



SOLAS

St. Aidan's Community College, Dublin Hill, Cork,
Newsletter Issue 12 Autumn 2002

A WORD FROM THE PRINCIPAL

The best possible grades and the highest possible points are a necessary objective for every pupil. They are the way forward into the future. In a market-place that requires more and higher qualifications of virtually everyone, to be either without qualifications or without adequate qualifications is to run the sure and certain risk of being side-lined one way or another.

It remains a fact, though, that, whilst they are definitely essential, professional qualifications are never enough. Success in the market-place and, more importantly, success in life, requires a whole range of personal characteristics that just cannot be learned out of a book. There is no course in honesty in the Leaving Certificate and there is none in loyalty. Yet, without honesty, without loyalty, no commercial or industrial venture will thrive. More importantly, without qualities like these, no individual, no family, no society, will thrive either.

The challenge, therefore, in Irish education today is to get the balance right: To go all out for the grades and the points and to put in the work to get them but to use, as well, every opportunity at home and school, in the study hall and on the playing field, to be the best 'you' that you can be.

This, after all, is what each of us was made for and it is in 'growing' in mind and in body, in spirit and in soul, that we fulfil the destiny set out for each of us when we were made in the image and likeness of God.

F. J. Steele
October, 2002

ST. AIDAN'S PUPILS' COUNCIL LEADS THE WAY



Students' Council Presidential candidates Darren Lynch, Laura Whelan and Eoin Cullinane with Lord Mayor Cllr. John Kelleher

For the first time ever, the Minister for Education, issued guidelines for the establishment of Student Councils to all schools in June 2002. St. Aidan's has just convened its 18th Council! Partnership with the Pupils in their own education has always been a key concept in the ethos of St. Aidan's and thus a Pupils' Council has been in existence since 1985!

The Pupils' Council is an invitation to the pupils to work with the Board of Management, the College Authorities, Parents and teachers for the good of the school. It is about learning to represent others, taking responsibility, seeing things through and being accountable.

It provides a training in democracy and active, positive participation. It is a means of harnessing the idealism of youth and channelling it into worthwhile endeavours. Over the years, we have had very active Councils and some extremely dynamic Presidents - one, Orla O' Mahony, who represented the pupils' interests at a meeting with the then Minister for Education,

Ms. Mary O' Rourke; another, Diarmuid Conway, who graduated from St. Aidan's to become President of the Students' Union at U.C.C. as well as a distinguished world champion debater competing at inter-varsity and international levels.

The Pupils' Council remains an educational experience for all concerned. For boys and girls alike the invitation is there to get involved, become a class representative, learn the skills of leadership and negotiation, take up the challenge and run for President of the Council!

We are currently preparing for this year's Presidential Election. Three candidates, prepared to work for the good of the school, have put themselves forward to serve. They are Eoin Cullinane, Class Daivi, 4th Year, Darren Lynch, Class Agata, 4th Year and Laura Whelan, Class Carthach, 6th Year. They will be on the campaign trail for the next week or so and already election fever is hitting the pupils

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Womens Group

The Women's Group started with a coffee morning on Oct 2nd in the Parents' Room and plans for future activities were put in place which will include:

- 10 week cookery courses- Mondays 7pm-9pm
- 8 week Enneagram course- Wednesdays 10.30am -12.00 noon (This is a fun way to discover personal-ity types)
- Christmas table decorations in December - Wednesdays 10.30-12.00

Photo: Women's Group Coffee Morning

Romeo and Juliet

On Tuesday the 1st of October, I, along with my class (see photo), went to the Everyman Palace to see "Romeo and Juliet" by William Shakespeare.

Romeo and Juliet is an ageless, classical tale of love and hate. Romeo and Juliet fall helplessly in love at first sight and when they realise they come from families that loathe each other, they vow to sacrifice everything for love.

Unfortunately, in the actual production, Romeo and Juliet were not as I expected and, instead, made a gracelessly indifferent pair of lovers. Romeo appeared very feminine and too sensitive, unlike the honourable and brave Romeo that I have recollected from studying the play. Juliet displayed no natural acting ability and seemed to speak in the same lofty tone for the entirety of the play.

However, not all the acting was quite so sub-

standard. A truly fine Mercutio, who so effortlessly conveyed many different emotions in his acting, wowed the audience. Benvolio was excellent, the Prince was dignified, Friar Laurence's acting was steady and solid and Lady Capulet was perfected down to a fine art.

The Everyman Palace was almost bursting at the brim due to the colossal numbers of Junior Certificate students who attended. The full house created an enjoyable and extremely lively atmosphere. The audience clapped and cheered enthusiastically at various recognizable scenes in the play.

The play introduced us to the finer elements of theatre productions and brought the book to life. All in all, our trip to Romeo and Juliet was a truly worthwhile, enjoyable and satisfying one and I, along with my class, hope to see more live theatre in the future.

Clare Senior, Class Lean

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult classes got underway on the week of September 30th. Classes available include

- Art/Design
 - Basic Maths
 - Communications
 - Beginners Computers
 - ECDL
 - Conversational French
- Leaving Certificate History is also being offered.

For further information please contact Grace Hickey (021) 4307486

Start of Year Mass

The Mass to mark the commencement of the 2002-2003 school year was celebrated in the college on Thursday 24th of September. In the middle of the hustle of a typical hectic school day teachers and pupils came together to worship God.

It is an education in itself to stop, from time to time, in the middle of the daily round to give our whole attention to those things above and beyond the daily round that help us make sense of, and cope with, the daily round. It is an education in itself, for teachers and pupils alike, to do this together because it shows us just how effective we can be when commit ourselves in mutual respect and support to the attainment of a goal.

Dr. F. J. Steele



Food for Thought!

Leaving Certificate students pictured (right) with Dr. Mary Grufferty, who visited St. Aidan's recently and gave a presentation to Fifth and Sixth Year Science students on University College Cork's Department of Food Science.





St. Oliver's Celebrates 10th Anniversary

St. Oliver's Parish Church, Dublin Hill celebrated it's 10th anniversary on October 5th. Bishop John Buckley celebrated mass which proved to be a joyous and uplifting celebration and pupils from St. Aidan's played a large part in contributing to the success of the evening.

Photos: St. Aidan's Choir who performed on the evening and St. Aidan's staff and students pictured with Bishop John Buckley.

To the students of St Aidan's,

I just want to say thank you to everyone who made our church's 10th birthday celebrations so special across the weekend. A special thank you to the 4th Years who delivered the birthday invitations last Thursday. A special thank you to our school choir who sang so beautifully during the 6pm Mass on Saturday evening. A special thank you also to our disco dancers, our set dancers, to our readers and to anyone who participated over the weekend. The feedback has been so positive. You really did yourselves and the community proud with the great effort you put in. I appreciate the effort you made and this little note cannot sum up how grateful I am to each of you. Thanks also to your teachers Ms Williamson, Ms O' Donovan and Mr Forde for their help and thanks as well to Fr. Shem and Dr. Steele

We'll talk soon

Fr. James Mc Sweeney



St. Aidan's Parents' Association AGM

Summer is over and already we're well into the new school year. On Tuesday September 24th we had the St. Aidan's Parents' Association A.G.M. While looking back on the work of the Association for the past year, we look forward to the year ahead. A Parents' Council was formed, which will meet every second month, and, from within this Council, an Executive Committee was elected. The Executive will meet on the second Tuesday of every month to discuss and plan the Association's work over the coming year. The Annual fundraising table quiz for the Book Loan Scheme will be just one of the items for discussion at our next meeting. I wish to take this opportunity to welcome the new members who joined our Council and Executive Committee this year. We look forward to a productive year ahead.

Mrs. Helen O'Flynn
Chairperson Parents Association

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who have the task of selecting the person who will represent them in a forthcoming election. Taking time off from their hectic campaigning, the presidential candidates Eoin, Darren and Laura took time to consult an expert on political strategy when they visited the Lord Mayor, Cllr. John Kelleher in his office at the City Hall on Wednesday 9th October. We thank all the pupils who generously give of their time to represent and we wish the best of luck to the candidates.

On a recent visit to St. Aidan's the Lord Mayor, Councillor John Kelleher addressed the pupils on the importance of re-cycling and how important it is that we work together to make Cork an attractive place for ourselves and our many visitors. He invited the pupils to consider contributions they would like to make to Cork, the European Capital of Culture 2005. *Photo shows Executive members of the Pupils' Council pictured with staff members Ms Desmond, Ms O' Donovan and Fr. Shem Furlong OSA.*



FOCUS ON PASTORAL CARE

The Pastoral Care System at St. Aidan's is committed to providing an environment in which each Pupil feels known and loved and seeks to establish the environment in which self-discipline is the norm and indiscipline the exception.

Mutual respect and partnership with the pupils and parents are key values to us. We want pupils to be actively involved in their own education and

to take responsibility, to be accountable and to have a sense of belonging to the community that is St. Aidan's.

At the very heart of Pastoral Care is the relationship between the Teacher/Tutor and the pupil, and here, at all times the focus is on trust and fair play.

The Pastoral Care System supports learning. It is the responsibility of

and motivation in the year group.

Two Pastoral Care Co-ordinators work on a daily basis with the Year Tutors to ensure consistency of rules and standards across the school. The Co-ordinators also liaise with the HSCL Officer, the Guidance Counsellor, Resource Teacher and Chaplain to ensure the provision of as much support as possible for the pupils.

The Co-ordinators and all Pastoral Personnel consult with the Principal on a regular basis.



Ms. Muldoon (2nd Year Tutor), Ms. Healy(3rd Year Tutor), Fr. Shemosa, Ms. Dineen(6th Year Tutor), Ms. Scanlon(1st Year Tutor), Mr. Cremin(4th Year Tutor), Ms. Desmond, Dr. Steele, Ms. O'Donovan, Mr. Savage(5th Year Tutor)

The ultimate aim of the Pastoral Care System at St. Aidan's is to prepare the young people entrusted to us for academic success in accordance with their ability, to have the confidence to be themselves and to follow their dream, to realize that they are unique and talented and to let their light shine.

not just to see education as something that happens to them. To this end, we encourage all pupils to see St. Aidan's as their school, their place, their space.

We promote as much pupil involvement as possible in the life of the school through participation in games, clubs and activities.

Our belief is that each Pupil is a special, unique, gifted and evolving individual deserving of respect. As such, it is part of the privilege of teaching that we may be central to these very formative years in each Pupil's development.

Pastoral Care at St. Aidan's promotes self-discipline and encourages pupils

teachers to teach and pupils to learn and the most important relationship at all times is between the subject teacher and the pupil. We do not allow anything to undermine teaching and learning and we want all pupils to aim for, and to achieve, their personal best.

Each class in the school has a Class Tutor whose job is to 'mind' each pupil in that class and to be a contact person for parents.

Each year group from First Year to Sixth Year has its own Year Tutor whose job is to oversee all matters pertaining to the pastoral work of the year group.

The Year Tutor promotes the highest possible standards of work, conduct

The Pastoral Care system at St. Aidan's aims to create an environment in which learning, growth and responsibility can flourish in a happy, Irish and Christian context.

Pastoral Care Co-Ordinators

As Pastoral Care Co-ordinators, we try to ensure that the aims of the Pastoral Care system are realised in so far as is possible. We work very closely with the Year-Tutors and other Pastoral Support Personnel to make St. Aidan's a happy experience for pupils where they can learn and mature in a safe, secure environment, where their varied and unique talents are nurtured and their many achievements celebrated.

We operate, with the pupils, on the basis of mutual respect. We challenge them to accept responsibility and to be accountable for their actions.

We encourage pupils to get involved in the life of the school and, by making their contribution, to make this space a better place for all. We welcome and need parental support and involvement - parents, pupils and teachers working together! This is and always has been the driving force of St. Aidan's. Together, there is little we cannot achieve!

**R. Desmond,
A O' Donovan**

Chaplaincy

The Chaplain seeks, through various ways, to make real the care and concern Christ has for his people. The ministry of the Chaplain is primarily concerned with the spiritual care and the pastoral needs of the school community. By being present, there, and available, the Chaplain provides an open door where students and staff are welcome and can receive support in a confidential and secure way.

The Chaplain celebrates Mass, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and liturgical services to mark various occasions and liturgical seasons. The Chaplain visits members of the school community when in hospital and, in times of bereavement, visits and gives support to students / classes. The Chaplain is a member of the Pastoral Care Team and works closely with the Pastoral Care personnel to ensure the best all round services to the students and school community.

The ministry of Chaplain in any school and, for me, in particular, in St. Aidan's, is a privilege to hold. The Chaplain, working with the entire school community, endeavours to encourage students to let their light shine.

Fr. Shem, osa.

Home School Community Liaison Officer

I was appointed as Home School Community Liaison Officer in January 2002. My job is to improve links between the home and school in order to help your child achieve his/her full potential at school. I am available to meet with parents to discuss any issues you may have concerning your child. You are welcome to drop into the Parent's Room any day or alternatively you can contact me on (021) 4307486 to arrange an appointment or a home visit.

Grace Hickey

ST. AIDAN'S PASTORAL SUPPORT GROUP



Mr. Dave Kingston, Ms. Ann O' Donovan, Fr. Shem osa, Ms. Grace Hickey, Ms Rose Desmond

Guidance Counsellor

Mary cried as she explained how terrified she was coming to school because of the nastiness of two of her classmates towards her. Sean had clearly breached the disciplinary code and, when questioned, suddenly replied he didn't care. It would be easy to focus on the cheeky answer and forget that he had experienced a deep trauma in the relatively recent past.

Patricia misses school because she baby-sits her baby brother. She is increasingly under pressure as she falls behind her classmates.

Philip is in a head to head with one of the staff. There appears to be aggravation and right and wrong on both sides. Meanwhile Philip is over stressed, under performing and going on the hop.

When parents think of the work of a Guidance Counsellor, subject choice, points and third level places readily spring to mind. That side of my work is easily advertised and easily measurable.

How do you measure the support needed in the case of each of the four students mentioned here and all of whom I have worked with. How do you measure a successful intervention? Their names are false, of course. Their stories are real. Each needs a listening, supportive ear in a friendly, non blaming and confidential setting, and, while humbly admitting to my human frailties, that is the benchmark to which any self respecting Guidance Counsellor aspires to. After all, the student I meet tomorrow could be your son or daughter.

D. Kingston

St. Aidan's to South America - Lending a Helping Hand

Last May students of St. Aidan's raised over 3000 Euro in a twenty four hour fast to assist the poor of Ecuador. In July R.E. Teacher Colm O' Brien visited that country and reports here on his experiences.

*Iglesia San Patricio
Parroquia Eloy Alfaro
Manta,
Ecuador*

Sept 2002

Dear Students of Saint Aidans,

Greetings from Ecuador. I wish you all a happy return to school. Mr. O' Brien has been visiting for the last couple of weeks and so I am availing of this opportunity to write this letter of thanks. The money you raised last year is being used to great effect here. In two areas of the parish we have completed a course for mothers on how to cook nutritious food cheaply. We received help from the local University in Manta, the students of the Department of Nutrition gave talks on the benefits of various food and how they should be prepared. Over 50 mothers attended the month long course and they are now asked to teach the mothers in their own area. We also had a campaign for children between the ages of 6 and 12 to cure stomach parasites; these appear frequently in the water and can cause serious infection. We are continually offering medicine to the poorest of children in the parish when they fall ill. As you can see, your efforts are helping the people of our parish here in Manta and on their behalf I wish to thank you and assure you that prayers are being offered for the staff and students of your fine Educational Institution. St. James reminds us that our faith is of little value if not accompanied by good works. May God bless you all and may you have an enjoyable year in school.

*Yours Sincerely,
Ted Sheehan (Fr.)*

When I arrived in Quito at the end of July it was immediately apparent to me that things were very different out here. Children aged four and up were selling roses for a dollar a bunch outside the airport, others were shining shoes for 25 cents. I couldn't understand how they were so cheap and to give a child just 25 cents for shining shoes was beyond me. But I was thinking in terms of how we earn at home and not the \$120 a month that would be considered a good wage for an Ecuadorian.

Life for those in Quito could be considered reasonably comfortable were it not for the difficulty in breathing, which results from the thin air - due to the high altitude, along with the choking pollution from the busses in the city. There are four Cork priests in Ecuador working in two parishes. The parish of San Patricio has a population of roughly fifty thousand people. I would estimate that ninety-five percent of the people there live in houses that would be far inferior to the wooden garden sheds that many people in Ireland have in their back gardens. This is not an attempt to make anyone feel sorry for the people in Ecuador. It might sound like a very cold thing to say but I did not feel sorry for them. I did not feel sorry for them because they were immensely happy people and I think that they would be quite insulted if they thought I pitied them!

I stayed in San Patricio with Frs. Ted Sheehan (Montonette) and Christy Harrington (Blackpool) and frequently visited La Paz where Frs. Kevin O'Regan (Blackrock) and Eoin Whooley (Glanmire) work. Life in the Ecuadorian parish is very different. There is a medical centre attached to both parishes and the priests are involved in the administration side of the medical centres which provide an invaluable, in many cases, life saving, service to the people of the areas. Fr. Ted has responsibility for the medical centre in San Patricio which sees about 500 people a week. In many cases people cannot afford to pay to see the doctor or pay for medication and the money raised in St. Aidan's through events such as last year's 24-hour fast makes an enormous differ-

ence to peoples' lives. Although the people have very little the hospitality I experienced in Manta was overwhelming with many people extending invitations to visit for lunch or dinner (see photo below).

Another major aspect of parish life in Manta is the catechetical dimension. Within the parish there are several communities, many with their own church and all of the communities have catechetical centres which consist of a few basic classrooms. The day before coming home we took part in a party organised for the 250 catechists of the parish. In the morning each community presented a biblical theme through drama and music and the afternoon was given over to a five-a-side soccer tournament between the communities. The teams were mixed but only the ladies could score goals! Mass is a real celebration with plenty of singing and at the sign of peace all the children in the church crowd around the priest to offer him a sign of peace.

Undoubtedly, one of the greatest assets brought by our local priests to the people of Manta was the financial support from home. Don't forget, a little in Ireland is a lot in Ecuador. This support put the physical structures in place in the various communities - the churches, catechetical centres, medical centres, pharmacies and houses would not be there otherwise. The cost of re-roofing a church at home could build a church in Manta.

When visiting the centres, the people there made us very welcome and we spoke to them with the help of Fr. Ted who translated. They had many questions and asked if we would come to Manta to work as catechists. Even though I was not long in Manta at this point, I felt that I could not ignore their request and, if everything works out, I plan to return there next Summer.

The four priests are scheduled to come home shortly. When the time comes for them to leave Ecuador, I hope that the people there will not be forgotten by us and that we will continue to support the immensely worthwhile projects that have been initiated there in the past ten years.



SPORTS NEWS

St. Aidan's A.F.C. had their first 'friendly' game of the year recently. The match was between the school under-15 team (middle-photo) and 'the Best of the Rest'!(top photo) 'The Rest' won 5-4 in a cracking encounter, full of good humour and an abundance of skill. On a thoroughly enjoyable sunny day everyone enjoyed themselves and numerous individuals stood out.

The U-15 team are drawn in a group containing Cobh, Ashton and Kinsale and hopes are high that they can progress out of Cork and challenge for Munster honours this year. With three teachers involved, Mr. Cremin, Mr. Warren and Mr. O' Flynn, there is no shortage of back-up staff and the fine school tradition continues.

Ex St. Aidan's pupils continuing to make a name for themselves locally, nationally and internationally include;

Kenneth Colman (Wolves), Roy O' Donovan (Coventry), Gareth O' Donovan (Cobh Ramblers), Paul Fitzgerald(Leeds Seniors), Alan Larkin (Leeds Seniors), Kevin Murray(Cork City), Eoghan Geaney (Cork City Youths), Dean Buckley(Cork City Youths), Michael Buckley(Cork City Youths), Colin Falvey (Cork City U-17), Alan Falvey (Rockmount).

To each and all of them we wish the best of luck. They are all playing at a top-class level and the skill and determination that they bring to their respective teams is a credit to their under-age club managers and to the school. *Biodh bhur solas ag taitneamh!*

Bottom photo:

Fourth Years enjoying the hugely popular and highly entertaining **after school indoor soccer tournament** organized by P.E. Teacher Ms. Guile.

Basketball News

Training is well underway with sixty-five players registered to represent the school this season.

We are all looking forward with enthusiasm to a successful season. The senior team has a lot to live up to as last year's team were county semi-finalists.

The annual outdoor activities trip is already being planned to Kilfinane for 9th -11th of May. This involves a weekend of outdoor pursuits such as canoeing, rock climbing and orienteering. Last year's trip proved to be a great success and the prospect of a return trip this year is already generating high levels of excitement and enthusiasm.

Last season saw the senior girls' team battle it to the county semi-final in Neptune Stadium only to be beaten on the day. All the girls are eager for victory this year and training is well underway. The up and coming younger teams also look very promising for the year and years ahead and all have committed to serious training since our return to school.

Lisa Bullman,Class Aban



The **Charity Soccer Marathon** is again being planned for December 8th. Last year's event raised over 2,900 Euros for **St. Vincent de Paul** - let's see if we can do even better this year. Sponsorship cards will be available shortly and all offers of assistance would be greatly appreciated.

SOLAS is produced by the staff and students of St. Aidan's Community College and is printed by Watermans Printers, Little Island. 2000 copies are distributed once per term in the Greater Dublin Hill Area. Many thanks to Class Agata, Transition Year for their invaluable assistance in this production. Warmest thanks also to Blackpool Credit Union for their continued sponsorship.

Blackpool Credit Union Limited



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Opening Hours:

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|------------|------------------|
| Monday: | 9.15am - 4.00pm |
| Tuesday: | 9.15am - 4.00pm |
| Wednesday: | 9.15am - 4.00pm |
| Thursday: | 9.30am - 4.00pm |
| Friday: | 9.15am - 6.30pm |
| Saturday: | 9.15am - 12.00pm |

List of Services and Budget Payments

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------------|
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