the impact in the new school term.

In terms of improving facilities in the school, it is uplifting to have the first phase of the multi-million euro extension for the school announced by the Minister last month. This phase of extra accommodation will provide more space for our current student population and address SEN needs. We look forward to the announcement of Phase two of the extension which will provide for enhanced technology, engineering, ICT and science facilities. This will be a tremendous development in the school and add to optimal conditions for growth (to continue the garden metaphor).

It is with a positive reflection on the quality and holistic nature of learning taking place in the school that I end this school year and I look forward to the next season in the Autumn. In the meantime, I wish all the school community a welcome break from the toil of the 'education garden' and a sunny and bright summer ...

Sincerely,

John O'Roarke, Principal



GUIDANCE COUNSELLING

Betty Farrell, Máiréad O'Mahony and Grace O'Carroll

With June and the state exams fast approaching, another school year draws to a close. It has been a productive and very busy few months in the Guidance Department. All applications to the C.A.O. were submitted by the 1st February deadline, while Educational Impact Statements for D.A.R.E. applicants were supplied by the 15th March deadline. Information on Post Leaving Certificate courses, apprenticeships, maintenance grants, scholarships, career events and preparing for life after school was circulated to students both in guidance classes and on their Google Classroom. We continued to deliver the 'Reach+ Career and College Preparation Programme' to 5th and 6th years through their guidance classes.

There were a number of invaluable information evenings facilitated by the guidance department addressing subject choice for incoming first years, for 1st years going into 2nd year, and the senior cycle subject options for 3rd and 4th years going into 5th year. Thankfully, with Covid restrictions removed, our sixth years were afforded the opportunity to visit many College open days in person with the school. We visited University College Cork and University of Limerick in October, MTU Kerry in March and the Careers Fair in November. Visiting these College campuses is invaluable to the students in helping them decide their future career path. We also gave our sixth years the opportunity to attend the Kerry College open day and brought a group of students to see the incredible facilities and courses on offer in the Monavalley and Clash campus.

To initiate the process of getting students to think about their future career paths, the 'Pathways' programme was administered to all 4th year students. This programme asks a series of questions relating to the student's hobbies, interests, passions and unique decision-making style in order to discover which college courses and apprenticeships would best suit the



student. The Differential Aptitude Test was also administered to all 4th years, 3rd years (going straight into 5th year) took the Career Decision Making test and Cognitive Abilities Test (CAT4) was administered to incoming 1st years in February.

This year saw the introduction of a new initiative by the Guidance Department. Our aim is to reach out to former students who are now pursuing various careers with the hope that these past students will record a short video about their career journey to date since leaving school. The goal is to create a bank of interviews to aid our Senior Cycle students in making career decisions and assist in completing their CAO. Currently we are reaching out to past students who may be interested in getting involved in this initiative. If you are interested or know of someone who may be interested please contact the guidance department at careers@mercymounthawk.ie to find out more.

Finally, we would like to thank our colleagues, parents and management for their continuing support. We wish both the Junior and Leaving Certificate students well in their upcoming exams and we bid farewell to another group of Leaving Certificate students. We hope that they will be happy and fulfilled on the individual paths they have chosen. As they begin both their exams, and their journey on from here, we leave them with Winston Churchill's famous words "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts" - believe in yourself and never give up.

Ms. Farrell, Ms. O'Mahony and Ms. O'Carroll

BIG BROTHER BIG SISTER PROGRAMME

We continued to run the 'Big Brother Big Sister' mentoring programme throughout the months of January and February. The aim of the programme is to help first years transition smoothly into Mercy Mounthawk and help them settle into post-primary school life.



Participation in the programme gives both first and fourth years the opportunity to develop friendships and increase their confidence and interpersonal skills.

The participants met once a week during Monday lunchtime. During this time the students had a chance to chat over a hot chocolate, play board games and card games, go for a walk, solve a murder mystery, partake in a cookie decoration competition and get to know others in the group. Fourth year students also helped first years with any questions they had about school, homework, study or lockers, but the main aim of the programme was to have fun. Both first and fourth years said they really enjoyed their participation in the programme.



Garda Youth Achievement Awards

The Lee Strand Garda Youth Achievement Awards took place in Ballyroe Heights Hotel on Friday 30th October. This year marked the 25th Anniversary of the Awards and there was a great turnout on the night. There were 25 Awards given on the night - Twenty Merit Awards, a Community Safety Award, a Special Achievement Award, a Group Award and the overall winner.

Mercy Mounthawk was represented in great numbers with three of our students receiving individual Merit Awards. Aoife Bourke was recognised for raising thousands of Euro for Breast Cancer Research and for her commitment in training basketball teams in the community. Odhran Ferris for his voluntary work with u10s at his soccer club where he is hugely committed and looked up to as an inspiration by his U10 team. Jessica Griffin was presented with an award for her volunteer work with St Vincent de Paul and the Red Cross. Jessica gives of her time freely and generously to help out with both charities.

Mercy Mounthawk YSI students under the supervision of their teacher Ms O'Neill were awarded the Group Award for their Bandage your Language project. This project aimed to create awareness about "the power of language"; highlighting the impact and effects that harmful words and language can have when used in a hurtful or negative manner. The goal of this



project is to educate and encourage students in their schools and local communities to take ownership of the words they speak and ensure that there is a no tolerance approach to harmful language.

Pictured from left: Jack O'Flaherty (Bandage your Language group), Odhran Ferris, Siobhan Clifford (Bandage your Language group), Gráinne O'Dwyer (Bandage your Language group), Jessica Griffin and Aoife Bourke.

TRÓCAIRE FUNDRAISER 2023 - WORLD JUSTICE

In the spirit of giving to the Global community, our 5th year class 5.8 decided to organise a raffle to raise funds for Trócaire.

Trócaire is celebrating 50 years in operation and is a voluntary Catholic organisation set up by the Catholic bishops in Ireland in 1973, to help raise awareness to combat world poverty in the developing world. Lent is a time of reflection and giving to those who lack basic health care and basic food supplies in our world.

We wish to thank all those in our own school community who donated generously to this worthy cause. We would like to extend our thanks to the Husseys who kindly donated lunch vouchers as part of the hampers. We would also like to thank Liz Foley, our wonderful Religion teacher, who provided Easter eggs and a homemade Easter cake which we assembled to make the appealing hampers. Without the help of Ms. Foley, our fund raising action would not have been such a success. We happily raised €400 for Trocaire.



We had seven lucky winners: Lily Parker 5th year, Lasha Bekauri 6th year, Ms. Molly Giltenane, Marie Favaudon 1st year, Keelin O'Mahoney 6th year, Sorcha Thibeaud 3rd year and Ms Brosnan.

May you all be blessed for your generosity of spirit in taking positive action to create a better world for those less fortunate this Easter. Thanks once again from Orlaith Stack Leane, Aoife O'Connell, Rachel Mulgrew, Lily Parker & class 5.8.



2nd Year Wood Technology Students 'Turning' it Out

Our 2nd year Wood Tech students produced some masterful works this year and should be very proud of their wood-turning skills. From Easter, students worked on these projects during class time, as well as spending many lunch breaks perfecting their projects. Their enthusiasm for the job meant time flew by, and they got great pleasure from the work. They were fantastic to work with and there is great talent amongst these students.

• Samson Abubakar • Rory Daly • Ryan Dela Cruz • Michael Diallo • Juliette Gleeson • Tyberiusz Gryglewicz • Fionn Hassett • Oskar Jaglowski • Fiadh McCarthy • Naomi Osibodu • Jamie Walsh



Ceiliúradh Sheachtain na Gaeilge 2023 i gCnoc an tSeabhaic

Eagraíodh go leor imeachtaí i mbliana chun Seachtain na Gaeilge a cheiliúradh sa scoil. Ba é **"Bí Gaelach, Bí Bródúil, Bí Linn"** téama na seachtaine. Chuir Ms. Stephanie Foley ceilí beo, bríomhar ar fáil do bheagnach gach bliain sa scoil agus ceol á bhaint as na frathacha acu go léir le rince an dreoilín. Reachtáil Rang Idirbhliana na Gaeilge Labhartha comórtas Thráth na gCeist do lucht na dara bliana agus bhí an bua ag Rang Ms. Ní Dhubhda agus Rang Mr. Flavin.



Buaiteoirí Chomórtas Tráth na gCeist Boird na Dara Bliana, Rang Ms. Ní Dhubhda

Rinne an tríú bliain Tóraíocht Taisce agus dhear an chéad bhliain póstaerí le seanfhocail orthu. Rinne an séú bliain Geandáil Ghasta chun cleachtadh a dhéanamh don scrúdú béil agus fuair gach bliain sa scoil deis páirt a ghlacadh sa chomórtas Cic Fada agus Poc Fada amuigh sa ghort. Chuir Ms. Cronin Biongó ar siúl do lucht na cúigiú bliana agus d'eagraigh Ms. Stephanie Foley seisiún an cheiliúrtha ag am lóin i halla an cheiliúrtha.



Daltaí na céad bliana a bhuigh an comórtas dearadh póstaer

Bhainemar súp as an gceol Éireannach a sheinn daltaí na scoile mar aon le grúpa Traidisiúnta Ms Ní Dheargáin dúinn le linn an tseisiúin. Cinnte ba léir go raibh pobal uile na scoile bródúil as a bheith gaelach le linn na seachtaine.

BUAITEOIRÍ AN PHOC FADA AGUS AN CHIC FADA 2023



Céili na céad bliana

ENROLMENT FOR AUGUST 2024

Enrolment for students starting in August 2024 opens on Monday 9th October 2023. The closing date for applications for August 2024 is at 2pm on Friday 17th November 2023.



SEISIÚN AN CHEILIÚRTHA

YOUNG HISTORIAN AWARD



Congratulations to Aaron Harty (left) and Rory O'Flaherty (right) who came first and second in the Junior Category of the Young Kerry Historian Award this May.

The Young Kerry Historian Award is an annual initiative open to all Kerry secondary schools and all Kerry students aged 12 to 19. It is kindly supported by The Education Centre Tralee and The History Teachers' Association of Ireland, Kerry branch.

The purpose of the award is to encourage participants to research and write about a local history topic in a personal, interesting and critical way with a special focus on some of Kerry's untold stories. Aaron wrote a magnificent project on the Lassinagh House and his family connection to its history. Rory wrote a deeply personal project on "A Local Celebrity-

Liam Heaslip". The award aims to encourage and produce the historians of the future as well as engaging young people in local history, archaeology and heritage.

Aaron Harty's essay will be published in The Kerry magazine, an annual publication by The Kerry Archaeological and Historical Society. Our school will receive a voucher from Kerry County Museum for a free visit or outreach visit to the school.

Mounthawk Secondary School will be guaranteed a free workshop at the Big Dig by the Irish School of Archaeology. This prestigious event takes place annually in Tralee Town Park as part of the Architecture Kerry Festival in September.

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR "YOUNG HISTORIANS OF THE FUTURE"



Turas na h-Idirbhliana chuig an Ghaeltacht



Séipílín Ghallaraís

Don chéad uair le roinnt blianta d'fhill rang na Gaeilge Labhartha le Ms. Ní Dhubhda ar Chorca Dhuibhne ar an gcúigiú lá de Bhealtaine chun blaiseadh a fháil de shaol agus de sheoda na leithinise.

Ghabhamar timpeall Chinn Sléibhe agus stopamar ar dtús ag tigh Pháidí Ó Sé in Árda Bhóthair áit ar fhoghlaimíomar faoi Mhuintir Uí Shé agus an tionchar a bhí acu ar chúrsaí caide i gCiarraí. Ar aghaidh linn ansin go hIonad an Bhlascaoid. Fuaireamar léargas ar an seana shaol ar an mBlascaod Mór agus ar na scríobhneoirí cáiliúla a d'fháisc as.

Stopamar ag Áras Bhréanainn i mBaile an Fheirtéaraigh agus bhuaileamar le hiascoláire na scoile John Prendergast a thug caint an suimiúil dúinn ar an obair thábhachtach atá á dhéanamh aige féin agus ag eagraisí eile lonnaithe sa bhfoirgneamh chun an Ghaelainn a chur chun cinn ar an leithinis. Bhuaileamar le mic léinn ó Choláiste Mhuire gan smál a bhí ar chúrsaí Gaeilge sa cheantar agus dhéanamar ióga lasmuigh.

Ar deireadh shiúlamar suas go Séipílín Ghallaraís agus go Cill Maolcéadair agus ní raibh áifeála orainn. Láithreacha seandálaíochta gleoite iad araon. Bhaineamar an taitneamh as ar lá sa Ghaeltacht. Guímid gach rath ar na scoláirí a bheadh ag filleadh ar chúrsaí Gaeilge i gCorca Dhuibhne i rith an tsamhraidh.



Ag bualadh le John Prendergast in Áras Bhréanainn



Tigh Pháidí Ó Sé in Ard a' Bhóthair

DEBATING 2022-2023

Mercy Mounthawk's long-standing tradition of being involved with debating continued this year. The Debating Club meets every Thursday during lunch time in the Library.

The Debate Club is open to all students and welcomes new members. It is mentored by students and overseen by teachers. It is a fun way to make new friends, develop communication skills and instil confidence in students. Students gain a deeper awareness of global issues and sharpen their analytical thinking skills. Students are challenged to think outside the box when preparing arguments and sometimes present arguments they disagree with, adding to the enjoyment. The Debate Club organised a challenge debate against St Brendan's Killarney this year which proved to be a great opportunity for students to practice their skills of research, reasoning and public speaking.



This year the following TY students were afforded the opportunity to be involved with the Concern Debates, Sadhbh Cadogan, Cian Hennessy, Noah Edwards, Brendan Linnane, Conor O' Sullivan and Anuska Saha. September saw the commencement of the first of three debates. In the first round, the TYs met an experienced team from Mungret Community College and it was unfortunate that they were unsuccessful. However, they learned from the first debate and prepared a compelling and succinct argument that won them a victory against North Monastery, Cork.

Patrician Secondary School was the final school they faced where the students from Mercy Mounthawk proposed the motion that "HIV/AIDS in the global south is a forgotten pandemic". The motion was successfully carried, however the TYs did not accumulate enough points overall to enter the knockout stages. All in all they got a taste for debating and enjoyed the opportunity to absorb some new skills.

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Munster Schools DEBATING

It was, once again, a very successful year in senior debating in Mounthawk as we reached the final of the Munster Schools competition for the third year running.

The Munster Schools' competition is the most prestigious and, indeed, difficult competition available to our students. Hosted by the UCC Philosophy Society, debates feature eight teams of two in each early round, with teams coming from all over the province. Teams progress as a pair, but an individual can be promoted as a single if adjudicators wish.

The first round saw us entering 3 teams and, of these, 2 teams and one individual advanced to the next round. This was our most successful opening round ever and we were thrilled to have so many superb debaters still in the mix. Eventually, one team (Tadhg Galvin and Clara O'Dowd) and 2 individuals (Laura O'Reilly and Layla Hannafin) made it all the way to the semi-final stage.

The standard of the semi-finals was possibly the best the debating coaches had seen, with motions such as support for the human extinction movement, the notion of a centralised global government and mandatory Religion classes, being vigorously debated. One candidate was left standing, as Tadhg Galvin made it through to the final. Getting better each round, this was a well-earned accomplishment for Tadhg. He put in a



superb performance on the day arguing in favour of the motion: "That This House Would Implement Harsher Sanctions Against EU Member States in Non-Compliance with EU Law and Regulations", just losing out narrowly on the individual prize. Well done to all the students who took part during the year and to Mr Fleming, Mr Mc Eligott and Ms Fitzgerald who coached them throughout.

PICTURED (L-R): TADHG GALVIN, LAYLA HANNAFIN, LAURA O'REILLY, CLARA O'DOWD, LABHRAIDH COSTELLOE AND JAMES DOWLING.

Scifest 2023

SciFest is an all-island STEM initiative which fosters active, collaborative and inquiry-based learning among second-level students. Over one hundred students from 12 schools across Kerry took part in the event.

We had huge success on the day and **Yasmine Odugbesan**, 3rd year, was the overall winner for her project entitled 'How effective is the Carotenoid Lycopene in regards to UV protection?'

Orla Buttimer, 2nd year, was the runner-up with her project 'Does the Yondr pouch affect students' concentration in school life?' The Irish Science Teacher Association Award was presented to **Cathal**



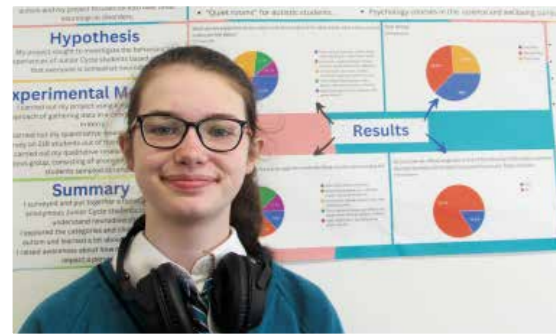
Fitzgerald, Sam Boyle, Matthew Guerin, 2nd Year, (pictured above) for their project: 'Bugs vs. Beef: Should insects be integrated into Irish cuisine?'

Kai Seno, 3rd year, won the Maths in Science Award for his study: 'Investigating How Paste Extrusion can be used to make 3D Printing more Environmentally Friendly'. **Conan Seino and Sam Gleasure**, 1st Year, (pictured left) won the Discover Space Student Award for their study entitled: 'Could the ZZ plant survive in martian soil?'

The Scifest Communications Award was given to **Grace Stack and Aaron McGowan**, 5th Year, for their 'Analyses on the Radon Levels in Kerry'. The Life Science Award went to **Margaret De Leon**, 3rd Year, for her investigations on 'The Dopamine Rush- does it affect students' academic performance?'

Aoife Kate Trant, 2nd Year, (pictured left) won the Inclusion in Stem Award for her 'Statistical Analysis of Neurodiversity in Secondary School Students.'

RIGHT: Overall Winner SciFest Yasmine Odugbesan



Orla Buttimer 2nd year - SciFest Runner-Up with her teacher Roisín Riordan



BT YOUNG SCIENTIST & TECHNOLOGY Exhibition



Mercy Mounthawk had another hugely successful year in the area of Science. We had 10 projects in total at the BT Young Scientist Exhibition (BTYSE), which was an amazing feat in itself. We had major award winners in both The BT Young Scientist and Scifest Competitions this year. Our school science club is getting bigger each year and it is heartwarming to see such growing interest, enthusiasm, commitment and curiosity in the world of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths).

BTYSE - MAJOR AWARDS

Coren Hughes (left) came 2nd Senior Individual in the Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences category for his project: 'Optimising Packing Problems With Computational Analysis And Further Mathematics'.

Rachel Feeley was 3rd Senior Individual in the same category, Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences for her project: 'A Surgical Forceps Incorporating Frustrated Total Internal Reflection For Energy Efficient Sealing and Cutting of Tissue Using Light Energy'.

HIGHLY COMMENDED

We also received awards in the Highly Commended section: Our first Highly Commended was in the Biological & Ecological category for the project: 'UnBEEtable - Investigating if beetroot juice can impact the performance of athletes'. This project by **Lilly Nowak, Aoife O'Brien and Sophie Hassett** (right) also won a Display Award on the day. These ambitious girls have since gone on to win the New School Award 2023 at the PE Xpo Sports Science competition Dublin at DCU.



Roanna Lawless O'Sullivan (left) was Highly Commended in the Social & Behavioural Sciences category for her project: 'The impact of going back to "normal" schooling post Covid-19 has had on teenagers' stress & anxiety levels'.

Cian Hennessy and Fionn O'Brien were Highly Commended in the Chemical, Physical & Mathematical Sciences category for their project: 'Using piezoelectric crystals to generate electricity'.



MATHS WEEK

Maths Week took place from 15th to 23rd October 2022. Its aim was to focus on all things maths for one week in the year and for pupils to have fun engaging in maths activities. It was hoped that taking part in Maths for fun, would help those students who may find Maths a little difficult to have a more positive attitude towards the subject. It also aimed to demonstrate to pupils that maths is not confined to a maths book or a maths lesson in school, but rather that maths is all around us and that it affects our everyday lives in so many ways.

Numerous events were held within the school to promote the subject. These included a quiz for all years and poster competitions for 1st years.



1st Year Maths Quiz Winners



First year

Panna Hernold-Csorba and Sam Gleasure were recognised for their outstanding achievements in the Irish Junior Maths Competition.

This competition saw over 15000 first year students participate and both Panna and Sam finished in the top 0.5% of the country. Best wishes to both who have a bright mathematical career ahead of them.

JUNIOR MATHS QUIZ



12 extremely talented and diligent 3rd year students competed in the Irish Maths Teachers Association Pi Quiz, held in Killarney Community College in March. They worked very hard in the lead up to the event.

We did not place in the end but it was a very enjoyable night and the students learned a great deal by taking part.



Senior Maths Quiz

These students are very talented mathematicians and represented the school in the Irish Maths Teachers Association (IMTA) quiz held in January. The team competition consists of 8 rounds and is held annually. Despite not winning, both teams gave great accounts of themselves and from the pictures it's very clear that fun was had by all.



Mounthawk Masterminds

- Lego Robotics Team

We are incredibly proud to share the achievements of our exceptional FIRST LEGO League (FLL) Robotics team, the Mounthawk Masterminds.

Comprising seven talented students from 1st to 3rd years, these young innovators have devoted countless hours to their training sessions after school, resulting in a truly remarkable year. This is the schools' first year being involved in the FLL competition and it certainly was a successful one. The competition comprises four areas: Innovation Project, Robot Design, Robot Performance and Core Values. This year's theme was "Superpowered", so the team's Innovation Project looked at the overdependence on non-renewable energy within our community.

The team was formed in late December and they have been hard at work ever since. In February, the Mounthawk Masterminds showcased their skills at the regional competition in Galway, where they left a memorable impression. The team's performance earned them the prestigious Robot Performance Award, achieving the highest score across 11 regional events in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Their remarkable efforts also led them to secure the Overall Champions Award, recognising their excellence in all aspects of the competition.

Fueled by their success at the regional competition, the Mounthawk Masterminds embarked on an exciting journey to the All-Ireland Finals. Competing against the finest teams in the country, they once again shone brightly. Their exceptional robot design garnered them the Robot Design Award, showcasing their ingenuity and technical expertise. Additionally, they triumphed in the intense Robot Knockout Challenge.

As a testament to their achievements at the All-Ireland finals, the Mounthawk Masterminds received a coveted invitation to compete at the Western Edge Open Competition in California. In May, after weeks of fundraising, they travelled across the Atlantic, eager to pit their skills against 22 international teams and 53 teams from across the United States. Their participation in this prestigious event is a testament to their dedication and talent.

The competition in California was a thrilling experience for the Mounthawk Masterminds. Surrounded by a global gathering of bright young minds, they showcased their extraordinary abilities and represented both our school and Ireland with distinction. Their innovative solutions, teamwork, and unwavering determination left a lasting impression on judges and fellow competitors alike, forging unforgettable memories and establishing lasting connections.



Our trip to California would not have been possible without the generous financial support of parents, family members all over the world, and our sponsors. As well as financial support, we have gained valuable insight into the world of robotics from local company, REAMDA, and we will no doubt continue to learn from them as we pursue our robotics journey. Thank you to team Coaches: Ms. Sadhbh Brosnan & Mr. William Nolan without whom none of this would have been possible.



MAKERSPACE CLUB

by Sadhbh Brosnan

It has been a very busy and productive year for our 30 Makerspace club members. The club meets every Friday after school and on some occasions we even meet twice a week.

The Makerspace Club is a place for hands-on learning. It promotes innovation through practical experimentation and it fosters a maker mindset in students. This club encompasses all aspects of STEAM education and has enabled students to make a number of different projects, both digital and physical. The Makerspace Club incorporates learning in a number of different areas including coding, robotics, science, engineering, designing, 3D printing and inventing.

SOME OF THE PROJECTS THAT HAVE BEEN COMPLETED SO FAR THIS YEAR INCLUDE:

Astro-pi Mission zero - The European Astro Pi Challenge is an ESA Education project run in collaboration with the Raspberry Pi Foundation. It offers students the amazing opportunity to conduct scientific investigations in space by writing computer programs that run on Raspberry Pi computers on board the International Space Station (ISS). Twenty Makerspace students took part in this year's challenge and will have their code running on board the ISS this summer.



The design and construction of students' Jack-o'-lantern boxes - To celebrate Halloween, students learned some woodworking skills and created their own Jack-o'-lantern boxes. As part of the project, students had to code a micro:bit which worked as a "candle" inside the lantern.

Hydraulic labyrinth - Students designed their own individual labyrinths and then used cardboard to create them. Students then used syringes and pipes to create a hydraulic system that moved a ball around the labyrinth.

Laser-cut Christmas ornaments - Students used CAD to design Christmas ornaments and then used the school laser cutter to bring their creations to life.

3D printing - Students have been using CAD to create their own objects to be 3D printed.

LEGO League - For the first time ever, 7 of our Makerspace students took part in the International First LEGO League Robotics challenge. As part of the challenge, students engaged in research, problem-solving, coding, and engineering - building and programming a LEGO robot that navigates the missions of a robot game.

Microbit Coding and Electronics - Students used microbits to create their own "buzz the wire" games. This involved coding programs, transferring them to microbits and creating circuits to complete the game.

Game Design & Development - Students used software such as Scratch and Makecode Arcade to design and develop their own computer games. Some students even worked on developing python programs.



We would like to congratulate 2nd year Makerspace and Junior Cycle Coding student, Samuel Garvey. Samuel worked tirelessly throughout the year to code and develop his own game on Scratch called "Grim Hallows". His talent and hard work earned him a spot at the National Scratch Competition Finals in the 1st-3rd year category which were held in May at the University of Limerick.

His game greatly impressed his peers and the judges. Well done Samuel.



Engineering/STEAM



ENGINEERS WEEK:

This was Mercy Mounthawks' second year celebrating Engineers' Week. The event this year was even more successful than last year with great numbers of students engaging in events throughout the week. Students from all year groups, many who do not study Engineering as a subject, got involved in the activities of the week.

There was much activity around the school for the week and there were trips and guest speakers also. We had guests from Munster Technological University talking about the different Engineering courses they offer and showing how they use



virtual reality in day-to-day Engineering.



There was a trip to Liebherr Container Cranes Killarney, where students got first-hand experience of Engineering in action. Two of our TY students, Billy Doyle and Forat Al Janabai, were accepted to the week-long STEPS



Engineering Your Future in Liebherr.

ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (ETTA) STUDENTS AWARD:

Adam Doyle who was a Leaving Cert student from 2022 was recognised for his excellent Engineering project.

Adams' project gained him a H1 in his Leaving Certificate and the standard of his project was so high that he won the ETTA's region 2 Student Award.



CANSAT:

A team of TY students were assembled this year to embark on a mission to construct a miniature satellite as part of a competition organised by the European Space Education Resource Office (ESERO) and Science Foundation Ireland. A CanSat is a simulation of a real satellite, contained within the volume of a 330ml soft drinks can.

The Primary Mission of the CanSat is to remotely measure temperature and pressure and transmit



the data to the ground-station (laptop computer). During the descent after the launch, they could transmit their data wirelessly back to the ground station. The Mercy Mounthawk team was the only school to represent Kerry in the provincial final and successfully launched their CanSat. It was mission success for this small group of Transition Year students.





Basketball season 22/23

SENIOR BOYS BASKETBALL

Our senior boys claimed the southwest schools 'A' basketball title for the 3rd year in a row beating Coláiste na Sceilge in the final. They won a further 3 rounds of the league before they were defeated in the All-Ireland quarter final. With most of the team returning next year, the team looks to be in great position for a title run next season. Four of our current players Eddie Sheehy, Coren Hughes, Donal O'Sullivan, Evan Boyle, and two of our past players, Daniel Bowler and Jack Dakissia (pictured left), were all members of the Tralee Warriors U20 squad who won the National title in March.

"Sports and extracurricular activities are a huge part of the life of every school, but no school I have ever seen or competed against in my six years in Mounthawk have had such prestigious and diverse sporting representation as I have witnessed here.

What I love about Mounthawk is that we have a vast variety of sports here, instead of specialising in just one sport or two. For all of these sports to thrive and succeed there is a need for dedicated and devoted teachers who sacrifice their free time to keep their sport alive in the school. This is exactly how I experienced my mentors, Mr. Dowling, Ms. Moriarty and Jimmy Diggins. Their commitment was second to none. They shared their extensive knowledge of the sport and that combined with their enthusiasm and dedication, cultivated the best environment for development you will find.

This environment allowed us to achieve in Basketball at the highest level. It gave us an appetite for winning which we satisfied year after year, winning at least the regional finals every year and giving almost every recent player to pass through this school experience on the national stage. For Eddie Sheehy, Darragh O'Connor, myself, and many more on my team, that amounted to one gold, three silver and two bronze All-Ireland medals. Each of us will cherish these long after we have left this school, but what we will look back upon even more than the medals is the positive atmosphere and encouraging environment Mr. Dowling always maintained, regardless of how poorly we were playing. That forged a sense of comradery amongst our team, leaving us with fond memories of our time here, which we will not forget anytime soon." **By Dónal O'Sullivan**



Senior Boys Basketball Team



2ND YEAR BOYS BASKETBALL

Our 2nd year boys (pictured left) had a very good year. They finished 3rd in the Southwest region, qualifying for the national competition. They then traveled to Dublin for the group stages where they qualified for the All-Ireland Semi Finals. They played St Malachy's, Belfast and in a game that could have gone either way, they lost out by a single point. We look forward to seeing much more of these young players going forward.

UNDER 14 BOYS BASKETBALL

It has been a tremendous year for this group of

young athletes. They sailed through the group stages of the cup and got all the way to the final without defeat. In the final the lads were down 16 points at one stage but they rallied their way back to win the game by 2 points, holding Colaiste Éanna scoreless in the last quarter. What an achievement for our U14s who have a great future in store.



U14 Boys Basketball All-Ireland Champions



GIRLS SOCCER MOUNTHAWK

This year in Mounthawk saw three individual girls' soccer teams representing the school. These teams comprised of a Senior, Junior and First Year Team.

It was the school's first time ever competing in the Girls Munster Championship and going on the talent on show this year, we expect these students will continue to represent the school on the soccer field in future years.

The senior girls under 19s team were the first ever girls soccer team in the school to bring home silverware. They won the Kerry Schools League. This was a fantastic achievement considering the team's two oldest members were only in 5th year.

With such a young squad we can be hopeful that this team will bring back more trophies and encourage more pupils to participate in the ever-evolving girls soccer team.



1st Year Boys Football

Our first year season started off with games against Milltown and St. Brendan's Killarney, both of which took place in Caherslee. A win in both games gave us a great start and gave us the confidence we needed going forward.

We trained every Monday evening after school and there was great commitment from all the first year students involved. Next up, we played Gaelcholáiste Tralee. It took the team a while to get into the game but when we did we really put it up to Gaelcholaiste. In the end we lost by a point, but it was a great battle and an enjoyable game.

We kept training hard until the next round of games came around, this time against Pobalscoil Dingle and Gaelcholaiste Tralee. We worked hard and got a win over Pobalscoil while the Gaelcholaiste scraped a victory over us.

Shortly after, the cup championship began. We played CBS the Green in the first match, and we fought hard until the very end. However, the Green were the better team on the day. Next up, we played Pobalscoil Dingle. Our team really gelled well during this game and we won comfortably over Pobalscoil. We were now in contention for the shield and in the final against the Intermediate School Killorglin. We started the game strong, scoring a goal and a few points but then we hit a stalemate and could not seem to get any more scores in the first half. At half time the score was: Mounthawk 1-3, I.S.K 0-1.

When the second half got under way, we got a handful of scores and started to pull away from I.S.K. But then ISK had a purple patch, getting on top of us and being awarded two penalties. However, I.S.K could not convert any of these chances and Mounthawk ended up winning the shield. The final score was Mounthawk 1-10, I.S.K 0-2.



THE FUTURE OF MOUNTHAWK FOOTBALL IS BRIGHT: 1st year boys football team who won the Kerry Schools A Shield

Under 16.5 Boys Football

Our under 16.5 boys football team had a huge task ahead of themselves seeking to defend both Munster and Kerry titles after last years' success. They started brightly with two opening victories before an eventual defeat to St. Brendan's Killarney in a tough game.



Our defence of the second title was ravaged by injury with 3 of our key players ruled out as a result. The remaining players fought bravely against De La Salle Macroom in an epic battle. The sides couldn't be separated in normal time. Another titanic effort saw the game level after extra time. We were unfortunately beaten in the lottery of a penalty shoot out.

There is a feeling of unfinished business within the squad and they will seek to bounce back next year and chase trophies again.



SENIOR BOYS FOOTBALL

The Senior Boys football team had a very strong campaign yet again this year and they produced some memorable displays in the O'Sullivan Cup and in the Corn Uí Mhuiri.

The first competition each year at senior level is the Kerry Competition, the O'Sullivan Cup starting at the end of September. We started out O'Sullivan Cup with a first round match away against Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne. It was a close game and we showed great resolve to regain control and eventually win on a scoreline of 4-16 to 3-8.

Next up for Mounthawk was SPSL Rathmore in the Semi Final played in Fossa on a real stormy day. We were again victorious on a scoreline of 2-18 to 1-6. The victory meant Mounthawk were into the O'Sullivan Cup Final for the first time in the school's history, playing St Brendan's College Killarney in the final. We went into the final with a lot of hope having had some good victories up to that point but alas it was not to be and the scoreline of 2-8 to 0-6

Next up was the business end of the school's football year, the Munster PPS Corn Uí Mhuiri. Each school was drawn into a different group, with Mounthawk in a group with St Brendans Killarney, Coláiste Na Sceilge Caherciveen and Coláiste Choilm Ballincollig. The Senior Football management team with the addition of Mr. Aidan O'Shea to the management team first faced Coláiste Choilm in Banteer 4G. Following the disappointment of the O'Sullivan Cup final the Mounthawk lads put in a strong performance from start to finish winning 3-18 to 0-12 and we off to a winning start in a tough group.

Next up was St Brendans Killarney. The senior boys put in a tremendous display but narrowly missed out on a scoreline of St Brendans 3-6, Mounthawk 0-12.

This result meant the last game of the group was a winner take all game, with the winners qualifying for the knockout stages of this prestigious competition. After a slow start we grew into the game and led well at both the half time and full time whistles, with victory on a scoreline of 2-16 to 0-12.

This result put Mounthawk through to the quarter finals for the second consecutive year and third time in the school's history. The next competitive game for Mounthawk was against a highly fancied Clonakilty Community College, a team with several Cork Minor players. A tight game throughout, a couple of goals by Mounthawk proved the difference with a winning scoreline of Mounthawk 3-15, Clonakilty 0-16. This great win had Mounthawk in the Corn Uí Mhuiri Semi-Final for the first time in the school's history. Again the opponents were St Brendan's Killarney. The match was played on January 28th in Fitzgerald Stadium. An exciting game throughout where

Mounthawk matched the Sem in almost all sectors but yet again St Brendan's prevailed, with a five-minute period midway through the second half providing decisive with the final score of Mounthawk 0-13, St Brendan's 2-16, thus bringing to an end a long campaign where next benchmarks were achieved and a bit of history made along the way too.

A special mention to those who helped behind the scenes throughout the year namely Barry Nagel & Donnacha Buttimer for their Videography work and the Maor Uisce's Michael Savage & Dylan Cunningham.

From our Senior team, both Michael Tansley and Rob Monaghan have made the Kerry Under 20s and four players Ben Murphy, Daniel Kirby, Tomas Kennedy and Paddy Lane are on the current Kerry Minor team. We wish you all the best. We know you will do yourselves and the school proud.

On behalf of the school and the Senior Football management team we would like to offer our sincere thanks to all the local clubs around Tralee and players who were involved through the year. We appreciate all the effort and commitment you gave, coming into school to train on days off, after school and weekends, in every sort of weather you can imagine. You all played with passion, energy, enthusiasm and have created some great memories. The ultimate goal of any team in school football is to leave it in a better place and this year's Senior Football panel have done just that.

To the Leaving Certificate students who played for the last time for the school we wish you all the very best in your Leaving Certificate, your progression to further studies and of course football success in the years ahead.

Leaving Certificate students: Rob Monahan (Captain), Seán Rice, Dónal O'Sullivan, Cillian Litchfield, Darragh O'Connor, Liam Carmody, Fionan Egan, Conor Enright, Cian Moran, James Moran, Cormac Gallagher, John Kearney.

SENIOR FOOTBALL SQUAD AND CLUBS 2022/2023:

Ardfert: Robert Monahan (Captain), Gary O'Riordan, Dónal O'Sullivan, Odhran Ferris, Fionan Egan. **Austin Stacks:** Michael Tansley, Jack Murphy, Cillian Litchfield, Daniel Kirby, Paddy Lane, Ben Murphy, Liam Carmody, Noah Townsend, Pdraig O'Halloran. **Ballymacelligott:** Sean Rice, Niall Collins, Skye Lynch. **Churchill:** Oisín McGibney, Cian O'Gara, Oran Murphy, Cian Mason, Billy Doyle. **John Mitchel's:** Bobby Byrne, Sean Corkery, James Moran, Kian O'Shea, Cathal Murphy. **Kerins O'Rahilly's:** Darragh O'Connor, Tomas Kennedy, Jake Hoare, Cian Moran, Cormac Gallagher. **Na Gaeil:** Kian Sheehan, John Kearney. **St Pat's:** Ben Sharp, Conor Enright.

Kerry Minors 2023



We are delighted to have four of our senior footballers involved in the Kerry Minor panel this year - Ben Murphy, Daniel Kirby, Tomás Kennedy and Paddy Lane. We wish them all the best of luck in this year's All-Ireland series.



Thank you to Louis Byrne of Spar Tralee for his support and generosity in sponsorship throughout the year.

JUNIOR LADIES FOOTBALL

JUNIOR B COMPETITION

Our Junior B team went from strength to strength in every game they played this year. Having won the Junior C All-Ireland Competition last year, we had now stepped up to the B competition this year.

Being the new kids on the block however did not stop our enthusiasm and drive, and with huge commitment and effort from all involved we reached the Munster final.

We lost out on the day to a strong physical Skibbreen team on a scoreline of 3-13 to 0-13. The girls fought hard in the final and never gave up until the final whistle was blown. The girls showed great heart, dedication and commitment to the jersey in the final and the school community were very proud of them. We will continue to grow and develop. We are all looking forward to next year's competition.



JUNIOR D COMPETITION

Due to the continued growth, progression and development of our Ladies football in the school we had a second Junior team in action again this year in the D competition. We played 3 games in the group stages but unfortunately we did not qualify out of this group to progress further.



We had a great win over Presentation Listowel, but we had losses to Intermediate Schoolm Killorglin and to Tarbert Comprehensive in the group games.

Our girls should be proud of themselves and their efforts. Our team is very young (mainly 2nd and 3rd years) and they will have learned a great deal from the games we played this year. They will carry what they learned into next season, as many of them will be pushing to play on the first Junior team.

GOLF NEWS

Congratulations to the Junior Girls golf team who won the West Munster title for the first time in the schools 22 years history and represented the school at the All-Ireland Finals in Milltown Golf Club in Dublin recently.

While not taking the top prize on the day the girls represented the school admirably. The team was Lucy Grattan (3rd year), Arie O'Shea (2nd year) and Emma Vinarcikova (1st year). Two of the girls will compete in the same age category next year. The girls are a credit to themselves, their families, their school and club - Tralee Golf Club. They have bright futures ahead in their chosen sport.



Senior B All-Ireland Finalists

Our All-Ireland Journey

Mercy Mounthwk Senior girls have had an unbelievable run of senior football this year culminating with an All-Ireland final place while only losing one match along the way. Considering that we only stepped up a division to Senior B this year this was an amazing achievement.

We started our season off in October with a challenge game against Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne. After this, we played the Intermediate School Killorglin and Clonakilty in the early stages of the Munster championship.

At the end of January, we encountered Coláiste Dún Iascaigh from Cahir, Tipperary in a Munster Semi-Final clash which took place in Charleville. A tough Cahir side gave us a really challenging game. The final 15 minutes of the game was very close and we were neck and neck but under great pressure we won our kickouts and worked the ball up the field for some excellent and crucial scores. We were delighted to come away with a one point victory.



On March 2nd, we were drawn against Skibbreen CS in the Munster final in Ballyvourney. We got off to a tough start conceding two goals in the first 10 minutes. Not giving up, we slowly worked our way back into the game. Showing great heart and determination we won 2-12 to 2-10. Our supporters were a huge help in getting us over the line.

Mid-March, we overcame Gorey CS by four points in the all Ireland semi-final,

at the new 4G pitch in Fethard. It was level at half-time but we had the advantage of the strong wind for the second half. We really enjoyed this game and we were delighted to get into the All Ireland Final.

We played Convent of Mercy Roscommon in the All Ireland Final, on the 30th of March at McDonagh Park, Nenagh. I think it's fair to say that we never really settled into this game. We didn't perform to our usual high standard. We were met by a very strong Roscommon side who deserved the victory on the day. We were extremely disappointed after the match but there are many lessons we will take from it and we will use this as motivation to go all the way next year.

We are excited for next season and are delighted to reach senior A after years of hard work. Next year is the last year of school football for many of our team as they will be in sixth year. We have a very close team bond from winning the junior All Ireland last year with this group.

We believe we have great potential as a team and we want to grasp this opportunity with determination and enthusiasm. We are committed to putting in the work with our dedicated and experienced coaches as we do not want to waste this unique opportunity.



Girls Volleyball team

Our girls volleyball team qualified from Killarney to play Coachford from Cork. We were victorious and qualified for the All Ireland semi- finals in University of Limerick where some excellent volleyball from all over Ireland was played, with Athlone going forward to compete in the final.



CHESS CLUB

Chess Club had a busy year in 2022 - 23. In addition to our weekly Club meeting on Fridays at lunchtime, we participated in 3 competitions.

SCHOOL CHESS COMPETITION

40 students from first to sixth year competed in our first competition of the school year, held in November in the Centenary Hall. Results were as follows:

1st Place - Torran Millar - 1st Year; **2nd Place** - Aleksander Lukasiewicz - 6th Year
3rd Place - Aditya Shet - 5th Year; **Runner Up** - Jakub Mikolajczuk - 5th Year

INTER-SCHOOL INVITATIONAL CHESS COMPETITION

Students from Causeway Comprehensive, St. Brendan's Killarney and Mounthawk participated in what we hope will become an annual event. The final round was an exciting quick-fire event and a great end to a great day.

Results: **1st Place** - Torran Millar - 1st year Mounthawk;

2nd Place - Aditya Shet - 5th year Mounthawk;

3rd Place - Abdullah Al-Darkazali - 5th year Mounthawk;

Runner Up - Aaron Padrillon, The Sem

MUNSTER JUNIOR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Mounthawk was represented by 12 students who traveled to Newcastle West to participate in this event for school-age chess players.

We were lucky to bring home the following medals:

Samuel Garvey - 1st in u16 boys; **Isabel Araiza** - 1st u14 girls; **Esha Shet** - 3rd u14 girls

Notable performances were achieved by Abudllah Al-Darkazali, Alex Lukasiewicz, Joel Oguariri and Torran Millar who placed just outside of the medals in their age groups.



Girls Basketball

We had our most successful year in girls basketball this year. Our Under 16 girls team won the South west region for the first time. We also made it all the way to the A National Cup Final in January which was the first time we reached that stage of the tournament. The girls improved all year and the future is definitely very bright for this group.



Our Senior team also competed very well this year and also made the trip to Tallaght in January competing in the U19 A league playoffs. This was a great experience for the team and with all the players, with the exception of Aoife Bourke, returning next year, it promises to be an exciting year ahead for girls basketball in our school.

Our second year girls also qualified out of the region and missed out on a place in the All-Ireland semi final by just one basket scored with 8 seconds to go against Pres Kilkenny. Congrats to the girls on a great year.

CAMOGIE 2023

Mercy Mounthawk Camogie has seen an extremely successful year bringing back to the school no less than four winning trophies since September, two at junior level & two at senior level – U16.5 Munster C Cup 2023, Junior Cork Colleges C Shield 2023, Senior Kerry Schools Camogie League 2022 (Scollard Cup) & Senior Kerry Winners 2023 (Kerry Group Schools Camogie Blitz).

For the first time there was a Kerry Senior Schools' Camogie League which saw senior camogie teams from across Kerry Schools compete for the Scollard Cup. This is a fantastic development in Kerry schools' camogie and something our school has petitioned for over the last year. Our senior girls, led by their captain Róise O'Donnell, fought an unbelievable final game against a very strong Causeway team which saw the teams tie at full time. Extra time saw both sides tire but the determination on the Mounthawk team saw our girls push through, eventually succeeding and lifting the Scollard Cup in its inaugural year.



Captain Róise O'Donnell raising the Kerry Senior Schools Camogie League Scollard Cup 2023

the Junior Cup competition were Presentation Secondary School Tralee. Winners of the Junior Shield competition were Causeway Comprehensive School.

A special thanks to local business Kerry Group for sponsoring and supporting this event and to Claire Salmon, Group Financial Controller, for attending and presenting the prizes to the winning teams. The day ended with a very welcome ice cream cone on a hot April day!

Next up was our U16.5 Munster Campaign which commenced in November 2022. We met with teams from Bishopstown and Coachford in the group stages to qualify for a semi-final against St Brogans of Bandon, where we had an impressive win showing a 4-13 win to 1-4. The points system and subsequent qualifiers resulted in us re-meeting Coachford in the final held in Mallow GAA grounds so we knew we were against a tough team given that in our previous encounter they had beaten us by a single point. Our girls, however, stepped up a gear on the day, having a lead from the very early stages.

We won after a sustained battle to raise the U16.5 Munster C Cup by joint captains Ruth O'Connor and Róisín Quinn and brought the Munster Cup home to Kerry. This is a fantastic achievement from a developing Kerry Camogie school and something we intend to build on over the next few years.

We thought our luck could not get any better, but we yet had to play our Junior Cork Colleges Final, also held in Mallow GAA Sports grounds. Group stages here saw us meet Coláiste Gobnatain of Ballyvourney and Boherbue of Cork. A strong score line of 1-13 to Boherbue's 0-1 saw us through to the semifinal. We played Gaelcholaiste Carrigaline and despite being 11 points down at halftime, a trojan second half kept our opposition scoreless and we came out on top by 2 points on a scoreline of 1-13 to their 4-2. On final day, our girls, led by joint captains Róisín Quinn and Ruth O'Connor, were just fantastic and while our scoreline ended on a 7 point win over Carrigwohill Community College, every single point was hard-earned with every girl on the pitch giving 110% for every single ball challenge.



Mercy Mounthawk - Scollard Cup 2023 Winners

Mercy Mounthawk hosted our 2nd Annual 'Kerry Group' Schools' Camogie Blitz, in April in Caherslee GAA grounds, Tralee, organised by school staff Martina Lawless, Stephanie Foley and Olivia Dineen. 7 secondary schools from around Kerry competed under glorious sunshine in what was a very competitive yet fun day, as local club team mates competed against one another with their respective schools.

16 teams competed at junior and 4 teams at senior level including Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School, Presentation Secondary School Tralee, Gaelcholáiste Chiarraí, Presentation Secondary School Tralee, Castleisland Community College, St. Joseph's Secondary School Ballybunion and Causeway Comprehensive School. Winners of the Senior Cup competition were our very own senior girls at Mercy Mounthawk Secondary School led by their captain Gráinne Leahy. Winners of



Mercy Mounthawk Winning Captains Ruth O'Connor & Róisín Quinn after the Cork Colleges Final



Kerry Group Schools Senior Cup Winners 2023



Captain Gráinne Leahy receiving the Kerry Group Schools Camogie Senior Cup 2023

To top all that success, many of our school players are competing at county level under various age categories and we must highlight some of the amazing successes they have had at National Level. Ciara O'Sullivan and Niamh Quinn as well as Ruth O'Connor and Róisín Quinn were part of the Kerry Senior Camogie panel who won out the National Camogie League Division 2A for the first time. This is a historic success for the Kerry Senior Camogie team and a tremendous achievement for our students who were part of the panel, especially Ciara O'Sullivan who was on the starting 15 at Senior Level.

Kerry Minors followed this success with students Gráinne Leahy, Gráinne Diggin, Orla Leahy, Ciara O'Sullivan (Joint Captain), Róisín Quinn, Ruth O'Connor, Amy O'Loughlin & Niamh Quinn on the winning team who won the Electric Ireland Camogie Minor C All-Ireland Championship Final. Our very own Róisín Quinn, 'the mighty Quinn' as local papers refer to her, was named the Electric Ireland Player of the Match for her powerful performance in the Championship semi-final.

Both these fantastic team achievements at senior and minor level on the National Stage are firsts for Kerry camogie and it is fantastic that 8 students from Mercy Mounthawk are part



Mercy Mounthawk - Winners U16.5 Munster C Cup 2023



Mercy Mounthawk - Winners Cork Colleges Final May 2023

of that success. What a fantastic year for camogie in Mercy Mounthawk and in Kerry! Some outstanding skills and ability in the school. We are really looking forward to the next few years ahead. Watch this space!!



Kerry Minor Winning students

Congratulations to Mounthawk students Gráinne Leahy, Gráinne Diggin, Orla Leahy, Ciara O'Sullivan (jnt captain), Róisín Quinn, Ruth O'Connor, Amy O'Sullivan & Niamh Quinn and the Kerry Minor Camogie team on their success winning the All-Ireland C Final.



THINK LANGUAGES EVENT

Mercy Mounthawk TY students were once again delighted to participate in the National Think Languages Event. On November 17th, one hundred and eighty schools with 15,000 students from all parts of Ireland participated in the event.

This nationwide event promotes the use of languages in our daily lives with a view to opening our minds both culturally and educationally.

Our students enjoyed a variety of language promoting activities including:

- Spanish Flamenco Dancing • Chinese Calligraphy
- Polish for Beginners • Romanian for Beginners
- World Cinema
- Introduction to EU Interpreter and Irish Sign Language

Many thanks to Post Primary Languages Ireland (www.ppli.ie), for their great support and promotion of this event every year, the Language Champion team of students for their great organisational skills, and of course to the teachers at Mounthawk who delivered the workshops with great dedication and enthusiasm!



MERCY MOUNTHAWK Track and Field 2023

Track and Field Championships returned once again in 2023 and the black and amber of the Mercy Mounthawk athletic army jogged forth and showed their dominance.

At Kerry Colleges Mercy Mounthawk took both the boys' and girls' shields for the second year running. We had a huge medal haul on the day.

Ruby Crean	Gold in shot put
Ryne Ybanez	Gold in long jump
Kevin O'Shea	Gold 100m and shot put
Amanda Duyile	Gold 100m and long jump
Sean O'Neill	Gold 100m
Niamh O'Shea	Gold shot put
Tadhg Galvin	Gold 400m
Lily May O'Gara	Gold 100m
Lucy O'Connor	Silver 100m
Cara Gannon	Gold 800m
Bao Foley	Gold long jump
Eoin Malik	Silver long jump

As well as gold in the relay for our minor boys / junior girls / inter boys / inter girls. Well done, gang!



The North Munster Schools' Championships brought both days of athletics to the An Ríocht track, thus bringing North Munster schools to our backyard. Medal after medal started showing up on the score sheet with the highlight being the fact all of our relay teams - 9 in total, qualified for Munster schools Championships. **Minor Boys** - Dara Harty, Sean Sargent, Micheal Cotter, Kevin O'Shea. **Junior Girls** - Amanda Duyile, Síofra Murphy, Jessica Leen, Melanie Py. **Junior Boys** - Ike Echeme, Saad Abdalla, Victor Malakhov, Sean O'Neill. **Inter Girls** - Lucy O'Connor, Lily May O'Gara, Laurel Mason, Eve Broderick. **Inter Boys** - Kai Seino, Aaron Harty, Bao Foley, Greg Clifford. **Senior Girls** - Cara Gannon, Doireann O'Shea, Orlaith McKenna, Róisín Rahilly. **Senior Boys** - Mo Abdalla, Ryne Ybanez, Tadhg Galvin, Jack Barrett.

INDIVIDUAL QUALIFIERS:

Ruby Crean - Shot put; Kevin O'Shea - Javelin and Discus; Niamh O'Shea - Shot and Discus; Áine O'Shea - Discus; Ryne Ybanez - Long Jump; Tadhg Galvin - 400; Conor McGibney - 1500; Dan O'Connor - 1500; Mo Abdalla - 800; Dara Harty - 75m Hurdles;



Aaron Harty - 100m Hurdles; Amanda Duyile - 75m Hurdles and 100m; Eoin Malik - Javelin and Long jump; Rachel Mulgrew - Long Jump; Lucy Mulgrew - Long jump and 80m Hurdles.

The Munster Schools Track and Field championships took place in Castleisland again on Saturday 21st May in favourable weather conditions. The athletes that travelled were eager to get out and perform. Though we had depleted numbers due to other weekend commitments, those that competed gave it their very best. 3 of our relay teams qualified for the All-Ireland. Minor boys (Gold), Junior boys (silver) and Inter boys (silver).

It was also a great day for the O'Shea family, as 3 of them qualified for the All-Ireland with Kevin winning the discus and getting a silver in javelin, Niamh O'Shea getting a bronze in the



discus and Áine O'Shea winning a bronze in the shot put and a silver in the discus.

A number of other students put in an excellent performance but were unlucky not to qualify for the All-Ireland. Tadhg Galvin narrowly missed out and finished with a bronze in the senior 400. Amanda Duyile was also unlucky to miss out, finishing with a bronze in the Junior 100. Dara Harty also finished 3rd in 75m hurdles and our intermediate girls team were also unlucky not to qualify, finishing 3rd.

The Irish Life Health Irish Schools Track and Field Championships returned to Tullamore Co. Offaly on Friday 2nd and Saturday 3rd June and it was a huge event for all, as only a handful had ever been to the venue before. They all took it in their stride. The weather was favourable and they competed with everything they had in their souls to give Mercy Mounthawk one medal.



This year the honour and All-Ireland medal went to 1st year discus thrower Kevin O'Shea (left). A National bronze medal at Junior level (while Kevin is still minor) was his reward for a fantastic 1st year at the Schools competitions.

Niamh O'Shea finished 6th in the inter discus while Aine O'Shea finished 7th in senior discus. Our minor boys relay finished 7th. Our junior boys 8th and our inter boys 5th.

A huge thanks must go to athletics coach Paul Griffin who worked tirelessly to help our athletes prepare for every competition. Well done to all who competed for the school throughout the track and field season. Blood, sweat and tears went into every performance this year and our athletes gave it their all putting in extra training, in the hopes of earning honours for their school. Your commitment and passion have not gone unnoticed and all the athletics coaches are more than proud of your achievements and are looking forward to next year's Multi events, Indoor and Outdoor seasons.

On June 24th next, Niamh O'Shea (right) has been selected to represent Munster Schools' throwing Discus, at the Irish Schools Track & Field "Tailteann" Interprovincial which will take place in SETU Carlow. We wish her the best of luck.

We also wish all of our athletes sitting exams this June the very best of luck and for those in 6th year that leave us and go forth in the next part of their lives and into adulthood, we wish you continued success in all you do.



All-Ireland Relay teams



WELL DONE TO OUR NORTH MUNSTER MEDAL WINNERS!

GOLD Kevin O'Shea - Javelin; Tadhg Galvin - 400m; Conor McGibney - 1500m; Doireann O'Shea - Javelin; Ryne Ybanez - Long Jump.

SILVER/BRONZE

Seán O'Neill - 100m; Eoin Malik - Javelin; Amanda Duyile - 100m; Jack Barrett - 100m.



TRANSITION YEAR 2022/23

BY RONAN REDICAN, TY COORDINATOR

After two strange, challenging and unique years, life for Transition year students returned to the normality we knew in 2019. No longer shackled by restrictions, our students have been afforded a transition year that allowed them the freedom to travel, explore and find themselves, both in and outside the classroom.

On the 1st of September our students boarded buses to begin their journey... Cappanelea for team building, Surfing in Banna, a unique visit to Ardfert Quarries, sunk or survived the Titanic Experience, got up to monkey business in Fota, walked Glanageenty, laughed out loud at comedy in Siamsa Tire, sung with the prom queen in the INEC, got lost and found in the woods with orienteering and were bowled over in the Bowling Alley. We took 127 students over and back to Paris!

We went on the Epic Gaisce walk, some of us went too many times! We have said prayers at Knock, and I know many prayers were said as our students walked the roof of Croke Park! We held so many fund raising activities, and so many charities have benefited from our students' endeavors- Trocaire, Breast Cancer research, Down Syndrome Ireland Kerry branch and Kerry Hospice to name a few!

We were lucky to have guest speakers and people bringing their skills and expertise to TY. We had talks from Gaisce, life-changing and inspiring stories from Wolf Academy, Breast Cancer Awareness talks, Dementia Awareness presentations, AILLO linguistics demonstrations and poetry workshops with Inspireland. Of course our TY year would not be complete without our annual visit from the Whistleblast quartet, who played live classical music to our TYs and held monthly workshops with our students, inspiring them to write the next number one hit! Our Whistleblasters performed in the Dúchas Hall in MTU and were part of a large orchestral piece in the Black Box Theatre in Galway.

All our TY fashionistas, along with every other TY - willing or otherwise, strutted, walked or even crawled the catwalk in aid of charity and great craic! It was wonderful to be back in the Gym with a live audience cheering (and screaming) on our TYs. A huge thanks to Stacey O' Leary, Mari Kearney and all the teaching staff who made this show a great hit and created great memories for our TYs.

Of course it is not all play in Transition year and our students have worked hard in the academic blocks, sampling potential leaving cert courses and going out for work shadowing, allowing them to experience the real world of work in careers they may pursue in the future. Our BT/ Scifest crew worked hard and were rewarded with great success at BT Young Scientists, our TY sports stars trained



ABOVE: TY Sports Day at John Mitchels

hard and got to All-Ireland U16 A Girls Final, won county championships in Camogie and also lost narrowly to the teachers in the hard-hitting grudge matches in basketball and soccer! We have had huge success in sports, with many of our TYs playing an integral part, both in Mercy Mounthawk, Club and County level!

A strong focus on Curricular and Extracurricular activities have given our students a dynamic year. The Transition Year Core team of Cora McElligott, Lyndsey Moriarty, Betty Farrell, David Smith, Alison Lynch, Rachel O'Neill and Liam Culloty closely worked with their base classes to ensure the students reached their full potential in TY. This is our biggest ever group and the Core teams' input, guidance and wisdom are invaluable to Transition Year. A huge thanks to every single Tutor for the massive effort you have put into the year!

I would also like to thank all the teachers who have put in a massive effort to make our transition Year programme so dynamic. I want to thank Declan and all the caretakers who also have a huge input into the life of TY. I would also like to thank Senior Management, Mr. Pat Fleming, Shane Kissane and Sinéad Muldoon Walsh. Their support with curriculum, planning, advice and of course cover, is invaluable to the programme. I would also like to thank Mr John O Roarke, our Principal who green-lights many of the mad-capped ideas our students have, who always supports our students and is always there to give advice.

I would also like to thank the parents. You have trusted us with your children, have always rowed in, driven at ungodly hours to drop and collect and generally supported our different events throughout the year.

This years' TY have been incredible, their innovation, enthusiasm and energy is what breathes life into the school. They have been a joy to and a credit to TY! In a blink of an eye, the year has gone. What they have achieved, learned and experienced will stand them in good stead! I wish them the best of luck going forward and always remember to look back and reflect - you got out of TY what you put in!



ABOVE: Tim Landers drama workshop

TY Active Leisure 'Breast Cancer Ireland - our chosen charity'

By Jack Barrett

Our chosen charity this year was Breast Cancer Ireland. They are a great organisation who do brilliant work in their research and fundraising. Most people know someone who has had a family member affected by Breast Cancer, and this is why our class decided to help out and raise awareness and money for this charity.



We all got our own pink t-shirts thanks to past pupil Lauren Barrett, who was an ambassador for last year's '100km in 30 days' initiative set up by Breast Cancer Ireland. Throughout the year, we organised various events and wore our t-shirts to help spread awareness. We also created a board near the General Purpose area to educate the school community about breast health.

Over the year through the events organised, we raised €2,481.30. It would not have been possible without the support of the staff and students who donated, the team behind our Active Leisure programme and our teacher, Ms. Dineen. We presented a cheque to Juliette from Breast Cancer Ireland and it was a great occasion. Again, a massive thanks to everyone who chipped in for such a great cause.

TY Active Leisure Students Vs Teachers Soccer Games

On the 23rd and 24th of January, we held a soccer game in our sports hall. We organised teams and got a variety of teachers to play against our class. We charged €2 per person to watch the event and it was a massive success.



We played two games, with the Teachers winning the first thanks to a masterclass by Mr. Flavin, who scored 4. The students won the second game to finally get their first win over the teachers for the year. In total between the two games we raised €719, which is a brilliant amount, and all went to Breast Cancer Ireland. A massive thanks to everyone who came to watch and donated.

TY trip to Croke Park



Habdashery competition

Well done to our TY students Alanna Lucid, Kaila Sugure and Lauren O Sullivan who won second prize in the Habdashery competition run by MTU Tralee.

The girls' project: "Banphrionsa na farrage", was a sustainable swimwear line made from ocean waste products.



JUNK KOUTURE

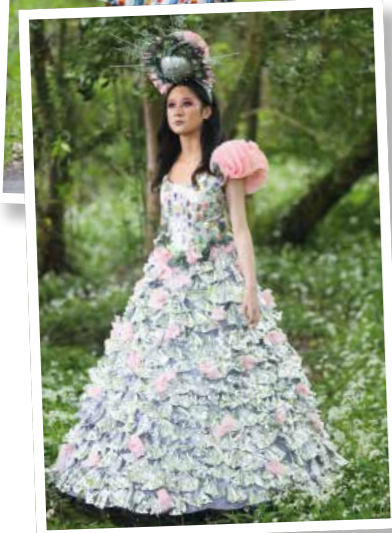


This year has been the most popular year to date for Junk Kouture in Mercy Mounthawk with 8 entries going through to the competition.

This is the first year we have run Junk kouture as a year-long module for TYs. We started off our year with a trip to Recreate Ireland which is located in Dublin to recover recycled materials for the designs. We then went on to Kildare to the Newbride Museum of Style Icons and this really provided us with the inspiration we needed to finalise the designs for our teams.

Our teams designed outfits from various materials such as floor insulation, broken CDs, old fake flowers, used party decorations, skewers, used coffee cups, old newspapers and wrapping from old floral bouquets, used coffee bags, sheep wool, a lampshade, old netting, can tabs, old fabric scraps, broken jewellery, Lee Strand milk labels, toilet roll holders, old garden netting and sea shells.

The Junk Kouture team would like to thank some very valuable members of the team Ms Mairead Ryan, Art teacher here in the school, who has been an incredible support to all of our groups, Mr. Jack Brosnan for all of his help using the facilities in the engineering room. Ms. Bernie O'Connor for helping with the makeup for Junk Kouture photo shoots, to our fantastic photographers Mr. Ronan Redican and Mr. Will Nolan and of course to our Home Economics teacher Ms. Stacey O Leary.



Transition Year Visit to Knock

TY students on a trip to Knock shrine where they took part in the @DonalLiveLife mass, along with students from all over the country. Our wonderful choir were honoured to provide the music for the occasion.



MINDFULNESS BASED WELLBEING CLASSES IN TRANSITION YEAR

Wellbeing is influenced by how we relate to ourselves and others. The Mindfulness Based Wellbeing course supports students to meet the challenges of life, by helping them to relate better to all that is passing through the mind; their own experience and their interactions with others.

The skills learned can be used across the lifespan. Feeling positive, well managed, calm and in control supports all students to navigate the challenges of life.

This year four groups of Transition Year students In Mercy Mounthawk took part in the 'Back to Breath' Mindfulness program for secondary students.

The program was developed by Catherine Hallisey (Psychologist), Pat O'Leary and Pascale De Conick (UCC). It introduces students to mindfulness based practices and psycho-education to support their wellbeing as they move through the remaining years of their secondary school experience and beyond.

European Studies



It has been an incredible year for the European Studies class of 2023 and it was topped off in style when, in their final week of the year, they were given the news that they had won a trip to the European Parliament in Strasbourg. This prize was awarded to the class as runner-up for the South constituency in the Euroscola competition "EU50: Back to the Future".

The class are no strangers to the workings of the Parliament, as ten of them attended a European Parliament in Cork last February. From this Maeve Trant, along with 5th year students James Dowling and Clara O'Dowd were invited to the Nationals, which was an amazing achievement.

In March, the class were invited to attend a Model Council event in Dublin Castle, and they were awarded an honourable mention after representing Czechia, and working with the Ambassador.

At the end of the year to mark Europe day, the class ran their own mock parliament here in the school. It was a great day and our younger students really enjoyed it.



In May, the class were invited to an awards ceremony in Cashel where MEP's for the South awarded them with their European Ambassador School plaque and Certificates. It was a great end to a great year for the EPAS class of 2023.

The class also raised €1,100 in one lunchtime by organising a bake sale during Mental Health Awareness Week in aid of Jigsaw Kerry. **Sherma McBride**

LEFT: Congratulations to the TY EPAS class, pictured here getting their certificates as Ambassadors to the European Parliament in Cashel this May.

Layla Hannafin

It has been an incredible year for 5th year student Layla Hannafin who represented Ireland in Norway at an International European Youth Parliament. She was also a head organiser of the National Session in Cork. Her work did not go unnoticed by the European Commission who featured her in a publication for the European Year of the Youth.

On top of her work with the Youth Parliament Layla has also had great success in qualifying for the Soroptimist Girls Public Speaking Competition in November and in Munster School Debates UCC Philosophical Society 2022 as an individual qualifier. She is one to watch for the future. Well done Layla!



HIGH SCHOOL Musical



September and the return to school inevitably prompts the Mercy Mounthawk school production team to begin thinking of the 2023 Siamsa production. What to do? We had an idea that there was huge interest in auditioning, and there was; we had close to one hundred students wanting to take part.

In Mercy Mounthawk, everyone is welcome to be a part of the musical production; you just need to stay the course. In the end we had 67 on stage; a magnificent number.

What musical would satisfy the abundant talent we have in Mercy Mounthawk? What musical had the rights available? After much thought and research, we decided on **High School Musical**, and what an inspired choice it was.

Director: Mr. Houlihan; Musical Directors: Ms. Giltenane, Ms. O' Sullivan; Choreographers: Ms. O' Neill, Ms. Nolan, and Ms. Foley; Costume Designers: Ms. Breen, Ms. Ryan, and Ms. O' Donovan; Resourcing and Managing Properties: Ms. Condon and Ms. Casey – all sprang into action. Mr. Redican, Mr. Nolan, Mr. Andreucetti, Mr. O. Sullivan, Mr. Mc Elligott, Ms. F. O' Connor, and the indispensable Declan Dowling,

were often called on for help, and that assistance was offered willingly, and was met with deep appreciation.

The production team of every musical would say that its cast worked the hardest ever, but I maintain that no cast ever worked as hard as the cast of HSM. Rehearsal took place four times a week – rehearsals had to; with music, choreography and acting, time had to be given and it was, freely, willingly and enthusiastically.

The leads of Gearóid Meehan, Lily Parker, Conor Breen, Sarah Brett, Sinéad Carr, Conor O' Sullivan, Eoin Griffin, Róisín Reidy, Adam Dineen, Amy Heaphy, Oisín Gallagher, Naoise O' Carroll, and all the cast worked so hard and with such commitment and good humour to bring a truly wonderful production to the stage. I must also mention the hard-working backstage crew who saw to it that each production ran smoothly and without a hitch.

On January 18th 2023, we opened in Siamsa Tíre and for five performances we wowed and wooed full houses. It was such a feel-good production. Everyone who left Siamsa each evening, left feeling better for having seen our wonderful production of *High School Musical*.

MR. HOULIHAN



Róisín Reidy & Oisín Gallagher

The standout experiences from my time in Mounthawk are without a doubt the theatre productions I was involved in.

There are plenty of schools across Tralee and all around Kerry that have fantastic reputations for their achievements in sport and academics, but for anybody whose interests lie in the realm of the arts and theatre, Mounthawk is unarguably the place to be. We are so lucky to have a huge team of teachers in this school who are willing to devote five to six months of their time to us every year in order to put together a production to be remembered. Without the efforts of Mr. Houlihan, Ms. Buckley, Ms. Condon, Ms. Daly, Ms. Giltenane, Ms. O Sullivan, Ms. Nolan, Ms. O Neill, Ms. Foley and many, many more, our school wouldn't be what it is: an environment that encourages and nurtures young talent to levels so far beyond what most people would ever dream of from second-level students. From Oscar Wilde's 'The Importance of Being Earnest' to Disney's 'High School Musical', there's something here for everyone.

Every production is a new experience with new challenges and most importantly new memories to be made. When studying theatre and performance in college next year, I'll never forget where it all started and will forever wish all the best to the younger students who I know will carry on the ambitious standard of hard work, fun and dedication in our school's productions for years to come. **By RÓISÍN REIDY**

Looking back on my time in Mounthawk, I am filled with gratitude and joy for the experience I had as the lead role, Troy Bolton, in our school's production of 'High School Musical.'

Being part of this production was truly the stand out highlight of my school experience, and I will always cherish the memories and friendships that were made throughout the process.

Being cast as the lead was an honour and a challenge. It required long hours of rehearsals, dedication, and hard work. But, the reward was the immense growth I experienced both as a performer and as a person. I learned so much about myself and my abilities, and I was able to push myself out of my comfort zone with the aid of the incredible teachers involved. They pushed us all to be our best and to strive for excellence, while also offering a listening ear. Without their guidance and support, the production would not have been possible.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this experience was the friendships that were formed throughout the production. The cast became like one big family, supporting each other through all rehearsals and performances, and we truly were "all in this together". It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will forever be grateful for and I would strongly encourage all students to give it a go as it is a great way of making new friends and, most importantly, having fun! **By GEARÓID MEEHAN**



Gearóid Meehan & Lily Parker



Grúpa Traid na Scoile 2023

Bhuel a chairde, bhí bliain iontach fuinniúil ag grúpa Traid na scoile um mblíana.

Bhí ana chuid seisiúin anseo i Halla an Chéid acu, agus blas nua-aimseartha ar chuid des na foinn, deirimse leat! Seoladh cuireadh chuig an ngrúpa faoi dhó, seinm le hiarbhunscóileanna eile an Chontae a bhí i mbun ceiliuradh ceoil traidisiúnta, in Oileán Chiarraí. Árdú croí a bhí ann éisteacht le breis is céad ceoltóirí óga ag seinm ar na laethanta sin!

B'iontach an rud é a bheith ar ais go clúthar sa Séipéal, le Cearúil na Nollag a cheiliúradh um mblíana, buíochas mór le Dia. Gan amhras, thugadar súp le seisiún ceoil Sheachtain na Gaeilge- mar a dhéanann siad i gcónaí!

Ní bhíonn in aon rud ach seal, mar a deirtear, ach is deacair é a chreidiúint go bhfuil: Conor Breen, Coren Hughes, Gearóid Meehan, Róise O'Donnell, Paula Holmes, Jane Sheehy, Shannon Dennehy agus Riain Kenney O'Sullivan ag fágáil slán linn um mblíana! Cad eile is féidir a rá faoina gceol, faoina ndearfacht, faoina bhfuinneamh, faoina meas ar a chéile agus ar an saol mór, nach ndúradh cheana? Guímíd gach ráth orthu, agus go pearsanta táim cinnte go dtabharfaidh siad aghaidh ar a mboithre amach rompu le fonn agus le foinn! Go néirí an tádhlíbh a chairde.



Winners of 6th Year Literacy Quiz



Literacy Week

Literacy Week took place from 27th February to the 3rd March and there was lots of activity around the classrooms, halls and corridors of Mercy Mounthawk. There really was something for all throughout the week and the English Department was extra busy organising and supervising the different activities.

On the first day, there was a Word Hunt competition for all First Year students and they could be spotted running around the corridors trying to out-do each other in the hope of being the first to finish and find all words on the list.

On Tuesday our 2nd years had their own private film screening of "Spiderman: Into the Spideverse" which is new to the Junior Cycle prescribed text list. On Wednesday it was the turn of our 3rd year students who had a Wordle competition. Thursday the TY and 5th years took part in a poetry workshop and our 6th years had a Leaving Cert Exam Revision Table Quiz in the Centenary Hall.

There were many other exciting activities held at lunchtime such as acting workshops, book swaps. Creative writing competitions, scrabble competitions and much more. It was a great week, thank you to all the dedicated teachers and students who helped in organising such a great event.



Character Dress-up day

HISTORY DRESS UP DAY



History Week...

Well done to the winners of the History Week 3D model and poster competition.



Viva España

2nd Years made the trip to Madrid for the annual school tour. With a busy itinerary, an enthusiastic bunch of teachers, and expert guides in the shape of Alberto - a Madrid-native and SNA in Mounthawk -, and Sister Bernadette - a Hispanic-enthusiast and frequent visitor to Madrid - our group took in the sights and sounds of the Spanish capital and its surrounds.

From a sun-soaked visit to the Palacio Real, to the Aqueducts of Segovia, to fun on the row-boats in Retiro Park, our Mounthawk students saw the best of Madrid and the surrounding Comunidades and had plenty of laughs along the way. Well done to all of our students on representing our school so well, and huge thanks to the staff who accompanied them for giving of their time so generously.



¡Hasta la próxima, Madrid!



Young Philosopher Competition



Pictured above is Ruby Crean who competed in the All-Ireland Finals of the Young Philosopher Competition in UCD in May.

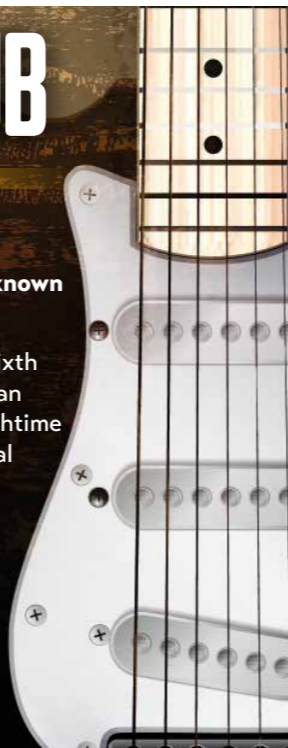
SONGWRITING CLUB



2022 saw the inauguration of a brand new club in Mercy Mounthawk that has become known as the Songwriting Club.

It emerged from the vision of sixth year student Kevin Clark who ran the group each Tuesday at lunchtime patiently encouraging the lyrical expression of his club-mates.

What started off as a small group of students sharing lyrics, quickly developed into them bringing in their guitars, amps, microphones, synthesisers, etc. so that by the end of the year the club became a live session of musical minds sharing their musical endeavours. Here's to many more years of the Songwriting Club to nurture the lyrical talent in Mounthawk.



Savour Our Flavour Success for Sophie

The Savour Our Flavour cookery competition was launched in January 2023 and we had a number of students who couldn't wait to enter. As you can imagine picking one student from all the talented chefs we have in our Home Economics classes was not a task that any of the teachers were relishing so Ms O'Leary used her contacts to secure a special judge, Chef Mark Doe from Just Cooking Cookery School in Firies.

Mark acted as a judge in our very own Mercy Mounthawk Cook-Off. The talent was of a very high standard but Mark chose Lauren Doody and Sophie Hassett as his winners and both girls went on to the semi-final cook offs in Midleton.

Both girls presented amazing dishes. Lauren prepared, cooked and served a fabulous roasted herbal chicken dish with fondant potatoes, honey glazed carrots and steamed broccoli with a creamy parmesan sauce. Sophie's pan fried citrus hake with a fragrant sea foam served on a bed of radishes and asparagus, broccoli and turnip puree, with sweet potato rosettes and crispy potato skins won the judges over and she qualified for the grand final of Savour Our Flavour.

On the 26th of April Sophie was one of the lucky 9 students to cook off in Ballymaloe Cookery School. Competitors were very fortunate to have dined in Ballymaloe. Sophie and Ms. O'Leary were treated to a two-course meal before the prize-giving ceremony. The standard was beyond our expectations. We were absolutely delighted that Sophie placed second in the competition. Celebrity chef Rachel Allen commended Sophie's outstanding knowledge of all nutritional components of her dish, her level of skill which she so perfectly executed on the day and finally Rachel was so impressed with Sophie's resourceful cookery practices.

Sophie will now go on to enjoy a prize worth €1,500 which is a two and a half days intensive cookery course in Ballymaloe with Darina and Rachel Allen. We look forward to more culinary delights being produced by Sophie in the future.

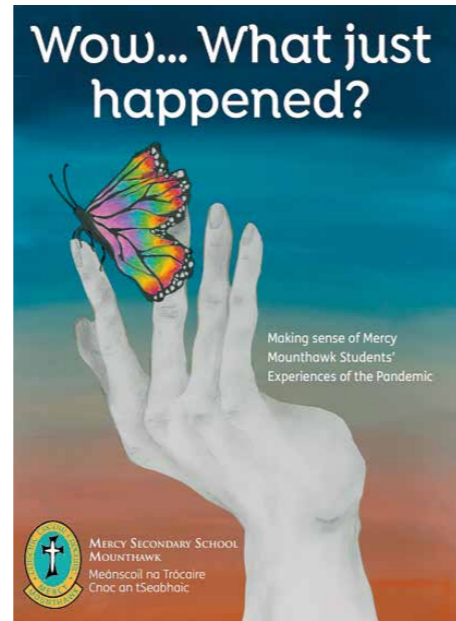


Wow! What just happened?

A wonderfully powerful book of photos, art and quotes telling the story of our students' pandemic experiences was launched in March. It was launched in school by Ireland rugby captain Ciara Griffin.

Wow! What just happened? is a compilation of reflections, poems, artwork and photography by students exploring their experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. The book delves into the trials and tribulations of the global pandemic while also celebrating the resilience and character of our students. The two year long project came to completion when it was published and launched in March 2023. The book was coordinated and spearheaded by Ms Alison Lynch and was supported by multiple subject departments, including the CSPE, SPHE, and Religious Education departments respectively.

The journey of the book began in lockdown of March 2021, when students were asked to take photographs of their area within a 5km radius. Following the reopening of schools in April, second and third year students were surveyed between March and May 2021. Students from 1st to 6th year were surveyed again in early 2022 as the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. The book allows students to voice their hopes, feelings and attitudes towards a defining period of time in their lives.



Wow! What just happened? was published by Educate.ie and edited by Fiona McPolin. A special thanks to Fiona and her team for their patience and expertise. Congratulations to all the students who contributed reflections, artwork, poetry and photographs towards the book. The diverse talent of our students is clearly evident as you leaf through the book. Furthermore, the ever-present feeling of hope even amid the despair of the pandemic is truly evident. It is a true testament to the character and tenacity of our students.

The book is available to purchase in O'Mahony's Bookshop or Polymath, Tralee or available via the school website at bit.ly/3V6dgUY



All proceeds from book sales will be reinvested into student wellbeing in the school.



2ND YEAR FIELD-TRIP TO KILLARNEY

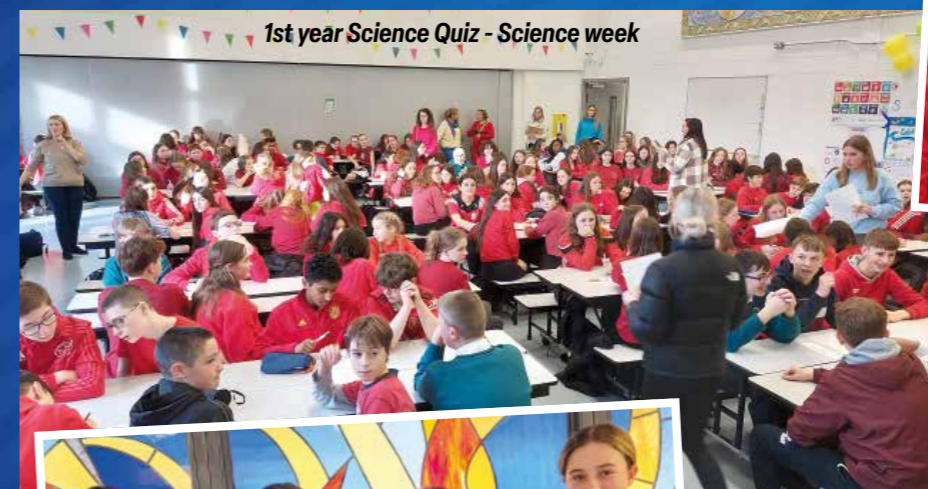
2nd Year Geography students went on a field-trip to Killarney, visiting a number of different sites and enjoying a wonderful day out.

First stop was Liebherr in Killarney to study the inputs, processes and outputs of a factory of this size and scale. Afterwards, they visited Lough Guitane, a freshwater lake that supplies water to Tralee and Killarney. They then went on a boat trip on Lough Leane and enjoyed a guided tour of the beautiful Lakes of Killarney. The day culminated with a reading by Ike of a Lord Alfred Tennyson poem inspired by Ross Castle, 'Splendour Falls on Castle Walls'.



SCIENCE QUIZ

1st year Science Quiz - Science week



LEFT: The winners of 1st year science table quiz held during Science week November 2022: Sadhbh Sheehan, Eden Ryan, Ema Vinarcikova, and Ali O Mahony.



ABOVE: The senior science quiz team that represented Mercy Mounthawk in Trinity college on December 3rd in the National Finals: Aideen Lynch, Coren Hughes and Paula Holmes.

SUPERVISED STUDY WILL RETURN NEXT YEAR

Supervised study is available to all students from:
Monday-Friday 4:05pm to 6.05pm or 4.05pm to 7.05pm
Wednesday 2.00pm to 4.00pm or 2.00pm to 5.00pm
 APPLICATION FORMS WILL BE AVAILABLE IN AUGUST



Graduation Mass

On Friday the 26th of May the community of Mercy Mounthawk gathered to celebrate the Leaving Certificate Class of 2023.

This event celebrated our students' 5 or 6-year journey through secondary education and looked forward with hope to the students' futures beyond the corridors of Mounthawk.

The ceremony was held in the beautiful surroundings of St. John's Church, where the sun shone down to welcome all those graduating along with their families. Speeches from the school's Head Girl and Head Boy, Grainne Leahy and Coren Hughes, began the ceremony. They reminisced on their time in school - the fun in classes and the time with friends.

The mass was celebrated by Fr. Amos while the Mercy Mounthawk choir enriched the ceremony with its beautiful singing and music. The theme for the ceremony was centered around wind and seeds. "The winds of opportunity blow in all directions, it's up to you to choose your course".

Mr. O'Roarke spoke to the graduates about the journey ahead of them. He reminded them to always stay true to their course, encouraging them not to allow themselves to be blown off course and to enjoy the opportunities that life will present to them.

One very special moment came when he asked the graduating class to turn around and give their families a round of applause for all the love and support they have received in their lives so far.

Following the presentation of certificates to the class they received their yearbook and a Mercy Mounthawk pen as a reminder of their time in Mercy Mounthawk.

Along with all of our staff here in Mercy Mounthawk, we wish the Class of 2023 all the best in their lives beyond the classrooms and corridors here. May you embrace life and all its opportunities, and always remember that if you find the wind ever blows you back in our direction our door is always open to you.



SCHOOL CHOIR

The choir has been very busy in the academic year of 2022/2023. This year they have performed for the Mercy Day Mass, the JCPA ceremony, the Carol Service, the 10th anniversary Mass of Donal Walsh in Knock, the School Awards ceremony and the Graduation Ceremony among more.

Our Annual Carol Service is one of the highlights of the school year. The theme of our service this year was Peace and Hope. The hope was that our carol service would reconnect people with the true spirit of Christmas, allow them to experience the joy of the season and to look forward with hope for the months ahead.



This year, our Christmas Carol Service took place on 15th December at St. Brendan's Church and there was a great turn-out on the night. With a mixture of Christmas Carols, instrumentals, drama pieces, liturgy, poems and reflections there was something for everyone on the night.

It is fair to say that all of the students and teachers involved put in a wonderful effort to produce a high quality, thought provoking and reflective carol service. We would like to thank Fr. Padraig for getting involved with the carol service and for being with us each year to celebrate.

It is important to give a special mention to our departing sixth years Gearóid, Conór, Coren, Ciara, Lauren and Lucy who have had significant roles in the choir throughout their time in Mounthawk. They have been active members of the choir and have enhanced our performances by singing, playing solos, as well as playing their instruments in accompaniment. We thank them for their generous contribution to school life in Mounthawk and wish them all the very best in all their musical endeavours in the future.

The choir has been recording songs for a school CD to which our 6th years have been contributing on an annual basis. Watch this space!



FARM VISITS



On Tuesday 23rd May the Student Council Environment Committee visited two farms on the outskirts of Tralee. The thirty students firstly travelled to a large dairy farm and later on the same day they had a brief visit to an Organic farm.

The first part of the trip took us to Kilgulbin near Ardfer. We were welcomed to the home and farm of Maurice and Eva Costelloe for a wonderful and engaging few hours where we saw, first hand, the workings of a large scale dairy farm. The Costelloe's farm has a herd of over eight hundred animals with nearly five hundred milking cows.

Mr. Costelloe explained the workings of a modern dairy farm from beginning to the end of the 'milk cycle'. Basically, the students got to witness the arrival of the cows into the state of the art automated milking parlour and at the other end we saw the tanker from Lee Strand arrive to collect the milk. We were amazed to have a peek into the 24,000 litre milk tank, emptied by the tanker every day or two, we saw the milking parlour which had room for 50 cows on a rotating turntable, the cows walk on themselves and when finished they back themselves out and go on their way. We were taken to see the new arrivals, the young calves, in their sheds and we even had an encounter with the Bull.

Students learned that all the water, tens of thousands of litres, comes from wells on the farm, that the heat from the cooled milk gets transferred into the house for heating and hot water, that the automated milking parlour is capable of taking 50 cows at a time and that up to 24,000 litres of milk are produced for Lee Strand every day or two. What also impressed students is that all the cows could be milked in just under two hours. It was interesting to note that nearly all of the fodder for the farm comes from the locality and that the milking parlour was designed and manufactured up the road at Dairymaster in Causeway.

It was a real eye-opener and a pleasure to witness how a modern dairy farm operates. They even kept a few cows behind for our students to have a go at milking, which was a real treat...even if Lewis was on the receiving end of a 'bovine accident'...the shirt came out well in the wash!

We would like to thank Maurice, Eva and their family for their time and their hospitality during and after the visit. We were very taken aback by the tables of treats laid on by the family, a wonderful experience of good, old fashioned hospitality. Many of the students had never before been on a



Ian welcoming us to Gortbrac



Students in the central hub of the milking parlour



One of the students has a go at milking



Maurice Costelloe explaining how the milking system works

farm and we are sure that the day will stand out for them in their memories of school life.

After visiting Costelloe's farm we travelled to Gortbrac Organic farm for a very quick visit of about an hour. In Gortbrac, Ian McGrigor showed us around and we saw his poly tunnels growing everything from figs and nectarines to cabbages and potatoes. Ian then took us on a walk up the hill on the old bog road where students saw two of our indigenous carnivorous plants the Butterworth and the Sundew and in the meadow we also saw a proliferation of pyramid orchids. Students sat by the lake which is used to water the poly tunnels as well as providing water for the toilets. Sadly we had to return quickly to the school but it is hoped that we will have a longer visit in September.



Students by the lake

Student Climate Conference



world that will, in the short and medium terms, bear the brunt of climate change. It is felt that wealthier nations should help these countries in mitigating the effects of climate change.

The energy group proposed the idea that all schools should have a blackout day every week or every month. During blackout day lights in the school would be turned off and an increased awareness of energy usage would be promoted. The action projects will be carried out in the individual schools who will decide themselves which areas of the environment to focus on through the action projects.

At the end of the day the conference agreed that all schools in Tralee should carry out and promote two action projects together. The first of these, it is proposed, would be a blackout day across all schools in the town. The second of the action projects involves the area of transport. All students present felt that promoting cycling and walking to school is something that the schools in town could achieve together. It was recognised by the conference that many students who have bicycles do not cycle to school and it was felt that, if promoted properly, many more students would get on their bikes or walk to school instead of getting lifts in cars.

At the end of the day it was agreed among all present that schools would reconvene in September to devise a safe and workable action project around the area of safe cycling and walking to school. It was felt that the promotion of sustainable transport to schools, namely walking and cycling, would not only enhance the environment, but would also increase the well-being and engagement of students after they got to school in the mornings.

After four hours of intense discussion and presentations, the conference came to an end, with the aim to meet again in September to plan what to do next. It is hoped that the student climate conference will become an annual event and that all students in town will work together to achieve success in changing habits of students, teachers and parents when it comes to the environmental and lifestyle issues that affect us all.



On Wednesday, the 10th of May over 80 students from five second level schools in Tralee met for a conference to discuss, debate and take action on climate issues.

The conference took place at Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk and brought together students from Mercy Mounthawk, Tralee CBS, Presentation Secondary School Tralee, Coláiste Gleann Lí and Gaelcholáiste Trá Lí. During the course of the event students, working in groups, discussed the effects of climate change under the headings of Energy, Transport, Global Food Systems, Biodiversity, Water, Litter and Climate Justice.



Each of the working groups comprised students from the five secondary schools and throughout the course of the conference the groups adopted resolutions and devised action ideas which will be carried out by the schools going forward into next year.

The action ideas included the following proposals from the school students: sensor taps to reduce waste water to be installed in schools, food miles on canteen food menus should be displayed in the school canteens and school canteens should promote vegan or vegetarian food at least one day per week. Students will be involved with school authorities and parents to help devise tasty, nutritious and meat-free meals.

All litter in the schools should be segregated and disposed of sustainably. The climate justice committee proposed that schools should have a climate justice week to raise awareness of the fact that it is the poorer nations and peoples of the



Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

On Friday, the 26th of May the Students' Council from Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk took part in the finals of the Eco-Unesco Young Environmentalist Awards in the convention centre in Dublin. The group had been entered under the Community Development category for their work throughout the school year 2022 to 2023.

The group were delighted to win their own category which was the Junior category. However, there was even more excitement to come and our group came out overall winner on the day and received the National Overall Junior Award. This is the first time that Mercy Mounthawk has won the national award at the Young Environmentalist Awards.

During the school year 2022 – 2023 the student council held a battery drive during which they collected the equivalent of 12,000 AA batteries, in all about 240 kg worth and sent them for recycling. During the battery drive the students promoted recycling in general and also developed resources including a video highlighting how cobalt is mined for batteries in countries such as the Congo.

The Cobalt mining video, which highlights the use of child slave labour, was shown to all junior cert students in the school. Students learned that a significant percentage of world cobalt, an active ingredient in many batteries including those for cars and phones, was mined by children as young as six or seven years of age. It is estimated that the majority of batteries for phones and electric cars probably contain cobalt mined by children.

Students also produced a video highlighting the unsustainable practices upholding the fast fashion industry, while at the same time suggesting alternatives to clothing that is worn only a few times before being discarded.



At the end of the school year the students held an environment conference to explore climate and sustainability issues under the headings of energy, water, fast fashion, global food systems and transport. The resolutions and action projects devised on the day included actions on promoting safe cycling and walking to school. The school secured an initial grant for €45,000 towards cycling infrastructure which it is hoped to have in place during the 2023 – 2024 school year.

This first student environment conference held in May 2022 also proposed to hold a follow up conference inviting all secondary schools from Tralee town. This multi school conference took place on the 10th

of May 2023 and all schools present expressed the desire and need to promote cycling to school throughout the town. It was proposed at this conference that the secondary schools in Tralee would reconvene in September to begin working on an action plan to promote cycling as a mode of transport to and from all schools in the town.

Mr. Kissane, Deputy Principal, expressed his delight at the school receiving this National Award and said that 'students had been taking part in the YEA's for quite a few years and it is great to see this effort rewarded in such a fashion. Our girls and boys had been working on the Battery Drive/Child Labour, Fast Fashion and Climate Conference initiatives for over a year. The resolutions and action ideas adopted at the conferences will point the way forward for the school environment committee for the next few years. The idea for all of the secondary schools to come together and work towards promoting cycling to school is something that the students should be commended for. It is hoped that Kerry County Council will further their engagement with the schools in Tralee to help improve road infrastructure to the point



Ethan Gilroy and Jolin Weng

where cycling and walking become viable, fully utilised and safer modes of transport to and from school'.

STUDENTS INVOLVED: Judith Waugh, Hugh Emerson, Maeve Trant, Rory O'Flaherty, Ethan Gilroy, Kai Seino, Cian Miller, Yasmin Odugbesan, Andrei Turcan, Jamie Samonte, Brendan Maunsell, Justin O'Connor, Lewis Hughes, Dan McElligott, Caoilainn Culloo, Jeri-Maeve Samonte, Jolin Weng, Aoife Hammed, Aisling Hammed, Joel Oguairi, Molly Sheehy, Ashley Baxter, Grainne Leahy, Isabella Teahon, Gabia Dackauskyte, Cathal Fitzgerald.



5th Year Spanish Immersion Trip

Fifteen students of Spanish from 5th year travelled to Madrid in February to take part in a cultural and language exchange programme organised by the Spanish Department at Mounthawk.

Mounthawk students attended secondary school in Madrid for two weeks, and stayed with local families in Madrid city centre. They polished their language skills, shared insights into life in Ireland and experienced authentic Spanish culture. "It was the trip of two lifetimes," Caoimhe reported upon her return.

They represented Mounthawk impeccably, and 5th year teachers Ms A Fitzgerald, Ms B O'Shea, Ms G O'Carroll and Ms AP O'Connor are very proud of them for stepping out of their comfort zone and embarking on this trip.

Upon their return, we enjoyed a lovely lunchtime gathering for all 5th students of Spanish, where we ate traditional Iberian dishes, prepared by Ms O'Connor and her wonderful helpers Molly and Aine. The returning students regaled us with stories of their travels and we had a visit from Alberto, Mounthawk's resident Madrileño, where they compared notes on life (and food!) in Spain versus Ireland. Needless to say, 5th year Spanish classes were peppered with Spanish slang and funny anecdotes for the rest of the year, enriching the class for everyone. ¡Enhorabuena chicos!



Texaco Art Competition

Congratulations to Keela Leahy, 5th year, (left) and Jolin Weng, 2nd year, (right) who were awarded a Special Merit in the Texaco Art Competition.



FASHION SHOW

WRITTEN BY EABHA NI LOINNSIGH AND RACHEL SARGENT, TY STUDENTS



This year's TY fashion show was our first live show since the lifting of Covid restrictions. We began working on it very early in the school year to make it as wonderful and enjoyable as possible for those who would be watching and taking part in the show.

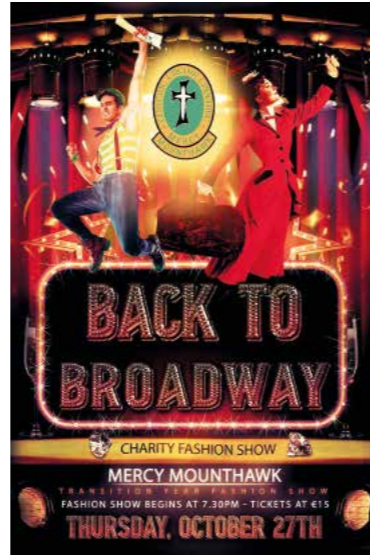
We had a variety of musical performances and even had a special guest... the Sam Maguire cup, won by the Kerry senior team this year. We are so grateful to all the shops that allowed us to showcase their brilliant clothes on our runway, as the show would have been impossible without them.

The fashion show was organised to raise money for the Kerry Hospice and Down Syndrome Kerry this year, and

in total we raised over €4000 for these incredible local charities.

Many teachers helped us to make our goals for the fashion show a reality: Mr. Nolan, Mr. Redican and Mr. Andreucetti with technical and video support, as well as Ms. Giltenane, Ms. Nolan and Ms. O'Neill's work in the musical side of things, Ms. Ryan for the artwork and Declan, our school caretaker, to all we are very grateful.

We must also mention the two teachers it would not be possible without: Ms. O'Leary and Ms. Kearney, for their key work in putting together the show. And finally a special mention of thanks to all the TY students for taking part in this years' fashion show and making it the success it was.



EID-UL FITR

Eid-ul-Fitr or Eid Al-Fitr is one of two great festivals for Muslims and it celebrates the end of Ramadan. It is known as the Festival of Breaking the Fast in Islamic faith.



Ramadan is a month of prayer and fasting. During Ramadan Muslims have an early morning meal before dawn, they then fast for the remainder of the day until they break the fast after sunset.

Like Easter, Ramadan is a moveable event each year. This means that during summertime in Ireland, Muslims may have to fast from as early as 2.30am to 10.00pm at night. Ramadan is the Arabic name for the ninth month in the Islamic calendar and is considered one of the holiest Islamic months, Eid is celebrated at the beginning of the 10th month. Ramadan is a time when Muslims are encouraged to give to charity, to strengthen their relationship with God, and show kindness and patience.

Here in Mercy Mounthawk it is our tradition to celebrate Eid by allowing our Muslim students to come to school in their own traditional clothes. We also display posters and artwork around the school.



Second Year Awards



Christian Leadership - Gaoilainn Roisin Culloo, Nicole Hartmann, Aobhin O'Sullivan, Naoise O'Carroll, Orla Buttimer



Comhar - Back: Emily Kate Flynn, Cian Daughton, Molly Brick, Roanna Lawless O'Sullivan, Aisling Marie Browne, Erikas Revotas. Front: Ikekukwu Echeme, Sam Boyle, Michael O'Keefe, Jamie Walsh



School Spirit - Back: Briain Hennessy, Samuel Garvey, David Sargent, Grace Somers, Tadhg Murphy, Patrick Lucid. Front: Arie O'Shea, Sam Boyle, Aoife Cooper, Favour Roberts



Diligence - Back: Cathal Fitzgerald, David Mullins, Colm O'Sullivan, Eoghan Crowley. Front: Zofia Lange, Aoibheann O'Dwyer, Amelia Adamczyk, Aoibheann McCarthy

Fifth Year Awards



School Spirit - Kim McTigue, Tadhg Galvin, Lily Parker, Ethan Marcus Fitzgerald, Doireann O'Shea, Jack Murphy, Layla Hannafin



Christian Leadership - Phelim Carroll, Evan Boyle, Aoife O'Connell, Molly Sheehy, Lia McLysaght, Luke Healy, William Bellchambers



Comhar - John Feeley, Rohan Carter O'Flynn, Eoin Griffin, Laura Doris Reilly, Cathal Murphy, Pavlo Marin



Diligence - Clara O'Dowd, Labhraidh Costello, Cian O'Gara, Ciara Palmer, Cara Gannon, Lauren Dowling, Oisín Gallagher, Aoife Greaney, Biye Guo, Eintla Musallari, Orlaith McKenna, Rhys Maher



Awards Night

We celebrated the many achievements, special gifts and talents of our wonderful students in our Annual Awards Ceremony which took place in the school gym on 16th May.

The Awards Ceremony is one of the highlights of the school year. It is a night of celebration and joy, where students, parents and teachers alike take the time to reflect on, appreciate and acknowledge the hard work, commitment, kindness, generosity of spirit, Christian leadership, diligence and overall excellence of our students who have excelled throughout their time with us in Mercy Mounthawk. Mr. Fleming and Mr. Houlihan were our Masters of Ceremony for the night and, as always, they gave an Oscar-winning performance.

The richness of co-curricular involvement continues to flourish each year here in Mercy Mounthawk and Mr. Fleming gave us a flavour of the sheer breadth of the activities, achievements and successes we have seen throughout the year. From reaching the Munster debating final for a third year in a row, to achieving two first places and a third place in the Munster Chess Competition. From having our Lego Robotics team represent Ireland in California, USA to our Young Social Innovators (YSI) team who won the National title this year. From a student who came second in Ireland in the Ballymaloe Cookery Competition to a student who reached the All-Ireland Final in the Young Philosopher Competition.

On the Sports front, Mr. Fleming welcomed on stage Róise O'Donnell, the captain of our senior girls' Football Team who were Munster final winners and All-Ireland final runners-up in this their first year in the 'B' competition. He also introduced Samson Abubakar, the captain of our under 14 boys Basketball Team who are All-Ireland 'A' champions. Finally, he welcomed Gráinne Diggin and Áine Leahy, representing our Under 16 and a half Camogie team. This year we are Munster Camogie Champions and we are the winners of the Cork Colleges Camogie competition.

We then began the official presentations of the night. We had many award winners in the Christian Leadership, Comhar, School Spirit and Diligence categories. Students who excelled academically in the different subject areas were also honoured. The **Junior Maths Award** this year went to the first two students who took part in the Irish Maths Teachers Association Quiz. This is a National quiz and this year had 15,000



entrants. Our winners of this award Panna Hernold-Csorba and Sam Gleasure came in the top 0.5% of the country. What an achievement!

Jennifer Slattery and Daniel Oyewande were the recipients of the **Senior Maths Award**, Cian Lawless the **Excellence in Engineering Award** and Coren Hughes the **Senior Science Award** for his Achievement in BT Young Scientist. Aoife Bourke and Paula Holmes were acknowledged with a special award for their continued Excellence in Science throughout their six years in the school and Jennifer Slattery was also awarded the **Tadhg O'Connell Memorial Award** for excellence in Physics.

Gach uile bhliain mar chuid de cheiliúradh oíche na ngradam bronnar dhá ghradam Gaeilge ar bheirt scolairí ardteiste. Bronntar Gradam in omós do Mháire Uí Gheiní ar an té a fuair an marc is airde sna bréagscrúdaithe Gaeilge. Bronnadh an gradam seo ar Róise O'Donnell i mbliana. Bronntar Gradam in omós do Sr Joan ar dhalta ardteistiméireachta a leiríonn díograis, suim sa chultúr agus grá don teanga. Bronnadh an gradam seo ar Jennifer Slattery. Guímid gach rath orthu araon.

For their absolutely unwavering contribution to the trad group in the school throughout their six years, the **Traditional Music Award** was presented to Conor Breen and Róise O'Donnell. The **Choir Award** was presented to Ciara Sugrue and the **Art Award** this year went to someone who has huge talent but is also committed and hard working - Michael Guerin.

The **Drama Award** for 2023 was presented to joint recipients Adam Dineen and Roisín Reidy. Both have been involved in drama and performance in one form or another since they joined us here in Mounthawk six years ago. They have graced the stage of Siamsa Tíre both in leading roles and as part of the chorus in almost all of our plays and musicals over their six years and they did so with a flair and panache that anyone who has seen them on stage would attest to. The **Music Award** was presented to Gearóid Meehan who entertained us throughout the night as part of the choir and trad group. The **Music -**



Special Recognition Award winner was Sinéad Carr. Sinéad has been accepted into the Phoenix Drama School in Dublin and hopes to pursue a career in music and performance.

The **Martha Brassil Award** was presented by Cora Mc Elligott. This is an award that is given to students who have faced challenges throughout their time in the school and who have met those challenges and overcome them with courage, resilience and with determination. The winners of the 2023 Martha Brassil Award were Mathew Johnston and Shaymaa Al Merhi.

Head Boy, Coren Hughes and Head Girl Gráinne Leahy were up next to announce the **Student Choice Award** which was selected by 6th year students. This year the award went to Lynda O'Connor. Mr. Kissane then announced Gráinne Leahy as the **Student Council Award Winner**.

Mr. Lyne came to the stage to present our Sports Awards, honouring those students who have excelled in sport throughout their time in Mercy Mounthawk. The **Female Sportsperson of the Year** was Niamh Quinn, an outstanding footballer and Camogie player and recent winner of a Kerry minor medal in Camogie. The **Male Sportsperson of the Year** was Robert Moynihan. Robert is a fantastic footballer and is currently a member of the Kerry U20 team. He is also a gentleman - kind and unassuming and a great example to those around him.

The **Leaving Cert Applied Award** was presented to Michael Burke, a student with excellent attendance, commitment and the drive to get his tasks completed on time and to a high standard.

Sr. Bernadette Costello took to the stage on behalf of the Board of Management. She congratulated all of the award winners and spoke of her sense of pride in seeing these young men and women embodying the Mercy values in their daily lives through their sharing of their God-given gifts and talents. She also acknowledged the parents who had supported their sons and daughters along their journey to this point. Sr. Bernadette proceeded to present the Ceist Award, a Leadership Award to acknowledge the remarkable achievements of students.

This year the joint winners of the **Ceist Award** were Conor Breen and Gearóid Meehan. Sr. Bernadette acknowledged how both students have given of their time freely and generously. They have shared their talents to bring success to the school and have demonstrated their leadership qualities through various activities both academic and extra-curricular in various roles over the past six years. Both have been truly committed. They have managed to model for all of us respect, diligence, commitment, good practice and an abundance of generosity. They have recognised, developed and shared their talents and in doing so have inspired their peers. They have done all this with a sense of graciousness,



good humour and commitment and their presence has made a profound difference to Mercy Mounthawk.

Sr. Bernadette also announced the **Board of Management Award**. This award was presented to Róise O'Donnell who has given her time willingly without counting the cost. She has shared her talents and has demonstrated leadership qualities in many different roles throughout the years. In doing so she has inspired her classmates with generosity, graciousness, good humour and commitment. Róise always has a warm smile and greeting for everyone on the corridors of Mercy Mounthawk and her engaging presence will be greatly missed.

The Principal, Mr. O'Roarke presented the final two awards of the night. According to Mr. O'Roarke, both of these students embody and live out the values of the school. The first of those awards is the **Principal's Award**. This Award was presented to Gráinne Leahy. Gráinne's sense of service throughout her time in the school has been immense. She has been part of the student council down through the years and has remained very active even in this her leaving certificate year. Her teachers describe her as kind, organised, consistent, pleasant, committed and of having a sense of care for those around her. She has that sense of what it means to commit, to support and to encourage and motivate those around her.

The final award of the night was the **Catherine McAuley Award**. This award was presented to Coren Hughes. Coren's teachers describe him as committed, pleasant, optimistic and positive. He has played basketball for the school and outside school for the past six years and he has himself trained basketball teams outside of school. He has been involved in our school orchestra for the Musicals down through the years and he has played music at almost any and every musical event, both live and online, that has taken place over his six years here. Mr O'Roarke described him as a young man with boundless enthusiasm and an openness to explore and be curious about life. This is what led him to represent the school and have such huge success in the BT Young Scientist competition. His insight and capacity to analyse and question is immense. Coren gives generously of his talents and he does so with such joy, optimism, humility and decency.

Mr. O'Roarke finished up by congratulating each and every one of our award winners.

We wish all of our sixth years the very best as they journey onwards to the next stage of their trajectory. Congratulations to all! If anyone would like to see the awards night in its entirety with the full list of recipients, you can do so at: bit.ly/3NIDwml

SCHOOL SELF-EVALUATION (SSE) and SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS (SIPs)

Report to the school community for 2022/23

NEW SSE CYCLE 2022 – 2026

School Self-Evaluation (SSE) is designed as a process of collaborative, internal school review that is focused on school improvement. The Department of Education published two documents this year: Circular 0056/2022 and the document School Self-Evaluation: Next Steps 2022-2026 which outlined two phases for school planning. Phase 1: (2022-2023) was to involve a 'Review Year for Schools' of the impact that COVID had on the experiences of their students and a space to initiate a wellbeing review and development cycle. In Phase 2: (2023-2026): schools have the autonomy to choose their SSE focus areas but should follow through with a plan that focuses on wellbeing.

In Phase 1 (2022/23), part of our review of the impact of COVID on our students' experiences was to harvest and collate the experience and voice of our students during the pandemic in our publication 'Wow, what just happened?' The book holds the authentic voice of our students about what they experienced during those years and it is a wonderful production by the teachers and students. It is available to purchase on the school's website at: <http://www.mercymounthawk.ie/>

We also surveyed the teachers, parents and students as to their perceptions of the impact of Covid on students. Similar themes emerged across the surveys, albeit with different emphasis between the groups. The most significant factor teachers observed was a more frequent use of social media (67%) by their students. 20.6% of the parents mentioned this as a consequence on their sons and daughters, whereas only 6% of students felt that there was an increase in their social media use. Teachers noted increased levels of anxiety amongst the student population (62%). 22.1% of parents noted this and 16.5% of students agreed - being one of the highest noted consequences among students. Poor attendance was a factor of concern for 59% of teachers who select it as being the most direct influence on students. They also discerned their students having a shorter attention span (49%). 14.7% of parents mentioned a reduced academic performance and 11.3% of students noted this impact.

The groups were also asked for suggestions on what they would like to see happen, which ranged from a focus on teaching coping skills, self-esteem and social skills, help with home study plans, study techniques, Revision Sessions/ Catch-up Classes whose purpose is to cover sections of the course missed during COVID, quiet time, less emphasis on exam pressure and tackling the impact of social media. The Wellbeing Committee are currently considering what strategies we can adopt in the coming years to address these needs.

'YONDR'

One of the initiatives we have already implemented in response to the impact of social media on students is the introduction of Yondr pouches for phones during the school day. This project had a long genesis, reflecting the ongoing concerns of parents and teachers around the increasing dependence and focus by students on media and the negative impacts reported in research such as the 'My World Survey 2' (2019). The National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland (by UCD School of Psychology and Jigsaw

reported a significant relationship between time spent online and higher levels of depression and anxiety and lower levels of self-esteem, which reflects the increased anxiety levels reported in our own Covid survey.

We are very satisfied with the levels of buy-in by our students into the new system introduced in March this year and we will be investigating the impact of strengthening the 'Phone free' environment of the school on the wellbeing, social engagement and class focus of students in the coming year.



ANTI-BULLYING SIP

A further factor adding to anxiety and impacting negatively on the wellbeing of certain students is the negative impact effect of bullying. Based on the finding of surveys last year, we continued our SIP on anti-bullying and progress has been made. Our goal this year was to work on the level of awareness among students and staff of the processes around reporting and tackling bullying and of the responsibility and efficacy of everyone (staff and students) in intervening and supporting students in appropriate ways if and when they see bullying.

A newly formed anti-bullying committee was established and initiated strategies. One strategy was to explore the impact of bullying through cross-curricular work and this was done through new modules in CSPE, SPHE, English and History classes. Health Promotion Week in October last focused on how to intervene when we see bullying, with inter-class debates and videos at assembly which focused on intervention. In relation to on-line bullying and safety on-line, the Lockers Programme by webwise was undertaken in SPHE classes. We have engaged with a number of intervention programmes, namely the FUSE programme, which was introduced in 2nd year. Core teams of teachers have been trained this year in both Restorative Practice and Helping Hands models of intervention and this will allow us as a school to implement these strategies in the coming academic year.

PHASE 2 - 2023 FORWARD:

Looking towards next year, we will continue our SIP on Anti-bullying, developing the initiatives begun this year, focusing on the upskilling of staff in interventions, embedding strategies and exploring the involvement of parents. Based on the feedback from our surveys this year, an improvement plan on Attendance will be initiated. We will progress with Yondr across the whole school. In addition, the SSE team will explore and seek to identify other strategies in relation to the promotion of Wellbeing in the school.

John O'Roarke (PRINCIPAL)

Parents' Council



JUNE 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians/Carers,

Congratulations on getting through another academic year. To those students and parents leaving us for good, we wish you the very best.

This year we were lucky to receive a Community Integration Grant of €2,500 from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). This funding was originally to be spent on intercultural celebrations of food with the aim of involving families of all nationalities in the school. In 2022 we hosted celebrations of Nigerian and Pakistani Cuisine.

WHAT IS THE Parents' Council? The PC is the structure through which the parents/guardians in our school can work together for the best possible education for our children.



Mercy Mounthawk Parents' Council



Parents' Council events this past year: This year the PC received a DCEDIY grant to host intercultural food nights and to create a recipe book of all our families' favourite dishes. This will be available in September. We also held a series of Parenting Courses on The Adolescent Brain. Similar courses will be available for you from September. We hold second-hand school uniform sale every year. Keep an eye on your email to receive more information on this. This event typically takes place in mid August. Not a member? Join our email list by sending an email to us at mmparentscouncil@gmail.com

Benefits of joining your Parents' Council: Volunteering with the Council allows you to share your skills and knowledge. This benefits your child and your school. Children perform better when parents are engaged in education both at home and at school. Your involvement boosts student achievement while at the same time providing a positive connection with the school.



This year, with support from the school and parents, we applied for a change in the use of funds. The remaining monies will now be used to produce and print a book of favourite recipes from families in Mercy Mounthawk. If you would like to have a recipe included in the book it's not too late and you can contact us on mmparentscouncil@gmail.com. Recipes can be in any language but should have an English translation and photos are also a must. If your particular recipe has a special meaning, please do include this also. We welcome traditional recipes, tried and tested recipes, recipes from Granny and recipes that make you think of home.

We also ran a Parenting Course on *The Adolescent Brain* over three mornings in February and March. This course ran over three weeks and we had Kristy McFetridge of the Shannow Family Resource Centre and Edel Lawlor, founder of Expressive Play, give talks to parents. The third week ended with arts and crafts with Helena Stackpoole from the County Museum. The Parents' Council have also secured funding for another Parenting Course which we plan on running in October. Details will be sent out in due course.

A second-chance uniform sale is held in the school every August. Unwanted uniforms are donated to the school and sold on to families by the Parents' Council. Details about this will be sent out during the Summer.

Parent Council meetings are held monthly, and we welcome questions and input from all parents. These meetings are held on the second Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm. If you would like to join our mailing list, please send an email to mmparentscouncil@gmail.com

We try to represent our parents/guardians/carers as best as possible. We are always looking for new members and ideas so if you feel you have something to offer than please drop us a line on mmparentscouncil@gmail.com.

Kind regards,

The Parents' Council (Angie, Jill and David)

Mercy Secondary School Mounthawk Parents' Council

1st years enjoy making St. Brigid's Crosses

to honour and celebrate St. Brigid



TRANSITION YEAR

Young Social Innovators

BY MS. RACHEL O'NEILL

Young Social Innovators (YSI) is a Social Innovation Education Programme that inspires and empowers young people to become "active citizens" in their local communities and beyond. It encourages students to use their talents, insights, passion and creativity to take action and come up with innovative solutions to social challenges and issues that exist in society today.

Here in Mercy Mounthawk, there is a strong tradition of engaging with the YSI programme that has seen a wonderful collection of awards and achievements. And this year, we were absolutely delighted to continue this tradition.

This year, thirty-five teams of student innovators from all over Ireland, including four from Kerry, were shortlisted to compete for a range of YSI Challenge Awards as well as the overall Gold, Silver and Bronze Young Social Innovators of the Year Title Awards.

Our TY YSI project "Catch My Drift" was nominated in the "Make Our World Safer" YSI Category Challenge Award. The project focused on the issue and social concern of the current lack of education and awareness that exists around the area of essential water safety and drowning prevention in schools and local communities. The team dedicated their year to the importance of being "water and beach safety aware" by providing access to basic and essential information as well



ABOVE: The brilliant YSI Team 'Catch My Drift' who took home the 'Make Our World Safer' award for their project on preventing water-related accidents. Huge congratulations! #YSIAwards2023

as drowning prevention awareness through their campaign in person and on social media.

The team's main goal was to be as proactive as possible in changing attitudes and behaviours around this social issue. They wanted to contribute to the prevention of future water-related accidents or fatalities from happening in Kerry and beyond so that local aquatic environments can be enjoyed with confidence and safety.

Since September, the team has been extremely busy coordinating a variety of innovative actions, activities and events to raise awareness. Students carried out a series of research surveys, set up information stalls, decorated halls and notice boards with visual displays of "Information, Facts & Statistics" that surround this topic. They ran a successful social media campaign, held a fundraising event in aid of their chosen charities: the Fenit RNLI branch and Water Safety Ireland, by selling "Mermaid's Purse" sweet bags and proudly raising over €450 euro for these essential services.

Students engaged with the Water Safety Ireland WISE (Water Insight, Safety & Education) programme and used their learning and upskilling in water safety strategies and risk assessment information to create a series of workshops for Junior Cycle students from 1st to 3rd year. The workshops, which were delivered during "National YSI week", provided important strategies from specific water based activities to hazards. CPR education was also provided to help students to know what to do when faced with potential unforeseen accidents. In May, the students organised a guest speaker event in collaboration with the Fenit RNLI branch to ensure the students in their school community were equipped with essential beach safety and drowning prevention knowledge and strategies in advance of the summer months ahead.

In March, the team travelled to the Lime Tree Theatre in Limerick where they had the opportunity to come together with other young people to share their ideas and actions for change



and perform their excellent YSI Speak Out showcase in front of a panel of judges and an audience of their YSI peers and invited guests. They lifted the roof with their wonderful Speak Out Performance including vital facts, information, prevention strategies as well as a fashion show and interpretative recreation of the song "I follow Rivers"!

In April, the team were thrilled to receive the news that their project had been shortlisted for the National YSI Awards being nominated for the National Challenge Category Award: "Make Our World Safer".

Students travelled to Dublin early on Tuesday 2nd May to attend the YSI national finals, which took place in Croke Park. Five students represented the team (Conor O'Sullivan, Meghan Rusk, Tyler Hanafin, Caitriona Doyle O'Brien and Sarah Jane Hoffman) pitching their project innovation to a panel of 5 judges which included a questions and answer section.

The official YSI awards ceremony took place at 1.30pm where it was revealed that the team had won the national challenge award for the category "Make Our World A Safer Place". We were absolutely delighted to have the honour of receiving such an award for raising awareness and seeking to tackle such a vital social issue.

SOME OF OUR HASHTAGS!

- #catchmydrift #YSI #watersafety #haveyoucaughton
- #beswiftdontdrift #divingdeep #educatesowedontreplicate
- #doyouknowyourH2O #staycurrent
- #ReachThrowDon'tGo #AhAhAhAhStayingAlive



ABOVE: Our award winning YSI group presenting the RNLI with a cheque from their fundraising activities.

OUTLINE CALENDAR - SEPTEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024

SCHOOL RE-OPENING DATES

- Monday 28th August** 1st year students begin school, finished at 13.10
- Tuesday 29th August** 3rd and 6th year students return to school
- Wednesday 30th August** 2nd, 5th and Transition Year students return to school

HOLIDAYS

- October Mid-Term** Closing Friday 27th October. Reopens Monday 6th November
- Christmas Holidays** School closes Friday 22nd December. Reopens Monday 8th January
- Spring Mid-Term** School closes Friday 9th February. Reopens Monday 19th February
- St. Patrick's Day** School closed on Monday 18th March
- Easter Holidays** School closes on Friday 22nd March. Reopens on Monday 8th April
- May Public Holiday** School closed on Monday 6th May
- Summer Holidays** School closes on Friday 31st May

IMPORTANT DATES

- Tuesday 15th August** Second Chance Uniforms 12 – 2 pm in school
- Wednesday 30th August** Talk for parents of Transition Year Students 7.30 pm in school
- Tuesday 12th September** Talk for parents of 5th year 7.30 pm in school
- Thursday 14th September** Talk for parents of 1st Year Students 7.30 pm in school
- Tuesday 19th September** Talk for parents and students 3rd and 6th years 7.30 pm in school
- Sunday 24th September** Mercy Day
- Tuesday 26th September** Talk for parents of 2nd years
- Wednesday 11th October** Parents' Council AGM
- Saturday 21st October** Open Day
- 16th – 20th October** Maths Week
- 23rd – 27th October** Health Promotion Week
- 13th – 17th November** Science week
- Tuesday 30th January** School closed, staff training
- Wednesday 17th January** TY talk for parents of 3rd year students
- 1st – 9th February** Mock Examinations
- Monday 5th February** School closed, St. Brigid's public holiday





U16.5 Girls Camogie - Munster and Cork colleges winners



Minister Norma Foley visits the school to announce the first phase of the multi-million euro extension



Senior Girls Football - Munster champions and All-Ireland finalists

